

1895—increase .....	2,037,000
1896—increase .....	1,143,000
1897—increase .....	4,162,000
1898—increase .....	2,771,000
1899—increase .....	5,236,000

Bearing in mind that it is the increase in bank circulation that is the measure of the activity at the time, the significance of the foregoing figures will be apparent. The volume of our exports for the last three months of the fiscal year has been no less than \$43,990,000, and if such a rate of exports is kept up, and it is quite likely that it will, the aggregate of our exports for the present year will almost certainly be the largest on record.

ABSTRACT OF BANK RETURNS.

30th Sept., 1898. [In thousands.]

Description.	Banks in Quebec.	Banks in Ontario.	Banks in other Prov's.	Total.
Capital paid up .....	35,917	17,334	9,648	62,899
Circulation .....	19,697	13,661	6,712	40,070
Deposits .....	117,701	94,796	35,736	248,233
Loans, Discounts and Investments .....	126,357	100,085	40,703	267,145
Cash, Foreign Balances (Net), and Call Loans .....	53,918	32,176	14,244	100,335
Legals .....	7,778	6,941	3,087	17,806
Specie .....	4,596	3,022	2,061	9,679
Call Loans .....	5,904	12,195	3,281	23,745
Investments .....	8,180	24,443	4,847	39,580

30th Sept., 1899. [In thousands.]

Description.	Banks in Quebec.	Banks in Ontario.	Banks in the other Prov's.	Total.
Capital paid up .....	35,776	18,062	10,345	64,183
Circulation .....	23,034	16,149	7,500	46,682
Deposits .....	129,238	108,262	41,018	278,518
Loans, Discounts and Investments .....	135,836	111,828	46,387	294,031
Cash, Foreign Balances (Net), and Call Loans .....	60,369	37,637	16,244	114,250
Legals .....	8,565	6,008	3,761	18,334
Specie .....	4,026	3,107	2,130	9,263
Call Loans .....	11,176	17,687	4,294	33,157
Investments .....	10,146	19,790	5,393	35,329

Government Savings Banks .....	\$50,766,000
Montreal City and District Savings Bank .....	11,180,000
La Caisse d'Economie, Quebec .....	5,912,000
Loan Companies, 1899, say .....	2,000,000
	<b>\$ 69,818,000</b>
Bank Deposits .....	278,518,000
	<b>\$348,376,000</b>

GOVERNMENT CIRCULATION.

Small .....	\$ 9,990,112
Large .....	16,920,401
Gold held .....	15,733,564 or 58.46%

With such a condition of things it is to be expected that there will be a marked diminution of insolvencies, and this is actually being the case. There has probably never been a time when payments were better met in every department of business than the present, or in which the trade and commerce of the country were on a sounder basis. And it is a most favorable time for the inauguration of a better system of credit in those lines of business, when credit has been abused. That it has been abused there can be no question. The universal opinion of all concerned has been that mercantile credits were too long; and being too long, they were too large in amount; for the one involves the other. And being too large in amount, the amount of loss made in the case of failure, from whatever cause arising, was proportionately heavier. If we could trace to its roots every individual loss made by the banks of Canada, for many years back, we should find, in nine cases out of ten, that it arose from unreasonably long credit. Now, a time of prosperity is the time to initiate

reform. The country could bear it. The individual retailer would not suffer by it. Our manufacturers might well take advantage of a time of prosperity and plentifulness of money to initiate a reform which will be of immense benefit to them. Their losses have been considerable enough in past years to make it important for them to initiate an improved system. It is little use attempting a reform in credit when times are bad and money is scarce. By the very necessity of the case, credit then becomes extended if business is to be carried on at all, but it can be done easily enough at a time like the present, and it ought to be done.

IMPORTS OF AUSTRALIAN WOOL.

We are obliged to Mr. Bennett Rosamond, of the Rosamond Woolen Co., at Almonte, for calling our attention to a regrettable omission from our article of 13th inst. The company in question, Mr. Rosamond assures us, has been a direct importer of Australian wool for a good many years, and was not mentioned in the list of users of Australian wool, although importing nearly as much as all the companies named put together. He takes exception to the view held by various persons we mentioned, that direct importation is not practicable, and adds: "The Rosamond Woolen Co. and others, that I could name, have been direct importers for many years, usually by sailing vessels to Boston, and when speed was necessary, by steamer to Vancouver." It is agreeable to find Mr. Rosamond taking such strong and hopeful ground on the question of Australian wool import, the likelihood of the increase of which is so much disputed by other mill-men and dealers.

ADVANCES AND FLUCTUATIONS IN MERCHANDISE.

To keep well informed as to changes in price of merchandise the world over; to bear in mind the influences which affect production and crops, whether droughts or deluges, strikes or lock-outs, pests or combinations; to know these things and carefully to weigh the probable effect of them on prices the world over is the business of the thorough-going merchant. At least it is a very important part of his business. But things happen sometimes so abruptly, changes come so quickly, so unexpectedly, as to falsify all comparison, and puzzle the most fore-sighted merchant. Nor can he always tell when an advance in price is brought about by skilful underhanded manipulation for speculative purposes. "This is what knocks us all out," as one merchant put it. The present is a time of activity in commerce and expansion in industrial production, and as a rule, prices tend upward. For months past this upward tendency has been very marked in various textiles, certain kinds of wool being higher, and in a number of metals. It has affected timber, and is now affecting leather. In fact, the departments are few in which, whether by reason of labor troubles or what not, prices are not looking upward.

In the metal trades, after a sharp and continued advance in tin, copper and brass goods, followed by a rise in iron and steel, there has come a check, ingot tin having fallen £6 per ton during the week, recovering £2 almost as abruptly. It is said, too, that a fall is likely