

to pay their liabilities in time, but banks that have their money locked up in one form or other in real estate are only sowing the seeds of embarrassment for themselves and their customers. Whether any further failures will take place will depend on the degree of confidence felt in the institutions that remain. The circumstances, to a very large extent, are entirely different to those prevailing amongst the banks of Canada.

QUEBEC FINANCES.

The Treasurer of the Province of Quebec, Hon. J. S. Hall, has gone to Europe to make arrangements in connection with the finances of that Province. The loan of four million dollars negotiated by the Mercier Government in Paris in 1891, which expires in the month of July next, has to be renewed, but besides this four millions more requires to be borrowed. Mr. Hall tells the *Star* that this new \$4,000,000 loan is necessary in order to meet deficits of the Mercier regime, which proved so troublous and costly a period for Quebec; but that when it is obtained—and he anticipates no difficulty in obtaining it—he will be able to put the finances of the Province on a sound basis.

A matter which appears to be causing trouble at present is, that some \$1,400,000 of railway subsidies granted by the Province is due, and the wherewithal to pay them is lacking. Then there is about the same amount in railway bonds which were deposited with the Mercier Government as security. These bonds were negotiated during the previous Government's reign; of course the Province is liable for them. It is the intention of Mr. Hall to arrange for the assumption of these bonds by some financial concern, the Province paying the interest. It is satisfactory to know that the practice of granting railway subsidies will be discontinued, for it will save Quebec about one million dollars annually.

Our readers know that bitter protest has been made from time to time by different classes of citizens in Montreal, notably retail merchants, to the new provincial taxes. Doubtless the imposition of these taxes was unpleasant to every one concerned. However, the Treasurer has now the satisfaction of announcing that the revenue has been swelled to the extent of some six hundred thousand dollars annually by them. The succession tax yielded \$40,000; the direct tax, \$20,000; the transfer of property impost about \$222,000, and the business tax, say \$250,000. The obligations which confronted the new government having been incurred by lavish legislators, the money to meet them had to be raised. No tax can be expected to be welcome, and Mr. Hall's taxes were only less welcome than what had existed before.

MARITIME COMMERCE.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

The writers who have dedicated their literary efforts to an exposition of the resources of this fertile island are not numerous, but their books are well written, especially that by Bagster, whose succinct style, interspersed with a quaint criticism

that would perhaps not suit these later days, yet possesses the merit of care and a graphic arrangement that is especially acceptable to the hurried man of business.

This writer states that Prince Edward Island was first ushered into the known world's surface on St. John's Day, A.D. 1497. For 150 years, he tells us, the island hardly knew its own name, and for a further period of 100 years the emigration was insignificant; it advanced slowly from ninety to three or four thousand inhabitants, and in 1770 the population was 150 families. By 1860, according to this writer, it contained 100,000 souls.

From 1797 to 1861 Prince Edward Island "struggled through vicissitudes of management and mismanagement." Sorrows fell upon this agricultural Canaan; it seems to be the fate of some countries to be especially burdened with difficulties of some sort while possessing everything that man needs for health and comfort. The difficulties were not self-imposed. They were a part of the colonial system as it was then understood as best for the preservation of that system. In 1798 the name of the island was changed from that of St. John to Prince Edward, and from this date its history becomes interesting. The island was as good an example of the Crown colony as history furnishes us with, and from this date, 1808, the people, through their representatives, set about making such laws for governing the inhabitants as were deemed necessary. They raised the sum of £1,600 as a revenue to meet the expenses of government, and in 1825 Lt. Governor Ready, whose name appears to have fitted the occasion, gave some attention to education and the encouragement of the fisheries. Laws of a rigid nature were passed against the use of intoxicating liquors, and measures were enacted to regulate commerce and the monetary institutions of the island.

In a commercial review it is perhaps not the place to recite these grievances, which were more or less of a political character, and which were the outcome of a system that certainly should not have existed in the form which it assumed, but which, as it has already been declared, existed because it was considered essential to the successful colonization of the country. These grievances more or less disappeared as the unfairness of the land system came to be recognized, even by the people of the Mother Country, and modifications were made in the interests of both parties.

A single incident will be sufficient to show the loyal character of the people who inhabited the Island. This was a procession of those who having grievances, marched into Charlottetown with the high sheriff at their head, who carried the British flag, as if in stately defiance of what was considered an outrage against its dignity and its protective influence. The flag was a disclaimer of any revolutionary intent on the part of the processionists.

In December, 1763, according to Campbell, the Earl of Egmont, then the first Lord of the Admiralty, presented an elaborate memorial to the king, praying for a grant of the whole Island of Saint John, to hold the same for the Crown forever, ac-

cording to a tenure described in the said memorial. On the supposition that the Island contained two millions of acres, for it had not then been surveyed, he proposed that the whole should be divided into fifty parts of equal extent, to be designated hundreds, as in England, or baronies, as in Ireland; forty of these to be granted to as many men, who should be styled lords of hundreds, and each of whom should pay to the earl, as Lord Paramount, sixty pounds sterling yearly, on the property of the earl, to whom, with his family of nine children, ten hundreds and a strong castle were to be allotted.

The report pointed to the grant made to the Lord Proprietor of Carolina as a striking sample of the inexpediency of such a semi-feudal plan of settlement, little progress having been made in the execution of it, till the property being re-invested in the Crown, a new foundation was laid which resulted in prosperity and advancement. The report ended with the following words:

"We have not thought proper to take the opinion of your Majesty's servant in the law upon this question, whether your Majesty can legally make the grant desired by the Earl of Egmont, because we cannot think it expedient either in a political or commercial light for your Majesty to comply with his Lordship's proposal. And as your Majesty has been pleased to annex the Island of St. John to your Province of Nova Scotia, we humbly recommend the settling it upon the plan, and under the regulations approved of by your Majesty for the settlement of that Province in general."

Although the Government had resolutely opposed the scheme of settlement proposed by Lord Egmont, yet it was disposed to divide the Island among persons who had claims on the ground of military or other public services, and it was accordingly determined, in order to prevent disputes, to make the various allotments by ballot. The Board of Trade and Plantations accordingly prepared certain conditions under which the various grants were to be made. On twenty-six specified lots or townships a quit rent of six shillings on every hundred acres was reserved, on twenty-nine lots four shillings, and on eleven lots two shillings, payable annually on one-half of the grant at the expiration of six years, and on the whole at the expiration of ten years after date of the grants. A reservation of such parts of each lot as might afterwards be found necessary for fortifications or public purposes, and of a hundred acres for a church and glebe, and of fifty acres for a schoolmaster, was made, 300 feet from high water mark being reserved for the purpose of a free fishery.

FIRE UNDERWRITERS.

A good deal of dissatisfaction, and sometimes indignation, which many people are apt to consider righteous until they reflect upon the matter, has recently been displayed by those who pay insurance premiums, because of what they term the extortion of the fire insurance companies, "who are," they say, "forever wanting to raise rates and squeeze the merchant." Hence it comes that in addition to abusing the companies people threaten to organize mutual insurance organizations—even municipal ones, as we have seen in Fredericton the other day—and will appeal to legisla-