ask cancellation of their policies as soon as they have paid the 40 per cent. call, and adds: "The reason is that our department of mutual insurance, after having received and paid that 40 per cent., will be without any income for two years, or with an income curtailed for the five years to come. So far that department could scarcely exist by its own revenue (20 per cent. per annum) and unless the losses are much less than in the past, we must conclude that the department will be bankrupt inside of two years and perhaps much sooner.

"Those insured in our mutual plan are interested in insuring themselves under our cash plan in La Caisse Générale. It is understood that the said company will each year out of its profits, partially reimburse those who are now going to pay the 40 per cent. call. In any case, the La Caisse will not have any legal obligation and will only make those reimbursements that it may think opportune."

The Canada Mutual, it will be remembered, protested against the legislation of last session making it obligatory upon all mutual companies to make a deposit with the government, stating that it did so "for the safeguard of the company, its agents and members."

Government Owned Telephones. Saskatchewan is now considering the purchase of the telephone system in the province from the Bell Telephone Company. Manitoba has already acquired the telephone system of that province and according to the statements made, it has worked satisfactorily. There is, of course, the general principle of public ownership involved, which under certain conditions may be all right, but it is not well to carry it too far; electors will always consider rates high.

The Brewery Merger. The amalgamation of all the breweries in the Province of Quebec under the title of the National Breweries, Limited, and with a capitalization of $10,000,000 or $12,000,0000 is an accomplished fact and one of no small importance in financial circles. To the general public, the most interesting question is how will the deal affect the price of beer.

Payne Tariff Bill. Irresponsible Government in a democracy has decided disadvantages. The United States Government is embarrassed in its fiscal legislation, as it is in its diplomatic negotiations by having to thresh everything out in public, before anything definite is accomplished.

STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE CO.

Preliminary figures are to hand as to the outcome of the Standard Life Assurance Company's 1908 business. At the 83rd annual meeting, held in Edinburgh last week, the directors reported that the net amount of new assurances for the year ending November 14th, was $8,964,100—obtained at a satisfactorily low expense. The net total of business in force on the company's books—exclusive of bonus additions—was $141,775,850. Accumulated funds of the company, after deducting current liabilities, totalled $59,845,901—these having been added to during the year by no less an amount then $1,345,400. The average interest realized on the funds was at the substantial rate of 4.28 per cent. subject to deduction of income tax. The total revenue for the year, from all sources, was $7,357,665.

From the Capital

REGARDING THE NATIONAL FINANCES.

Statement of Revenue, Expenditure and Debt for Past Fiscal Year—Lumbermen Complain of Railway Rates—Trade Outlook with Germany.

A sober-minded Scot when asked the "why' of his glumness in a time of marked personal prosperity remarked: "Aye, but thenk o' the national debt." There are those in Parliament and out by whom the amount of the Dominion debt seems to be considered over-gloomily. They have not been able to rid themselves of the idea that temporary declines in revenue should have caused, not merely a careful scrutiny of all new capital commitments, but almost a standing-still in the matter of national development. Now that a gradually rising tide of customs revenue can again be hoped for, possibly their forebodings may be less dark. In the case of a country situated as Canada is, it is not so much the amount of the capital received from overseas investors, as it is the use to which it is put, that should have chief concern.

The preliminary statement of the debt and revenue and expenditure of the Government of Canada for the fiscal year ending with March 31, appears in the Canada Gazette. The figures will be considerably modified when the accounts are adjusted. As it is, they show the expenditure during the twelve months to have exceeded the revenue by $29,959,655, while the debt has been increased by $46,666,595. The figures of the revenue and expenditure are:

Consolidated Fund expenditure	$ 71,535,760
Capital and special expenditure	41,524,420
Total	$113,060,180
Revenue	83,100,525
Excess of expenditure	$ 29,959,655

In 1907-8 the preliminary statement gave the revenues as $94,708,982, and the expenditure as $93,218,926, which showed a seeming excess of revenue of $1,489,976.

The debt statement on March 31, in the two years 1907-8 and 1908-9, may be condensed as follows:

	1907-8.	1908-9
Total gross debt	$391,729,289	$451,653,066
Assets	131,183,562	144,440,744
Total net debt	$260,545,727	$307,212,322

There has been by this an increase in the net debt during the twelve months of $46,666,595.

Important Traffic Hearing.

A recent important hearing by the Railway Commission related to the matter of the lumber tariffs of the Canadian Pacific, Grand Trunk and Canadian Northern Railways. Claiming that these have been increased abnormally, and asking that they be disallowed, the Canadian Lumbermen's Association appeared in force before the Commission. After two days' argument the case was finally put over till May 18.

In response to a question as to a recent press despatch regarding negotiations respecting trade between Canada and Germany, the Finance Minister replied that no negotiations had been entered into with Germany officially.