

commendable caution displayed by the management last year, the remaining earnings of the year have been added to the undivided profits of the previous twelve months, the present balance of Profit and Loss Account being \$87,948.95.

The statement under review displays remarkable strength in the amount of immediately available assets, the amount thereof being nearly 3 1-2 millions of dollars. The overdue debts, and the item of "real estate other than bank premises," show a reduction of \$20,000 during the twelve months. The deposits are about equal in amount to the figures of the 1898 statement, but the notes and bills discounted have increased nearly \$200,000, probably owing to the "activity in business," and the consequent demand for money referred to in the report of the directors.

Altogether, the business of the Quebec Bank for the year recently closed must have proved satisfactory to Mr. Thomas McDougall, the General Manager. The operations of the past twelve months have enabled him to pay six per cent. to the shareholders, and to continue the work of strengthening this old institution by adding very materially to its reserve fund.

THE LANCASHIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

The forty-seventh annual meeting of the Lancashire Insurance Company was held at Manchester, on the 19th ultimo. In common with several other leading companies, the Lancashire found fire underwriting during 1898 somewhat unsatisfactory, when compared with the prosperous years of the past. But even if the results of the twelve months' business in this important department were not, to quote from the address of the Chairman of the Board of Directors, "what we would desire" for such an excellent company, it is pleasing to note he is philosophical enough to find some comfort in sharing the experience of the majority of companies whose figures have been reported, and that he is able to announce, even of the fire department of the Lancashire, "we have made a profit." After referring to the disturbed conditions existing in New York which precluded all likelihood of profit from fire underwriting in that city for quite a long period, the chairman adds:—

"I have gone into these details in order that you may not for a moment suppose that our unfavourable experience is in any way owing to the quality of our business having deteriorated; we have not relaxed any of the care which for some years has guided the selection of our risks; ours is a good business and, with a return to normal conditions, it will, we feel sure, again become profitable. About two months ago the New York Tariff Association was re-organized, and upon such lines as give every hope that it will continue upon a firmer and more satisfactory basis than ever before, and that the restoration of harmony in New

York will conduce to an improved state of things in other centres where demoralisation was threatened."

In reviewing the figures of the fire department, we find the premiums for 1898 amounted to \$3,528,940, an increase of some \$25,000 over the preceding twelve months. The losses were \$2,226,165, and the expenses and commissions \$1,272,505, leaving a balance of \$30,270.

It is indeed cheering to note that, even during the past year, the Lancashire has been able to add to its reserve funds. In 1897, the Reserves amounted to \$1,606,160 and for last year the figures are \$1,680,450, an increase of \$74,290 made up as follows:—

Surplus Fire Account	\$ 30,270
Surplus Employers' Liability Account	63,720
Interest, etc. (less tax)	65,605
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	\$159,595
Less Dividend at 6 1-2 per cent.	85,305

Increase \$ 74,290

It will be noticed that very satisfactory results were obtained by the Lancashire from the opening of an Employers' Liability Department, although the brief period of its existence makes it somewhat difficult to judge of the future experience of companies now transacting this business.

Whatever may have been the experience of the Lancashire in the United States and elsewhere, its record for the year 1898 in Canada is deserving of special mention. Of the British companies engaged in the fire insurance business in the Dominion, the Lancashire showed a percentage of losses to premiums received of the most satisfactory character, and Mr. J. G. Thompson, Manager for Canada, may well claim a large share of the praise bestowed by the chairman upon the gentlemen throughout the world whose "loyal and assiduous help" has enabled him to say:—

"The year has been a trying one in many ways, but we are able to pay the same dividend as last year, and to carry forward a fair balance at the credit of profit and loss account."

A NEW BANK DIRECTOR.

Mr. William Hendrie, of Hamilton, has been elected to the Directorate of the Imperial Bank of Canada.

BANK OF TORONTO.

The most captious critic of financial balance sheets, the most inquisitive inquisitor at a bank's annual meeting, will find the latest statement of the Bank of Toronto so thoroughly destitute of material to pick holes in as to be almost aggravatingly useless for his purposes. But as a subject for favorable comment, the questioning shareholder can hold forth at any length in praise of its profit and loss showing, and even the reviewer may derive pleasure and satisfaction from the study of some of those items of the statement in which bank managers are popularly supposed to take pride.