

THE CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE.

The Fifty-Second Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of The Canadian Bank of Commerce took place on the 14th instant at the Head Office of the Bank. The report submitted, which has recently been made public, was of an unusually satisfactory character. The President, Sir Edmund Walker, took the Chair, and after the Report had been read he requested the General Manager, Sir John Aird, to address the Shareholders. The General Manager then said :

For the first time since January, 1914, we meet without the sinister shadow of the great war upon us. Difficult as is the outlook before many of the warring nations, and perplexing as are the problems for which a solution has to be found before a satisfactory peace can be concluded, hostilities have ceased and cannot be renewed on the same colossal scale. We rejoice that the sacrifice of life has come to an end and that those members of our staff at the front who have survived the conflict, and others who are near and dear to many of us, can now look forward with assurance to the welcome that awaits them at their home-coming.

Fifty Years' Service.

The past year has been pleasurably marked by the jubilees of both our President and Vice-President in their respective callings. On July 24th our honored President, Sir Edmund Walker, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the day on which he entered the service of this Bank, and the occasion was marked by a dinner tendered to him by the Board of Directors. An account of this has been printed and copies of the pamphlet are available for any of you who may desire them. The addresses of the evening, and the extracts from the many letters and telegrams of congratulation which came from all over the country upon the happy event becoming known, tell more eloquently than any words of mine could do, the esteem in which he is held by all classes of the community.

Rest Equals Capital.

The day was further commemorated by our making it the occasion upon which the five and ten dollar notes of the new issue of this Bank, to which I referred at the last annual meeting, were first paid out. The artistic quality of the designs of these notes, for which Sir Edmund is personally responsible, and his well-known interest in matters of art, seemed to make this a fitting compliment to him. Just a few weeks earlier, on May 19th, Mr. Z. A. Lash, our esteemed Vice-President, and trusted legal adviser during so many years, has celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his call to the Bar of Ontario. The close coincidence of these two events, so unusual in themselves, with the fiftieth anniversary of the Bank itself and with the consummation of our long-deferred wish to see the rest equal to the paid-up capital, was very remarkable; and being followed so closely by the close of the great war, makes the past year a very notable one in the history of the institution.

An Excellent Statement.

We have, therefore, many reasons for a feeling of jubilation on this occasion, and this is added to by the excellence of the statement which we have pleasure in presenting to you. The earnings of the Bank have been good, and the profits have again reached a new high level, amounting to \$2,850,000, or \$212,000 more than a year ago. We confess to a feeling of pride that we have been able to maintain the premier place among Canadian banks in this, to you, important item. Notwithstanding the apparent size of the figures, however, it must not be forgotten that the rate of earnings of this Bank, as of Canadian banks in general, is steadily decreasing, when measured by the services rendered and the extent of the effort put forth by our staff. On the average of our total assets during the year we have earned only 7-10ths of one per cent., as compared with 1.27 per cent. in 1913, the last year prior to the war, and 1.37 per cent. ten years ago.

Increased Services.

The main causes of this, as I have pointed out in previous years, are, on the one hand, the enormous increase in the volume of those banking services which are performed for the public without remuneration, and the fact that banking is one of the few businesses in which charges are sometimes lowered but seldom increased, in spite of the general increase in the cost of everything else; and, on the other, the increases in salaries and wages which are inevitable to enable our men to meet the great increase in the cost of living. It must not be forgotten that salaries and wages constitute the most formidable item of expense in the budget of a bank, and it will readily be understood that the responsibilities and the difficulties of dealing fairly with the members of our staff, in view of the high level of the cost of living, are not small.

Depreciation Unnecessary.

An unusual item in our Profit and Loss account this year, which affords us much gratification, is the recovery of the appropriation of \$1,000,000 set aside in the year 1915 to provide for the depreciation of securities. We then expressed the hope of saving this, or at least a part of it, at the end of the war, and it is a source of satisfaction to find our prediction fulfilled.

On the other side of the account, our disbursements in the way of dividends and bonuses to shareholders, and the amounts required to pay the special war tax on bank-note circulation and for the Officers' Pension Fund, are the same as a year ago. Subscriptions to various funds of a patriotic nature, almost all of them the direct outcome of the war, have called for \$102,550.

A War Memorial.

We have set aside \$100,000 to defray the cost of a memorial we propose to raise in honor of the officers of the Bank who served in the great war, and for the cost of the history of the Bank to which I referred a year ago. The form of the