

days this month, a succession of the most severe storms experienced during the past thirty years, and Halifax has been more or less cut off from the rest of the province. The railways have been nearly all tied up. The recently opened Halifax and South Western, we are told, has had a train stalled in the snow at Middleton since February 11th, and last week announced that all trains were suspended for the present. The Midland Railway of that province has not run a train since February 7th, so say our Halifax advices of 20th instant. The Dominion Atlantic has been unable to get trains through for several days at a stretch. The Intercolonial has not been much better off than the others, except through the advantage gained by superior equipment and snow-fighting facilities. Its trouble was worst between Truro and Sydney, but nearly all the branch roads are closed indefinitely. Travellers are snowed up all over the Eastern Provinces, and the majority of firms do not know of the whereabouts of their travelling men. No attempt is being made to send out goods, says our Halifax correspondent. "Supplies of coal are very low in many places, and the schools have had to be closed. There is even a scarcity of provisions, and flour has sold in some places as high as nine and ten dollars a barrel."

If it were not that there is the month of March still to come, we might surmise that these violent storms were the last effort of an expiring winter. But we have had, since November, a sufficient variety of weather to make one wary of predicting any sudden moderating of temperature.

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#### THE CONDITION OF JAPAN.

Some thirty pages in English out of the hundred of the "Industrial Orient" for January 14th, are devoted to discussion of the social and commercial features of Japan, statistics of her finance and trade, and articles upon the war. A resumé of the financial situation of that country is given by the president of the Bank of Japan, Mr. Matsuo, showing that bank deposits are increasing, that more capital is going into railway construction, that convertible notes and subsidiary coin are being sent in increasing millions to Korea and Manchuria. But we had better give Mr. Matsuo's own words:—

It is a subject of congratulation that while the nation is providing ample war funds business has nevertheless progressed. From the point of view of bank deposits the returns show that whereas the total lodged in the banks of the six cities having clearing houses namely, Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, Nagoya and Yokohama, was 333 millions of yen last January, it had increased to 351 millions in October. Further, while the capital of railway companies and others was 910 million yen in January, it grew to 929 millions in October, an increase due to the electric railways, the Keiju Railway, the Hakodate-Otaru Railway, the Maesuru-Osaka Railway and the Sanyo Railway, all of which, despite the pressure of the war, made steady progress. As for convertible notes, there were 214 millions circulating in January, and there are now 240 millions. But included in the latter amount are 20 millions sent direct by the Bank of Japan to Manchuria and Korea, so that the actual increase at home is only 6 millions. Moreover, a considerable quantity of subsidiary coins have also gone to these places from Japan, and if that be taken into account the issue of convertible notes is probably smaller in effect than it was before the war began.

Compared with the previous fiscal year, the foreign trade of Japan shows an increase in 1904 of 24,990,000 yen (about \$12,500,000), in exports, and 38,900,000 yen in imports. This growth of imports is not, however, on account of goods for the nation's ordinary use; it is due directly or indirectly to inevitable purchases connected with the war. The increase in exports, on the other hand, proves that although so many of the country's young men have gone abroad, its industrial power has not been impaired. With regard to war expenditures, the Vice-Minister of Finance has just told you that we have paid out over 400 millions. Of that total 280 millions have been obtained by floating a domestic loan, the paid-up instalments of which amounted at the latest date to 130 millions. There is no indication that the subscription of this sum has produced influence in other directions. Bank deposits, on the contrary, have increased. Note issues have not grown. From what source, then, has the money been obtained? Investigation is needed before answering that question. Mr. Sonoda, a few minutes ago, suggested the query, what is the net annual income of the Japanese people? He thought that if a part of that income were devoted to meeting war outlays, the war might be continued for several years without inconvenience. We have no statistics now to show what the income is, but seeing that the payment of 130 million yen has not produced any sensible effect, one is tempted to think that the money may have been defrayed from the income. Or have the people exercised proportionate economies? Apparently one source or the other, or both perhaps, have been drawn upon. At all events no consequent deficiency is perceptible elsewhere.

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#### CANADA LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The year 1904 closes a quinquennial period for this company, and a comparison with previous quinquennial periods shows how great has been its progress, the income of the year just past approaching four millions, and the total assurance in force at 31st December exceeding one hundred millions of dollars. The following table shows leading figures at the close of different years:

| Year.      | Total<br>Income. | Total<br>Assets. | Total<br>Assurances<br>in force. |
|------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1885 ..... | \$1,336,680 58   | \$ 7,044,940 20  | \$34,890,225 71                  |
| 1890 ..... | 2,098,205 10     | 11,032,440 09    | 54,086,801 26                    |
| 1895 ..... | 2,737,470 74     | 16,324,476 93    | 70,541,395 67                    |
| 1900 ..... | 3,055,905 33     | 22,648,204 08    | 81,039,083 00                    |
| 1904 ..... | 4,350,857 35     | 29,074,599 00    | 101,805,944 00                   |

The company has completed the change to 3½ and 3 per cent interest basis for reserves, which is not only a more exacting one than the Government requires, but a stronger basis than other Canadian life companies have as yet adopted. This, while it places the Canada Life in an excellent position looking forward to any exigencies of the future, has absorbed a good deal of the surplus profit which some policy-holders naturally expected would go to them. But the fact is that money is nowhere earning the rates of interest it used to do, and this, along with the fact that by the altered standard a company is strengthened, ought to solace those who long, and must long in vain, for such profits as 1885 used to bring forth. The president's address reminded his hearers that "in addition to the \$500,000 reserved from the surplus of the previous quinquennium we have, during the five-year period just ended, in order to complete the change to our present valuation basis, transferred from the surplus to the reserves the large sum of \$725,000; and when it is borne in mind that during the same