country were in the late seventies and in the eighties. Rates of interest were high then, and the companies could borrow in Great Britain or in Canada at rates which yielded them a profit of three or four per cent per annum on their loans. So we find that the amount borrowed for purposes of investment ran up from $30,000,000 in 1880 to $68,000,000 in 1892, since which date it has declined to $58,540,000 in 1899. The debenture liabilities of such companies abroad grew rapidly twenty years ago. For example, where they were only $6,206,000 in 1879 they jumped up to $22,968,000 in the very next year, and reached their highest point at $49,408,000 in 1893, since which time they have been steadily reduced, standing at $37,200,000 last year. But the companies were able at a later time to get money at cheap rates in Canada, and so we find their Canadian debentures increasing steadily from $8,000,000 in 1890 to $14,000,000 in 1899, and their deposits from $11,000,000 in 1880 to $19,466,000 last year.

Against liabilities of such large aggregate as these figures indicate, the main assets of the companies were of course loans on the security of real estate. These ran up with marvellous quickness from less than three millions in 1867 to $116,810,000 in the year 1894. But through amalgamation of companies, loans being paid off, or companies leaving the field, the aggregate at the close of last year had declined to $111,672,000. The companies have other assets, however; indeed they are better off of late years in the matter of available assets than they used to be. Where in 1881 their liabilities were $71,965,000, they had cash assets of only $4,341,250, or about 6 per cent. of the liabilities, by the year 1898 the cash assets had grown to $9,620,825, which was equal to almost 7 per cent. of what the companies owed.

Taking the total liabilities of all descriptions of leading companies in this list, which are shown at $148,143,000 last year, there is an array of assets equal to $148,614,000, consisting of loans secured by real estate, $111,672,000; loans on government or municipal securities, $116,323; loans to shareholders on their stock, $982,914; loans otherwise secured, $7,021,085; government and municipal debentures and other loan company debentures owned, $5,272,222; cash on hand and in banks $3,660,129; real estate held for sale for loans $4,266,701; office premises $2,229,333; other property owned, $13,392,752. These items of assets are taken from the recapitulation on pages xx and xxi, as the items given on page xiii do not make up the total given thereon.

Ontario is the most competed for field of mortgage loaning that we know of. Besides the hundred companies enumerated in this volume, ninety of which have their main field in this province, there are fire insurance companies, as well as life assurance companies, also many legal and other representatives of Old Country capitalists, and hundreds of private lenders, all looking for mortgage loans; so that the farmer, by means of competition, gets money at low rates. It would be well for legislatures to pause before being too ready to charter further companies for this purpose.

CANADIAN BANKERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING.

The annual meeting of the Bankers' Association just held in this city was one of more than usual interest, arising from the fact that to this Association has been committed by Parliament the supervision of the circulation of the banks with all necessary powers for the accomplishment of this great object. Not that this will add to the security of the notes so far as the public are concerned, for the holders of Canadian bank notes are more absolutely protected than the holders of any bank notes in the world. Not only are the notes secured by being made a first charge upon all the assets of the bank that issues them, but by the peculiar operation of the Redemption Fund, the whole of the banks are practically made the guarantors of each other's circulation.

There are, however, others besides note holders who are interested in the circulation, viz., the whole body of bank corporations in the country, as well as the whole body of bank depositors. The banks are interested in seeing that there has been no over-issue of notes, as their own guarantee might in case of over-issue be called upon for more than the law contemplated, and the depositors are interested in preventing an over issue inasmuch as the assets of the bank to the amount of that over-issue would be diverted from the fund necessary to enable a failed bank to meet its obligations *to them*. For we must remember that a bank may fail, so far as its stockholders are concerned, and yet pay the whole of its obligations in full. It is mainly for the latter reason that the Government has acted in the way of endeavoring to surround the circulation of the banks with additional safeguards, and Parliament has done wisely in committing this business to the banks themselves. And that for two very good reasons:— In the first place the banks are so familiar with the machinery of circulation and the internal economy by which the banks carry it on that they are more able to do the work effectually than any others, that is, so far as it can be done at all without creating an enormous Government department with a hundred officers in it. For all persons who are familiar with the question are aware that to carry through an absolutely correct inspection of circulation, and maintain an absolute check upon its amount, a simultaneous examination would have to be made on the same day of every one of the offices of each bank. This, however, is out of the question, if for no other reason than its enormous cost. But much may be done, no doubt, by the Association requiring systematic and periodical statements from the banks, which could be carefully checked and compared from time to time by a competent officer of the Association.

The second reason will press with still more weight of obligation upon the banks, inasmuch as because of their guarantors they are vitally interested in the circulation of every bank being kept within legal bounds.

The deliberations of the banks with regard to the matter were of a prolonged character, in which every phase of the question was thoroughly discussed. The conclusions come to were, we believe, unanimous, for which reason, we should think, there would be a strong probability of their being adopted by the Treasury Board and going into effect without delay.

As to the other proceedings of the meeting the two principal items of interest were the re-election of Mr. Clouston, general manager of the Bank of Montreal, as president (the first time that this honor has been conferred on any banker), and next the address of the secretary of the American Bankers' Association on the subject of protection against burglars. Mr. Clouston's address is an able one, as our readers will discover on its perusal, not only by reason of the acquaintance it shows with financial and industrial conditions, but because of the breadth with which the suggestion of a Canadian mint and a Canadian gold coinage is examined. His arguments against the proposal are weighty, and we think, will be deemed generally conclu-