

is needed in the locality; and if so, whether the parties applying for it are responsible and fit to be entrusted with the privileges conferred by a charter. This view is most reasonable. The opposite is entirely untenable.

The whole subject of the banking of Canada was never so thoroughly discussed as when the present Act was framed in 1871. Every contingency and circumstance that could be thought of, both present and future, was then passed under review. What the Act omitted to say is, therefore, just as important to be noticed as what it did say. It did not give a general power to all and sundry persons to found banks on complying with certain formalities. It did compel them to come before Parliament in each individual case. It would have been perfectly easy to enact the former. But it did not. If it had intended that there should be simply an enquiry as to whether certain formalities had been observed, that object could have been obtained by referring the matter to government officials. But the very fact of insisting that persons must come to Parliament and pass through the ordeal of an examination by a large committee implies that something more is to be done than merely seeing whether formalities are complied with. We say then, distinctly, that it is the duty of the Banking Committee of Parliament to go deeper than they have been doing for some time past. They are undoubtedly bound to satisfy themselves at least on the two points mentioned; namely, whenever a charter is applied for, to enquire: is such a bank wanted in the country and in the locality; and, if such a bank is wanted, are the men who are applying for a charter the proper people to be entrusted with it?

We press this matter on the attention of members and trust that its importance will secure the attention it deserves.

ABSTRACT OF BANK RETURNS.

31ST MARCH, 1885. [In thousands.]

Description.	Banks in Quebec.	Banks in Ontario.	Banks in other Prov's.	Total.
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital paid up..	36,305	18,976	6,383	61,664
Circulation	16,198	10,214	3,379	29,791
Deposits	51,111	37,567	10,073	98,751
Loans & Discounts	89,083	62,454	16,319	167,856
Cash and Foreign balances (Net)...	16,504	7,908	3,151	27,563

31ST MARCH, 1886. [In thousands.]

Description.	Banks in Quebec.	Banks in Ontario.	Banks in other Prov's.	Total.
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital paid up..	35,947	17,883	8,388	62,218
Circulation	15,571	10,397	3,991	29,959
Deposits	56,279	42,797	11,316	110,392
Loans & Discounts	84,011	64,484	17,746	166,241
Cash and Foreign balances (Net)...	22,831	8,275	3,783	34,889

H.—The legal firm you name is a respectable one. We question, however, if they or any other could collect such a debt as you describe. The high-strung party referred to is "an idealist" in the sense in which the Boston wit used the term. The idealists are "ever striving after the ineffable, but they never pay cash."

INSURANCE ON RETAIL STOCKS.

The necessity of some organized means to secure what we referred to last week as a desirable object, that is, that retail dealers' stocks should be covered by insurance, has been strongly impressed upon prominent business men. Hamilton and Toronto merchants and bankers are at one in the desire that an effort be made by the wholesale trade generally to bring about a more equitable state of things than at present exists.

A meeting of the council of the Toronto Board of Trade, to which the representatives of all the fire insurance companies were invited, was held in this city on Monday last, to discuss the matter in question. A full representation of the council was present. Messrs. Sanford and Roach, members of the Hamilton Board of Trade, Mr. W. C. Matthews, representing Dun, Wiman & Co.'s Mercantile Agency, and Mr. J. Priestman, Bradstreet's Mercantile agency, were also present. The insurance companies were represented by the following gentlemen: Messrs. S. C. Duncan-Clark, Wm. Henderson, Hugh Scott, S. F. Magurn, Alex. Dixon, R. Wickens, Alf. W. Smith, E. P. Pearson, Geo. B. McMurrich, R. N. Gooch, and R. McLean. Mr. Wm. Ince, vice-president, occupied the chair. The president, Mr. Darling, who was unable to remain, made a short address cordially approving of the object of the meeting, which was to provide means by which retail merchants could be induced to keep up an insurance on goods to the extent of 75 per cent. of their value. After Mr. Ince had expressed his entire approval of the object sought he called on Mr. Sanford, of Hamilton, who was the originator of the present movement, to address the meeting.

Mr. Sanford said that he was strongly impressed with the necessity of something being done to protect the interests of wholesale dealers by devising some plan by which the retail trade could be induced to maintain a reasonable amount of insurance on their stocks of merchandise. He had lost, during the past year, from the neglect of his customers to keep up an adequate amount of insurance, a sum sufficient to pay a premium on \$300,000. He thought if the insurance companies would give their aid in this matter by giving information to the mercantile agencies as to the amount of insurance held by them on retail stocks throughout the Province. The wholesale men would then obtain reliable data regarding persons who failed to keep properly insured, and a remedy could be applied that would result in a large increase in the aggregate amount of insurance carried on retail stocks, and thus the insurance companies would be benefitted for the extra trouble the giving of such information would entail upon them.

The meeting was further addressed by Messrs. Elliot, Christie, Matthews, Blain, Duncan-Clark, Smith, of Toronto, Roach, of Hamilton, Henderson, Scott, Magurn, Wood and others. A committee was appointed from the council of the Board of Trade to confer with a committee of the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association, and the Boards of Trade of Hamilton and

other places, namely: Messrs. Ince, Matthews, Blain, Christie, Chapman and Wilkie. The representatives of the Mercantile agencies were requested to formulate a scheme by which the desired information could be obtained. This, we understand they are willing to attempt if the insurance companies will do what has been urged upon them. It was proposed that the committee meet as soon as possible.

We would suggest members of this committee not to overlook what is essential equally with adequate insurance, and that is to discover whether every retail merchant keeps proper books of account in a safe place. If a merchandise account be properly kept, the daily cash sales duly entered—and stock taken at least once a year and entered in the books in detail, there will be no difficulty in determining the amount of any loss that may occur through fire. Without this a settlement of any loss is a mere matter of guess and is never satisfactory to either party.

THE SETTLEMENT OF FIRE LOSSES.

A correspondent writes to us from a neighbouring town the following letter, and from its importance we give it in full:

"Can you tell us which man is in the best position in case of fire, the man who locks his door and allows the goods to take their chance, or the man who, with assistance, clears the goods out on the street with the chance of having any amount stolen? At the last fire that occurred here, Mr. W., whose goods were badly burnt and damaged, got a fair settlement, while Mr. H., next door, carried everything out, suffering considerable damage in the simple removal—boxes broken, &c., and some stolen, had to accept \$40 in full of his claim.

What would his position have been if he had locked his door and allowed his goods to be damaged by the water that came through the ceiling of his store, taking off nearly all the plaster? We ask for general information, for although the policies have a clause stating that a man shall use his best endeavor to save property, still the companies seem to ignore claims for removal."

Our answer to the first question is, that the man who endeavors to save as much of his goods as possible from a fire, is infinitely better off, than the "man who locks his door and allows the goods to take their chance" of either being burned or saturated with water. The latter having failed to comply, as far as he is able, with that condition of his policy, which requires him "to use his best endeavour to save the property insured," is in danger of forfeiting his right to indemnification for a loss, which, by proper and necessary care on his part, could and should have been prevented.

To make it plain that it is not only the duty, but also the interest of the assured, to use his best endeavours to save his property from being destroyed by fire or damaged by water, let us suppose that a person has a stock of say \$6,000 value, on which he has an insurance of \$4,000, and that a fire takes place in his own building, or that it breaks out in the one adjoining and is likely to extend to his. Now, if he locks his door and the whole stock is destroyed, he loses \$2,000 and the insurance company loses \$4,000. If, on the other hand, he goes to work, like an honest man, to save as much of the stock as he can, with all the help he can obtain, and manages to carry out say \$2,000 worth, are not