

Meetings.

BANK OF MONTREAL.

The eighty-sixth annual meeting of the shareholders of the Bank of Montreal was held in that institution at noon on Monday, 7th December.

There were present: Hon. George A. Drummond, vice-president; Sir William C. Macdonald, Hon. Robert Mackay, Messrs. R. B. Angus, A. T. Paterson, E. B. Greenshields, R. G. Reid, Charles Alexander, E. K. Greene, G. F. C. Smith, A. T. Taylor, Hon. J. K. Ward, Donald Macmaster, K.C., C. J. Fleet, K.C., F. S. Lyman, K.C., Henry Dobell, Angus Hooper, Richard White, Thomas Gilmour, James Tasker, James Moore, George Hague, B. A. Boas, James Croil, D. Forbes Angus, George Filer, R. H. Clerk, John Molson, John Taylor, H. Macdougall, Robert Archer, Hugh Cameron, W. D. Gilleen, Robert Hampson, M. S. Foley, W. Howard, W. H. Evans, Farquhar McLennan, H. J. O'Heir, Alfred Piddington, J. J. Robson and John Morrison.

On the motion of Mr. John Morrison, Hon. George A. Drummond, vice-president, was unanimously voted to the chair, in the absence of the president, Right Hon. Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.

Mr. B. A. Boas moved, seconded by Mr. Henry Dobell: "That the following gentlemen be appointed to act as scrutineers: Messrs. F. S. Lyman, K.C., and G. F. C. Smith; and that Mr. James Aird be secretary of the meeting."

The report of the directors to the shareholders at their eighty-sixth annual general meeting was then read by Mr. A. Macnider, acting general manager, as follows:—

REPORT.

The directors have pleasure in presenting the report, showing the result of the bank's business for the period from 30th April to 31st October, 1903, in accordance with a resolution at the special general meeting, held 7th January, 1903: Balance of profit and loss account, 30th April,

1903	\$ 724,807 75
Profits for the half-year ended 31st October, 1903, after deducting charges of management and making full provision for all bad and doubtful debts	917,156 31
Premiums received on new stock	416,024 00
	<hr/>
	\$2,057,988 06
Dividend 5 p.c., payable 1st December, 1903.....	684,000 00
Amount transferred to rest account.....	1,000,000 00
	<hr/>
Balance of profit and loss carried forward.....	\$ 373,988 06

Since the last annual meeting of the shareholders branches of the bank have been opened at Edmonton, Alta.; Indian Head, Assa., and Brandon and Gretna, Man.; and a branch at Sherman Avenue, Hamilton, has been arranged for, to be opened on the 1st December, 1903.

The bank also established a branch at Yarmouth, N.S., through the purchase of the business and premises of the Exchange Bank of Yarmouth.

The bank is at present erecting premises for the branches at Edmonton, Alta., and Birchby Cove, Newfoundland, and has acquired properties on the corner of St. Catherine Street and Papineau Road, Montreal, and the corner of Greene and Western Avenues, Westmount, where premises are being erected for the occupation of branches to be established at those points.

The bank has also, since last annual meeting, gone into occupation of the new premises on Craig Street, Montreal, and the reconstruction of the St. James Street building is proceeding satisfactorily.

With deep regret the directors have to record the death of their esteemed colleague, Mr. A. F. Gault, who had been a member of the board for upwards of ten years.

The vacancy on the board has been filled by the election of the Hon. Robert Mackay.

It has been thought desirable to provide an assistant to the general manager, and Mr. H. V. Meredith has been appointed to the position of assistant general manager, retaining also the position of manager at Montreal.

The issue of \$2,000,000 new capital stock authorized at the special general meeting of 7th January last, has been all subscribed for, and all taken up with the exception of \$12,660, which will be paid up on the 23rd December, making the capital stock, all paid, \$14,000,000.

The head office and a number of the branches have been inspected since the meeting last June. All the branches will be inspected, and reported on at next meeting.

STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL,

President.

Bank of Montreal, Head Office, 31st October, 1903.

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

Hon. George A. Drummond then said:

The statements now presented show clearly the position

of the bank, and will, I feel assured, be accepted as satisfactory.

In Montreal the new banking room to the rear has been occupied, and, giving as it does ample and convenient accommodation to the public and the staff, has proved most satisfactory.

The old building had long been outgrown by the business of the bank, which was being carried on in it under crowded and most unsanitary conditions.

The reconstruction of the old building in modern fire-proof manner is now proceeding, the original facade alone remaining, and when finished the premises of the bank in this city will no doubt be accepted as creditable alike to the architects, the bank and the city.

It may be mentioned that the original building fronting the square was first occupied in 1847, at which period the liabilities of the bank to the public were \$3,660,000, as compared with \$93,534,000 at present, figures giving some indication of the expansion of the bank's business and the accommodation required.

Turning to general questions, the most striking event of the year has been the serious decline in the market for securities.

Primarily, this has been the result of over production of stock certificates, bonds, debentures and all marketable securities, in some cases the necessary consequence of great industrial activity, but in others due to excessive capitalization, the disclosures of which excited public distrust.

It is to be noted that such cases have been rare in Canada, but we have by no means been exempt from the consequences.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, which have made the receipts of wholesale houses occasionally slower than usual, the general trade of the country has been prosperous, as the following summary will indicate:

Dry goods—"An unusually good year."	
Wool—"A good demand at good prices."	
Iron and hardware—"An excellent year's business at fairly remunerative returns, equalling those of any former year."	
Leather exports—"An increase of late at prices netting shippers good returns."	
Boots and shoes—"A very good year's trade."	
Grocery—"A satisfactory year's business, materially greater than last year."	
Lumber—"A very satisfactory year, at prices 10 to 15 per cent. higher than last year."	
Cheese—"The most profitable for years."	
Summarizing the figures approximately they stand thus:—	
Exports of lumber.....	\$ 33,000,000
Exports of butter and cheese.....	27,000,000
Exports of bacon, ham, eggs, poultry....	16,000,000
Exports of grain of all kinds.....	28,000,000
Exports of flour and meal.....	7,500 000
Exports of live stock.....	12,500,000

\$124,000,000

And it will be noted a large proportion of the year's crop has yet to come forward.

The opening of the trade with South Africa promises well. Already an extensive trade in flour, meal, lard, meats, canned goods and lumber has been established.

As regards the business of the port of Montreal, very full information is already in the hands of the public, and it need only be stated that the tonnage visiting the port shows a steady increase over the past three years, the excess being 41 vessels and 350,662 tons for 1903 over 1902.

The abolition of tolls on our canals has been effective in increasing the business of the port, the exports of wheat for the season from Montreal being larger than from New York; nevertheless, our grain exports are below the figures for 1896 and 1899.

The cattle exports for the past season show a very great increase over any previous year.

The rapid development of the North-West Territory, and the consequent increase in exportable produce, is amongst the most important of recent events. During the past sixteen months the Canadian Pacific Railway has sold for settlement over three million acres of wild lands; add to this the sales by the Government and private holders, and the aggregate must reach into large figures. It is known that at least 115,000 immigrants have entered these territories since the 1st of January last.

If disposed to attempt a forecast, which I have no intention of doing, it would undoubtedly be necessary to give weight to the great factors already alluded to. The prosperity of our farmers, the wealth pouring into territories only recently a barren waste, the full employment of labor of all kinds at high wages, and the great industrial activity caused by the establishment of many branches of manufactures; but I should also be compelled to enforce the counsels of prudence and economy.

I have much pleasure in moving:—

"That the report of the directors now read be adopted and printed for distribution among the shareholders."

This was seconded by Mr. A. T. Paterson, and was carried unanimously.