

**Novel Pension Scheme.**

A firm of tea dealers in Louth, Lincolnshire, which is a sleepy, old town, have been granting pensions to widows at the rate of \$1.25 to \$2.50 per week, if a quarter of, or half a pound of tea has been purchased weekly for twelve months. A certificate of the husbands' good health must have been held by the tea dealers five weeks before his death. The scheme took so well that 1,498 annuitants, costing \$150,000 per annum, were on the pension roll. The pensioners must have been residents of other places where the firm has branch stores, as Louth cannot have a tenth of that number of widows. For conducting this class of business, the British Board of Trade brought an action against the firm, as the Act requires the deposit of \$100,000 by any firm or company doing an annuity business. The defendants were fined \$25, and \$35 costs. The case will be carried to a higher court. The mixing up of life assurance business with that of a retail tea dealer is a custom against which the public might well be protected. These schemes are continually being started, they run on for a time, until claims come in to a disagreeable extent, then they are dropped. The schemer has then pocketed all the receipts without any outlays incident to life assurance business. The Louth scheme is a case of apparent benevolence, being utilized as an advertisement.

**A 20th Century Prophecy.** M. de Blowitz is, and has for a generation been, the most distinguished of foreign correspondents connected with English journals. He represents "The Times" at Paris, and has repeatedly created a sensation by sending news ahead of all other agencies. He has assumed the role of a prophet regarding the new century. One of his forecasts will amaze those who imagine that democracy has claimed France as a permanent seat of power. M. de Blowitz foresees another French Revolution akin in purpose to that at the close of the eighteenth century. France, he says, is becoming more and more burdened by a privileged class who act like parasites, sucking out the life of the nation. To throw off this incubus, will, he thinks, involve a national convulsion that will shake France to her centre; throwing society, trade, government and order into confusion. If this eminent writer judges truly as to the future of France, Canada will feel less inclined than ever to develop more intimate associations with that country. M. de Blowitz anticipates the United States having severe conflicts with other powers, arising out of the imperialistic policy of the Republic. Altogether, the journalistic prophet is somewhat of a Cassandra, his forecasts are tinged with blood, and, in the twentieth century, he thinks, the doors of the temple of Janus will be very wide open.

**Canadian Progress.**

The following data gives a striking picture of the progress of Canada since the Provinces were united:—

The population, which, at the taking of the census of 1871 was about 3,500,000, is now supposed to be between 5,000,000 and 6,000,000. In 1868 the revenue amounted to \$13,687,928, and the expenditure to \$13,486,092; in 1899 the income reached \$46,741,250, and the expenditure \$41,903,501. In 1868, 3,638 post-offices were open; in 1899, there were 9,430. In 1868 the number of letters that passed through the post-office was estimated at 18,100,000; in 1899 it was 150,375,000. In 1868 the value of imports was \$73,459,644, and of exports \$57,567,888; in 1899 the value of imports was \$162,764,308, and of exports \$158,896,905, of which amount \$137,360,792 reproduced products of Canada. In 1868 there were 2,269 miles of railway in operation, and in 1899 17,250. In 1868 the paid-up capital of Canadian chartered banks amounted to \$30,289,048, and the assets to \$77,872,257; in 1899 the paid-up capital amounted to over \$63,000,000, and the assets to \$408,936,411, as against \$316,330,478 representing liabilities. In 1868 the balance to the credit of depositors in Post Office Savings Banks amounted to \$204,558; at the end of June, 1899, it was \$34,771,605. Other savings institutions show a proportionate increase.

**A Government Horse Ranch.** The great demand for Canadian bred horses, which is likely to continue and increase, has caused the suggestion to be made, that the Government of Canada go into the horse breeding business on a wholesale scale, by establishing a ranch, or haras for raising thoroughbred stock. The demand is so great for cavalry mounts, and riding horses for private owners far exceeds the present supply. Foreign governments, as well as the Imperial authorities, are constantly on the lookout for suitable horses in this country. There is said to be no fear of this enterprise interfering with that of our private horse breeders. This seems an eccentric proposal, but there is nothing more strange in a government raising horses than in one manufacturing guns, as horse-breeding is a trade like gun-making. We doubt whether the scheme as proposed will materialize, but the discussion will draw attention to there being an opening for capital in the horse-breeding business, which would bring good returns if conducted properly.

SAMPLES OF SEED GRAIN are to be distributed under instruction of the Minister of Agriculture, applications for which should be addressed to the Director of Experimental Farms, Ottawa, before 1st March next. Samples of potatoes for seed will be distributed later. The Minister of Agriculture desires it to be known also, that, by application to the Experimental Farm, any sample of grain or seeds may be tested to ascertain its fitness to be used as seed.