

but with large capital, no bank in Australia has attained the magnitude of our own Bank of Montreal. The four banks with largest capital in Australia are as follows:—

	Capital.	Rest & surplus profit.
Bank of Australia ...	\$5,800,000	\$1,600,000
B'k of New S. Wales	4,860,000	2,015,000
London Chartered		
Bank of Australia	4,860,000	820,000
Union B. of Australia	6,070,000	2,350,000

In Canada the four largest are the following:—

Bank of Montreal ...	\$11,900,000	\$5,600,000
Merchants' Bank ...	7,220,000	2,300,000
Ca. B'k of Commerce	6,000,000	2,040,000
B'k of British N. A.	4,860,000	1,200,000

The accumulation of a large "Rest" or reserve, after writing off all bad debts, has, for some years, been a cardinal point in Canadian banking, and the policy cannot be too highly commended in view of the immense complications of our banking system, and the wide-spread operations of some of our banks, not in Canada only, but in the great centres of the United States.

#### THE CANADA AGRICULTURAL INSURANCE COMPANY.

A stock company with this name, chartered by the Dominion Parliament in 1872, has been organized in Montreal for the insurance of isolated risks and farm property generally. We are informed that about \$500,000 of capital has been subscribed and 10 per cent. paid in, and that a license has been issued by the Minister of Finance. This Company has secured an extended business from the outset by taking over the Canadian risks of the Agricultural of Watertown, which has withdrawn from the Dominion. We have seen a list of the shareholders, which is all that could be desired, the stock being placed in respectable hands and well distributed. Mr. E. H. Goff, the manager, has shown great energy in promoting this undertaking, and, from his long experience in the business, may fairly expect to achieve success. The fact that he has now the support and assistance of a strong local interest, which was against him while he acted for foreign companies, ought to enable him to raise the "Canada" to a foremost place among the companies of its class in the Dominion.

**A COSTLY ROAD.**—Because the Dawson road from Fort Garry to Fort William cost \$1,294,888, instead of \$250,000 as first estimated; and because Mr. Cunningham, M.P. of Manitoba charged that there were gross frauds perpetrated, in this connection, a committee of Parliament has sat upon

the question. It would seem natural to enquire why a public work should or did cost five times as much as estimated; and reasonable to conclude that there must be either a degree of incompetency evinced in making the estimates, or of extravagance in making the expenditure which ought to entitle somebody to suffer public vengeance. Many a Grand Vizier felt the fatal bow-string draw for a less cause. The investigation shows that Mr. Dawson, the Hudson's Bay Company, various contractors and the Department of Public Works are all mixed up in the affair. "Hon. Jos. McKay, superintendent, and "Wm. Lonsdale, assistant," supervised the job in fine style. "They kept" says the committee's report, "no papers or books, "and the payments were principally made "by orders for lump sums on the Hudson's "Bay Company; no proper payments being "made out or proper vouchers taken for "workmen for payments made to them." If frauds had been committed, this is precisely the state of things we would have expected to find. It is certain that the Hudson's Bay people made a "good thing" out of the job, others ditto; but, as we have said, the responsibility has been so skillfully divided up that there is no alternative left the great suffering, sweating public but to pay and grumble.

**BANK OF COMMERCE.**—A decline in the price of this stock is due to an impression industriously circulated that a further and large issue of new stock will be announced at the annual meeting. It is assumed that the management have adopted a fixed policy of continued issues of new capital from year to year, till the aggregate becomes equal to that of the Merchants' or even that of the Montreal Bank. This, we have good reason to know, is not the case. Nor is there any intention of greatly increasing the present capital either now or at a future time. If a new issue be made, it will be a final one, and will not be large in amount when compared with the present capital and annual transactions of the Bank; and we think that the shareholders may safely assume that the rate of premium will not exceed, if it equals, that charged on former issues.

**INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF LAKE UNDERWRITERS.**—A large committee of the National (U. S.) Board of Lake Underwriters had a somewhat protracted session in this city with gentlemen representing Canadian Marine Companies and British Companies represented here, with the object of agreeing upon a basis of organization for the Interna-

tional Board of Lake Underwriters. This latter body will be composed of representatives both of United States and Canada companies. We believe the work on hand has been, after a good deal of patient deliberation, nearly completed; and the prospect is therefore that harmony of action as to rates, &c., will be secured. Of this we shall know more by next week.

—The able speech of Mr. R. B. Angus, General Manager of the Bank of Montreal, on the occasion of the annual meeting, is very favourably commented upon in banking and business circles. We shall next week have to devote some attention to this speech and to the facts brought out in the reports of various banks, some of which we are compelled to hold over till another issue.

#### BILLS AND NOTES—CHANGES IN THE LAW.

The Act to amend the law as to bills and notes, which comes into operation on the first of August next, introduces some important changes. We reprint it elsewhere from a copy received from the Department of Justice, as finally passed. The old law was that notice of the dishonor of a bill or note should be sent to the residence or place of business of the party for whom it was designed, and when the notice was transmitted by post it was necessary to show that the letter was so directed as to reach the party in due course of post. Under the new Act it is sufficient to address the notice of dishonor in due time to the party entitled thereto "at the place at which such bill or note is dated." If the party entitled to notice has under his signature on the bill or note designated another place to which the notice may be sent, then it will be sufficient to send it to the place designated. The new Act does away with the necessity of giving notice of dishonor at the place of business or residence of the party entitled, unless the note or bill is dated at such place. If the note or bill is not dated at the place of residence or business of the party entitled to notice, under the new law the notice must be sent to the place where the note is dated. The new law shortly stated amounts to this: the place of the date of the note irrespective of residence of the party is the place to which notice must be sent, but a party entitled to notice may, under his signature on the note, specify any place he chooses, irrespective of his residence or the place where the note is dated, and then notice must be sent to the place so specified.

The Act also makes an important alteration in regard to stamping notes. The old law, as explained in the MONETARY TIMES, was that a subsequent party to the note might affix the proper stamps or pay double duty if the note was not sufficiently stamped in the first place; but it was doubtful on the authorities whether