are from our own sources. The figures of the Mutual Life are estimated:

Company.	New Business, 1899.	New Business, 1898.
Canada Life	$ 8,500,000	$ 6,034,665
Connecticut Mutual	10,819,210	9,678,249
Equitable	200,000,000	168,043,739
Massachusetts Mutual	20,777,450	20,769,190
Michigan Mutual	7,000,000	7,380,718
Mutual Benefit	40,000,000	35,128,412
Mutual Life, New York	200,000,000	134,118,295
New York Life	202,000,000	154,223,057
Northwestern, Wisconsin	75,000,000	76,257,159
Provident Savings	47,000,000	30,268,550
Prudential	55,000,000	43,614,000
Travelers	17,165,686	17,454,061
Union Mutual	10,000,000	8,905,243
United States	7,709,764	7,528,459

Nearly every company in the list increased its business, some of them very materially. Notable gains are those of the three "giants," which made every effort not only to excel each other, but to break records. But most of the moderate sized companies also made substantial increases, showing a healthy and normal growth.—Insurance Age, New York.

FINANCIAL MATTERS.

A branch of the Bank of Montreal has been opened at Marysville, N.B., under the supervision of manager Ritchie of the Fredericton branch.

Dawson banks estimate the gold output for the present season at $20,000,000. Work on the claims is progressing well, but general business is reported dull.

Rossland merchants complain that too many nickels are in circulation there. Nickel-in-the-slot machines in the western town have been put out of service, and the result is more small change in circulation than can be conveniently handled.

A gang of six men forced an entrance into the branch of the People's Bank of Halifax at Danville, Que., early on the morning of February 8th, blew open the doors of the vault with nitro-glycerine and got away with $5,000 in cash. The same afternoon the gang were overtaken at Windsor Mills, twelve miles from Danville, and after a sharp fight, in which two of the robbers were shot and seriously injured, they were captured and placed in Sherbrooke jail. The stolen money was found divided among the gang, who the police think are the same who committed the Bowmanville Standard Bank robbery some time ago.

The Ville Marie Bank depositors do not yet despair of having the Government come to their assistance. In a factum of their case forwarded to the Governor-General-in-Council they point out that in 1868 the Dominion Government voted $250,000 to the depositors of the insolvent Bank of Upper Canada, and contend that this precedent should be followed, as since 1881 the bank never complied with its charter; that its circulation was out of proportion to its capital; that its paid-up capital was represented as $500,000 instead of $200,000, and that these irregularities had in 1892 been called to the attention of the Government by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

A GRUESOME KIND OF JOKE.

It is probable that the average business man enjoys a joke as well as his neighbor. There is so much that is hum-drum in business life, so many of the waking hours of a shop-keeper are full of grinding labor, mental or physical, that he is glad to have the relaxation of meeting some jovial friend—glad to hear a funny story or to exchange an innocent joke. But we can quite well understand that he may not like the practical joke as played by some fat-witted people; and small blame to him if he does not. An indignant subscriber in Montreal frees his mind this week over the receipt of a circular, couched in French, which we translate as follows, and which was printed on paper with a black border three-quarters of an inch wide:

"You are respectfully requested to assist at the burial of the Bachelorhood of our excellent friend, M. E. B——. The watch over the body will be held on the —— day of February, at Club ——, on St. —— street. It will commence at 10 o'clock, and continue to the small hours. We count on your co-operation and presence to assist at the presentation of the gifts, and to aid us in gaily launching him into the marriage state. In fact to render all due honor to a good sort of a boy."

Our subscriber tells us that he got a fright on receipt of this lugubrious missive, with the names of an "Organizing Committee" appended, and that it was not until he had read it twice that he perceived the humor of the thing. But it seems that this is by no means unusual. A gentleman in the hardware trade writes us, "that it is quite the fashion in Montreal to pass round a list among 'the trade' when a fellow is going to get married, have a baby or die. We actually had an able-bodied man in to see us twice last week getting subscriptions 'for a death on St. George street.' And although the 'stiff's' name was not mentioned, and it was not pretended that he had even belonged to the trade, yet a couple of dozen persons had actually given sums ranging from $1 to 25c. each, and the Lord Bishop $5." Gruesome joking in the first place. Jocular swindling in the second. We cannot say that we admire the form of either. Money must be plentiful in Montreal, and the business men more easy-going than we had thought them, to submit to being bled in such ways.

IN THE DRY GOODS STORE.

Makers of alpaca dress goods in England are very busy, and raw alpaca maintains its price.

Raw cotton is firm in the States, and in Liverpool on the 13th showed an advance of a halfpenny since Saturday.

In flannels and blankets the American market is decidedly strong. Stocks of both are in limited compass and prices firmly held.

Canadian cotton mills generally are very busy, some of them months behind with orders. Woolen mills, too, are very well employed.

In the Bradford market on 3rd February the tone of the wool market was very firm, with no disposition to push sales of raw material.

"Every department of the linen trade continues to show increasing firmness." Such is the language of the Belfast correspondent of the Record.

Quotations for raw mohair were very stiff at last accounts, by reason partly of the strong request for bright dress materials and partly because of the shortage the African war will occasion.

Spring millinery openings are to be later this year than last, it seems. The Montreal houses have fixed upon March 6th as the date, and the Toronto and other Ontario houses within a few days from that date.

By way of further advance in price of domestic cottons we hear that the Canadian Colored Cotton Co. have advised the cancelling of prepaid freights, which they have been in the habit of paying. This amounts probably to between two and three per cent.

The clothing trade in Leeds at the beginning of the month was very busy. At Batley and other places heavy woolens business was good. Rochdale makers were well occupied with flannels for Government orders. At Huddersfield there was a good demand for worsted coatings, both plain and fancy.

Down-East folks are "smart," but the smartness is not always nice. The Bridgewater Enterprise relates that an elderly woman from the country recently played a pretty sharp trick on one of the store-keepers of that Nova Scotia place by bringing her late husband's darned socks to town and palming them off as new ones.

Items of interest about Scottish textile industries are that tweed makers in the South are very well employed; that the Kirkcaldy textile establishments have not been so busy for many a day; that prices are looking up in the Glasgow cotton market; that the lace industry in Ayrshire is in a satisfactory state, except that there is a scarcity of weavers.