to their legitimate level it will be found the demand from Canada has ceased to exist. Very little refined sugar is being imported into Canada from abroad. The wholesale grocers do not find it profitable to handle these sugars, and importation is confined to the manufacturers.

Although the past year has not been without its reverses, it has been, on the whole, fairly satisfactory to the refiners. The consumptive demand has been probably little in excess of its ordinary volume, but the course of values in the raw market favored Canadian refiners. This year's statement of the Acadia Sugar Refining Company of Halifax, N.S., bears evidence of better times in sugar circles. The company, which, since the reorganization several years ago, has earned little or nothing for the shareholders, shows net profits $149,249, and after covering last year's deficit of $89,436 has $44,813 left, which is devoted to paying a three per cent. dividend to the holders of preferred shares, carrying forward the balance, $3,933, to profit and loss. The natural course of market values is not alone responsible for this showing. Careful management has contributed to bringing it about.

## HOMESTEAD LOAN AND SAVINGS SOCIETY.

"Each of these annual reports was a financial ignis fatuus put forth by the officers and auditors to lure the trusting public into the quagmire of insolvency which has swamped the society."

Such are the words used to describe the annual reports of the Homestead Loan & Savings Company, of Hamilton, a terminating building society to which we referred last week. They are the words of Mr. Hodgins, the Master in Ordinary of the court to which was confided the duty of allotting the claims of shareholders. The Master finds that there was fraud in the conduct of the company's affairs; that it has been insolvent since 1892; and he refuses to grant shareholders of either class (there are three classes) any priority of claim, declaring that they all may only share in the surplus assets, after payment of the society's debts and liabilities, in proportion to the amounts they paid in.

We estimated last week that the amount of realized assets held by Mr. Scott, the assignee, would pay something like 20 cents on the dollar to the society's creditors. But Mr. Scott stated in court on Saturday last that the creditors might look to receive not more than 15 cents. The $120,000 realty assets of the concern have dwindled to something like $25,000.

After describing the action of the society's secretary in declaring certain shares matured to be "usurping power," and after declaring that both secretary and treasurer had exceeded their powers in treating their shareholder's payment as a deposit, the court finds that the payment of interest at 6% to these shareholders was unauthorized and therefore not binding upon the society. Does this mean that it can be recovered from those who wrongfully received it? And it is added that the payment of 105 or 108 deposits of one dollar each *does not* realize the amount or value of the prescribed share of $200, as was assumed it would do.

Here is a pronouncement from the High Court of Justice quite in line with what this journal has been for years asserting with relation to building societies of the terminating sort. Namely, that they promise more than they can make good. Suppose that A joined this society in 1884, B in 1890 and C in 1894, and all three made payments as required. It now appears that the fresh contributions of B and C in later years have been made use of to pay six per cent. interest periodically to A and to help to keep up A's shares to the "book value" stipulated for when he joined.

It would be unjust to found a general criticism of building and loan associations of a terminating sort on the outcome of the Hamilton Homestead company, because there was malfeasance by the manager of this particular concern; and because, besides, they are not all on a like basis. But the methods of auditing of some of them bear a painful resemblance to what has been so severely criticized by the court in this case. Mr. Hodgins finds the auditors' certificates "false and fraudulent." How many more volunteer auditors of similar societies are signing certificates which are, whether knowingly or not, no better than these?

## LOOK AFTER YOUR STOCK.

It does not do for a storekeeper to hold on to certain goods in his stock, year after year, because he cannot get the price for them that he expected. All goods cannot be sold at a profit; some must be sold at a loss. And it is a mistake to keep such goods until they are rusty or dried up or fly-blown or faded, for they are getting no better very steadily and are eating up interest. When a thing is out of favor or unsalable it had better be got rid of even if it do not bring cost.

In a recent article on the subject of cleaning-up and stock-taking in country stores the New England Grocer takes strong ground in favor of the nimble sixpence rather than the slow shilling. That journal in describing the old-time country store says that the odds and ends were left to accumulate because no one called for them or was willing to pay a profit on the first cost. Dust gathered on ancient fabrics, rust on neglected hardware, and the hard-working proprietor never knew where he was at. "We have known stores where the inventory, or 'taking account of stock," as then expressed, was never gone through with. The proprietors seemed to avoid as far as possible all thoughts of those old, unsalable goods they were sorry to possess, and so kicked them under the counter or put them out in the back room. We well remember the effect of a special stock-taking in a New England general store, many years ago, and what we found in making out the lists. There were many articles which had lain for years, until the interest on their cost had amounted to quite a charge against them. Many of these goods, in fact most of them, might have been sold for cash long ago, by exposing them for sale at cost or a slight loss. The money could have been turned many times since, and all the while the stuff was getting more out-of-date and unsalable."

It would be well for merchants to avoid the losses inevitable upon such a course by making special efforts to clear out old stock. They would thereby not only get rid of an incubus, but they would make their stocks more up-to-date and attractive.

## AMALGAMATION OF LIFE COMPANIES.

A very ample and circumstantial story of purchases of life assurance stocks and probable consolidations of life insurance companies was launched in one of the Toronto morning dailies of Nov. 15th. There was some foundation for the story, because within the preceding week Mr. George Gooderham, a large proprietor of the Manufacturer's Life, had bought 350 out of the 600 paid-up shares of The Temperance and General Life and had paid $132,000 for them, as an investment. But the entertaining recital of "insurance consolidation" which one daily set forth was, we are assured by both Mr. Gooderham, of the Manufacturers Life, and Mr. Cox, of the Imperial Life, a pure in-