

in Ontario and Quebec, amounted, on 31st December, 1869, to \$26,283,248, and in June, 1884, to \$45,800,382, or 74 per cent. increase compared with Nova Scotia, 377 per cent. The House will see that, as compared with the increases in Ontario and Quebec, the increase in Nova Scotia has been not only equal, but I believe superior. Not only did I say I was prepared to prove that there had been an increase from 1869 to 1884 in Nova Scotia's prosperity, but that the increase had been very fair indeed during the last five years of this period as compared with the previous ones. Before I go into that proof I will just say that the increase in the paid-up capital of the chartered banks, in deposits bearing interest, in deposits not bearing interest, and in deposits in the savings banks in Nova Scotia was from \$5,137,069 to \$19,822,084, an increase of \$14,725,000, or 286 per cent., as against an increase in the same classes of deposits and bank capital in Ontario and Quebec of 128 per cent. I have shown there has been a steady increase in the available capital savings from 1869 to 1884, that the increase compares favorably with that of Ontario and Quebec; and I will now establish that during the period, 1879 to 1884, the increase was quite as great as during either of the previous periods. The paid-up bank capital in Nova Scotia was, in 1869, \$1,890,696; 30th June, 1874, \$3,466,931; 1879, \$4,295,878; 1884, \$4,858,207. The House will see from the total figures that the increase during the last period has been a very fair one.

Mr. VAIL. Not so large as before.

Mr. STAIRS. It was very much larger from 1879 to 1884 than from 1874 to 1878. I admit it was not quite as large as from 1869 to 1874, during which time hon. gentlemen on this side of the House were in power. If that argument will suit the hon. gentleman he is quite welcome to it. Deposits not bearing interest in 1869 amounted to \$1,157,853; in 1884, \$2,002,677; increase, \$844,824, or about 73 per cent. I notice in the bank returns something exceptional in the deposits not bearing interest in 1879, because there was a very large falling off in one of the banks during one or two months, showing that there was some special cause in operation. From 1874 to 1879, however, there was a decrease in the deposits not bearing interest from \$979,164 to \$841,488; from 1879 to 1884 the increase was from \$841,498 to \$2,000,677. We now come to deposits in banks bearing interest, and if the hon. member for Digby (Mr. Vail) can obtain any consolation from these figures, he is welcome. Here are the figures: 1869, \$1,366,734; 30th June, 1874, \$2,177,100; 1879, \$2,990,310; 1884, \$6,518,582. The savings bank balances in Nova Scotia were as follows: 30th June, 1869, \$722,419; 1874, \$1,530,981; 1879, \$2,499,406; 1884, \$6,493,277. Hon. gentlemen will see that the last figure shows an increase within a fraction of \$4,000,000.

Mr. VAIL. Give us the dividends.

Mr. STAIRS. I want hon. gentlemen opposite to know that the enormous increases, as I have shown, have taken place in the deposits in the chartered banks, bearing interest, and in the deposits in the savings banks, a class of deposits which show most quickly and clearly the increased savings of the country. If it be said that those increased savings took place at the expense of the business of the country, I deny it emphatically. I say that the available business capital of the country was increased; that the business of the country absorbed the usual capital, besides which there was a very large expenditure of capital for the ordinary improvements going on through the Province generally. I have endeavored to prove that the people of Nova Scotia at the present time are, as a whole, much better off than they were in 1867. To those who know the Province well it needed no proof at all. Anyone who has travelled from one end of it to another is aware that improvements are constantly going

on. The markets for the farmers are much better than formerly, and the return I have given shows that all classes are very much better off. If this be the case, what is the reason of the depression of which we hear so much? There must be some reason, and I will endeavor to explain what I think is the cause of it. Whereas, throughout the whole of Canada there has been a great increase in the prosperity of the masses, still we must admit, and all who are acquainted with business will admit, that during the last ten or twelve years a very great change has taken place over the whole world in trade and business. All who have engaged in active business know that whereas twenty years ago it was very easy for a man in any ordinary community to make a good living with care and economy, at the present time competition is so great that it is a very difficult matter indeed. We have had over-competition, over-trading. It seems now-a-days that people are in such a hurry to get rich that they fail to get rich at all. If you admit this is the case, you cannot show that there has not been at the same time a steady improvement in the condition of the mass of the people throughout the whole country. The trader may not be as well off as formerly, the wholesale merchant may not be so well off, and is not so well off as formerly. But at the same time the working classes are a great deal better off. The difficulty is not that the men are not well able to buy articles and pay good prices, for they are buying more goods every year; but the difficulty is in the merchants themselves, though not from causes over which one merchant could have control, but from causes that are affecting the whole mercantile community throughout the world. Now it has been said that Confederation and the abrogation of reciprocity has something to do with the dulness of the times in Nova Scotia. No doubt the abrogation of the reciprocity treaty was a disadvantage to Nova Scotia. No one who knows anything about that Province will claim to the contrary, but I hold that it is not the main reason of the difficulty that is troubling us in Nova Scotia just now. I believe that the people of Nova Scotia have largely got over the trouble which was experienced when that treaty was abrogated. They have settled down to new modes of business; they have found new markets, and they are prospering fairly well. The difficulty with regard to the prosperity of the trading community is that it is now impossible for merchants, out of the larger businesses they now have, to maintain the profits which they had twenty years ago, and I regret to say in some respects that condition of things applies more to Nova Scotia than to any other part of America. Nova Scotia is a small Province; the trade of our dealers is confined pretty much within the Province, and it happens, from our geographical position, that every town there is a port of entry—every town of any size is a sea port, and it is as easy for the merchants in these towns to import as it is for the merchants of Halifax. This condition of things is much to the disadvantage of the merchants of Halifax, but no gentleman should complain of that, because it is to the advantage of the merchants of Nova Scotia. From the position and size of Halifax—this is the ground for many of the complaints of the Halifax wholesale merchants about the state of business—we cannot do much of the business that we used to do, or rather the business cannot realise the profits which it used to realise. A large portion of the import trade of the United States goes through New York; so in Montreal, in regard to the Canadian trade. If the goods are not bought in Montreal they must pass through Montreal to go to their destination. That is not the case in Nova Scotia. No doubt, in the course of time, these things will settle themselves; but at the present time business is undergoing a change that has produced disadvantages for many of our people, but these disadvantages are ascribed to causes which are not the right ones. Some com-