

COLD STORAGE COMMISSION

Criticism of the appointment of Mr. G. F. Henderson, K.C., as chairman of the new commission to review the report of Commissioner O'Connor on the cold storage corporations, was made to parliament on Tuesday by Mr. F. B. Carvell. He was afraid that the chairman would be "more inclined to prevent the truth coming out than to get at it for the benefit of the public." He was of this opinion from experience he had had with Mr. Henderson at a previous inquiry, the shell committee inquiry, where Mr. Henderson acted for the then Colonel J. Wesley Allison. Mr. Carvell thought that, in view of the appointment of Mr. Henderson, counsel should be named to represent the people. If this were not done, he was "afraid that a truthful report would not be forthcoming."

We are not in a position to judge of Mr. Henderson's qualifications for his present appointment. We do know, however, that implicit confidence may be placed by the public in the work and the findings of Mr. A. B. Brodie, representing Price, Waterhouse and Company, and of Mr. Geoffrey Clarkson, of Clarkson, Gordon and Dilworth. These two accountants are associated with firms of the highest standing and one may feel certain that the investigation, so far as they are concerned, will not be tinged with the slightest political consideration. Mr. Clarkson particularly has had considerable experience in just such investigations and has won an excellent reputation for straightforward and accurate work of this nature.

Sir Robert Borden stated in the House at Ottawa on Tuesday that the question was largely one of accounts, profits, and so forth. The inquiry was eminently one for gentlemen of the experience possessed by those appointed. A committee of the House of Commons would not be the best tribunal for an inquiry into complicated accounts and matters of a complex nature in relation to large business affairs. That is the proper view. In the meantime, the cold storage companies, we feel sure, will do everything possible to facilitate the work of the inquiry. It was Sir Joseph Flavelle, president of the William Davies Company, who asked for the investigation.

LLOYDS BANK RETURNS

The report of Lloyds Bank, presented by R. V. Vassar-Smith, chairman, at the recent annual meeting, showed gratifying results. The available profit for the past year, after payment of salaries, pensions, other charges and expenses, and the annual contribution to the provident and insurance fund, and making full provision for rebate, income tax, bad debts, contingencies, etc., is £1,283,797 15s. 8d. To this has to be added £106,969 1s. 11d. brought forward from the previous year, making a total of £1,390,766 17s. 7d. Out of this an interim dividend of 14s. 6d. per share, being at the rate of 18½ per cent. per annum, and amounting, less income tax, to £363,128 was paid for the half-year ended the 30th June last, the usual £60,000 has been written off the bank premises account, and £520,000 has been appropriated in writing down the bank's investments, which (with the exception of the war loans, which are taken at cost) stand at or below market value.

From the balance remaining, £447,638, the directors recommended that a dividend at the same rate, amounting, less income tax, to £340,433, should be declared, and that the balance, £107,204, be carried forward to the profit and loss account of the present year. Four directors were elected during the year, namely, Mr. Henry Bell, the Hon. Robert Henry Brand, C.M.G., Mr. Oswald Sanderson and Mr. Andrew Weir.

MINING INVESTMENTS

The suggested legislation to protect investors in British Columbia mines has much to commend it. It is proposed to divide the province into six mineral survey districts, each in charge of a qualified mining engineer. Permanent survey and inspection of mining areas would replace the temporary work of the past, and so bring capital directly into touch with the man who needed it. It is proposed also to carry on experimental work with the oil flotation and other processes which would be done at the Department of Mines, Victoria, or in connection with the British Columbia University at Vancouver. Anyone bonding a property must guarantee in advance the payment of a month's wages to his miners. Hon. Mr. Sloan, provincial minister of mines, who introduced the bill, deprecates fraudulent stock sale methods. Legislation in some places presumes that a man is dishonest and attempts to legislate him into honesty. In a clause in the British Columbia act, for the protection of investors, the government takes the attitude that if persons floating a mining stock company do not aim at legitimate development, the minister of mines can give such notice as will protect investors. This provision in the bill for the protection of investors in mining stock or shares reads: "The minister of mines may, and each resident engineer shall, upon receiving notice of any advertised or intended sale of shares in any company or interest in any claim or mine or mineral property or interest whatsoever, upon statements or terms not in accordance with actual facts and conditions, give such notices, either personal or public, as may be necessary to prevent any injury to investors, and every notice given under this section shall be absolutely privileged."

The Canadian mining industry has suffered too long with the evils of stock jobbers. The reputable mining engineer has not been consulted often enough regarding mining investments. Our governments can well afford to take a greater interest in the relation of capital to the mining industry, one which will yield a much larger income to the nation in future years than it does now.

The company's assets are as follow, shillings and pence omitted:—Cash in hand and with the Bank of England, £38,115,548; cash at call and short notice, £6,430,338; bills of exchange, £15,306,652; war loans, at cost (including £1,100,000 lodged under treasury minute of the 17th November, 1915), and other British government securities, £35,774,830; Indian and colonial government securities, corporation stocks, English railway debenture and preference stocks, and other investments, (including investments lodged with the treasury under Scheme B), £5,867,958; Lloyds Bank (France), Limited, namely: 11,980 shares of £50 each, £20 paid, £239,600; advances to customers and other securities, including stock exchange loans under treasury minute of the 31st October, 1914, £55,856,841; liabilities of customers for acceptances, endorsements, etc., as per contra, £11,207,869; bank premises, at cost, less amounts annually written off for depreciation, etc., £2,832,845; total, £171,632,486.

We cannot sell in foreign markets only those styles and qualities we desire to sell and at our price. We can sell in foreign markets only what they want and against competitors who give careful attention to market requirements.

Mr. F. H. Wright, who has been in charge of the rental department of the Yorkshire and Canadian Trust Company, Vancouver, has been appointed assistant general manager of the company. Mr. Wright is a capable young business man.