

an increase in the national debt. In the first 7 years of Confederation, they spent on Capital Account, over and above what was allowed the Provinces towards their debts, the sum of \$27,891,860, towards which total they applied \$13,743,878, derived from their surplus revenue in excess of ordinary current expenses. A perusal of the Budget speeches for those years, shows no trace of excuse for not raising enough revenue to cover both the current charges of administering the public services, and the costs of public works, canals, railways, and the acquisition of new territory. No apology for, nor defence of their financial policy in this respect was needed, as the speeches of the Opposition in that period contained no objection to the balance of revenue over and above current expenses being regarded as a "surplus." In regard to additions made to the debt, comparisons between the respective amounts added in particular years are not very instructive. In themselves, such statistics show neither economy nor extravagance. When the debt has been increased the question is: Were the expenditures which caused such increase of a nature and extent which a business man would consider to be a justification of borrowing for these purposes, and to that amount? If they were, then such increase needs no apology, and if they were not, the excuse for such expenditures are entitled to no respect. Com-

parisons between one year and another, or between two series of years, in increases made to the debt, are irrelevant, as the conditions existing in any two or more years cannot possibly be identical. Between 1884 and 1886, for instance, the net debt increased at an average yearly rate of \$21,560,000. Between 1889 and 1891 the average yearly increase was only \$1,002,500. Since Confederation the average yearly increase of the net debt has been \$6,071,000. Which of those periods is to be regarded as a precedent? Surely none of them. Political financial critics would be wise in avoiding comparisons so futile. The defence of any increase in the debt, and condemnation of it, to have any value, should be based upon considerations as to the necessity or desirability, or the needlessness or the imprudence, of those outlays which have caused the debt of the country to be enlarged. As the additions made to the debt of Canada in recent years have been mainly caused by expenditures required to make our canals equal to modern requirements, towards which outlays the ordinary revenue of the country has contributed the larger proportion, the enlargement of the debt to the extent which has occurred was justified on the grounds of necessity, of economy, and by precedents set by every Canadian Government since Confederation.

TWO INTERESTING TABLES.

THE BANKING RECORD OF APRIL FOR EIGHT YEARS.

	Bank Notes in Circulation	DEPOSITS					Total Assets.	Total Liabilities.
		On Demand.	Afer Notice.	Call Loans.	Current Loans.			
1892....	\$31,496,369	\$60,730,909	\$ 94,447,185	\$16,004,117	\$191,995,277	\$ 283,069,561	\$199,471,250	
1893....	32,633,071	64,542,427	104,216,667	16,469,427	206,789,141	302,415,455	216,268,317	
1894....	29,996,472	63,772,064	109,589,042	15,444,830	205,051,675	305,575,405	218,003,543	
1895....	29,152,152	65,578,633	114,457,027	16,566,271	203,273,500	312,740,834	225,570,990	
1896....	29,654,973	60,559,928	120,644,617	13,371,072	210,292,087	315,410,894	225,666,491	
1897....	30,814,923	69,731,791	126,994,097	13,540,564	216,284,936	333,557,594	243,421,066	
1898....	35,843,651	78,196,100	139,997,150	19,034,498	222,115,392	358,531,275	268,619,023	
1899....	37,369,887	88,537,362	163,093,210	28,641,774	245,498,939	398,440,210	304,931,109	

TOTAL DEPOSITS IN THE BANKS OF CANADA.

(AS ON 30TH APRIL, 1892 AND 30TH APRIL, 1899.)

	1892	1899
Chartered Banks.....	\$155,178,094	\$251,630,572
Government Savings Banks.....	16,721,713	15,065,207
Post Office Savings Banks.....	21,465,047	33,851,405
Quebec Savings Banks.....	12,113,435	15,742,970
Loan Companies as on 31st December, 1892 and 1898.....	19,392,165	18,900,000
	\$224,870,454	\$335,190,154
Average yearly increase.....	\$ 15,759,957	
Total increase during seven years.....	110,319,700	

CANADIAN CANALS COMPETITION.

More Than 23,000,000 Bushels of Grain Received at Montreal Last Season, Chiefly by the All-water Route.—A Saving of 700 Miles by the Montreal Route.—Proposed Improvements.

Under the above heading, the New York "Journal of Commerce" thus refers to the advantages we enjoy: "The grain trade of this city is much concerned just now, as a rule, on account of the increased movement of grain by way of Montreal, due to the improvements in the Dominion's canal facilities. The tour of inspection of Canadian canals of the Canal Advisory Committee has also directed particular attention to the Canadian waterways at the moment.

"The canals of Canada, as far as their influence on competitive commerce is concerned, may be conveniently classified as the Welland Canal and the St. Lawrence system of canals. The main reason for the existence of the latter is to enable vessels to avoid the rapids of the St. Lawrence. With these canals, vessels drawing 14 feet of water can now start at the head of the lakes and deliver grain cargoes alongside ocean steamers at Montreal."

With such testimony from our neighbours as to the value of the St. Lawrence system of canals, surely all good citizens will now combine to obtain further improvements at the port of Montreal.