

The Stock Transfer Tax a Revival. We doubt much whether it was known to the proposers of the stamp tax on the transfer of securities that such a tax was in force long years ago, but that such was the case is evident from the following passage in Dean Swift's letter to Stella, dated London, January 12, 1711, which reads:

"This morning I sent for Tooke whom I had employed to buy £500 in the stock of the South Sea Company off Stratford, and settle things with him. He told me I was secure, for Stratford had transferred it to me and all was done on stamped parchment."

The Equitable's July Record.

In his monthly circular Mr. Tarbell, 2nd vice-president of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, appeals in stirring words to the agents and through them the policy-holders to "get abreast of new conditions and forget the past." He compares the society to a tree that has been pruned so that "it will be stronger and bigger and more beautiful than ever before." He compares it also to a house that has been cleaned and he remarks:

"The advantage of house cleaning is known to every family. The more thorough the cleaning the better. A house is never so clean as just after house cleaning.

This is equally true of a corporation. You are sorry there was so much dust; yes, but surely you were glad to get it out. You know that, as compared with the total assets of the Equitable, the amount that has been diverted to questionable uses was very small, and the semi-annual statement submitted by President Morton at the last board meeting shows a condition of which we may all be more than proud. The following figures are taken from that report:

	First half 1904	First half 1905	Increase 1905
Premiums,.....	\$28,903,415.06	\$29,977,057.64	\$1,073,642.58
Interest,.....	6,615,190.44	7,442,379.37	827,188.93
Rents,.....	693,721.88	897,427.21	3,705.33
Assurance in force	{ Dec. 31st, 1904	June 30th, 1905	Increase 1905:
	{ \$1,495,542,892	\$1,526,434,73	\$30,891,847

President Morton also stated that the chartered accountants are still at work and that it will be some time before they conclude their investigation, but that a preliminary report has been made by them stating that the securities of the society have been counted; that the amounts and values of stocks and bonds listed on the exchange were verified and found correct, and the amounts of those not listed were confirmed although as yet the value of these has not been verified for want of time.

The president further stated that retrenchments had already been made which would result in a saving to the society of more than \$500,000 per annum.

THE RISE IN BANK SHARES.

The recent rise in market quotations for the stocks of some important Canadian banks has, naturally, drawn attention to the outlook for banking profits in the Dominion. Evidently this is regarded by investors as being favorable, for the buyers seem to be more insistent in their demands than the sellers.

Ever since the end of the depression which began in 1893, the banks have been prosperous. There has been a large steady growth in their deposits, but, large as this was it was not sufficient to enable them to meet the demands for accommodation made by their discounting customers. It was found necessary to call up fresh capital from the stockholders. With the aid of this, and of the increased note circulation privileges that accompanied it, the business of the country has been carried on. The monthly statistics show how greatly the volume of banking business has increased in the last eight or ten years. None know so well as the bankers that, if the same level of rates and commissions could be had on the business of 1905 as obtained in 1895, the banks would show profits greatly in excess of the figures now being reported.

It was inevitable, so long as no monopoly existed, that as Canada's business expanded, competition among the banks should increase. Not only did the existing institutions strive more energetically to attract the business of their rivals, but several new banks have come into existence, and since their advent the competitive struggle has become fiercer than ever.

So far as the immediate future is concerned it seems to promise that in 1906 the banks will be able to transact considerably more business than ever before. There is apparently no check to the increase in deposits, and none is to be anticipated while well-to-do immigrants are coming in at the present rate, while the farmers of the East are receiving such satisfactory returns for their dairy and other produce, and while the Northwest is yielding such enormous wheat crops to be sold at such remunerative prices. Having regard for the improvement in general conditions as compared with what was in evidence last year, it seems certain then, if no untoward event happens to destroy public confidence, that the business that will fall to the share of the banks will be very large indeed. If they could transact it at the same rates as they got last year or two years ago, and if their losses are not increased profits will assuredly reach a new high record. But we know that the tendency of rates is ever downwards, that the increase in the volume of business is being offset in whole or in part by the concessions in rates resulting from increased competition. The result has been that profits have shown moderate increases only when compared with the increase in business. It is the tendency all over the world where competition reigns. No doubt the