

the short time such advances are current, they, of course, increase not only the item of Government Securities, but also the total of Public Deposits on the opposite side of the Bank's account.

The heading of Other Securities is a sort of *omnium gatherum* comprising all the Bank's investments other than Government Securities, and includes general securities, loans, bills under discount, and advances to bill-brokers. The two latter items are naturally subject to wide fluctuations at different times and under varying money market conditions.

The two items of Notes and of Gold and Silver Coin have already been referred to as combining to form what is known as the Reserve of the Bank—the most looked-for item in each week's Bank Return. It is to be remembered that this is the reserve of the Banking Department alone, and has no direct connection with the convertibility of the Issue Department's notes.



SKYSCRAPERS OPPOSED.

The conflagration menace and general undesirability of New York's extremely high skyscrapers was warmly discussed last week in that city at a public hearing before the Committee on Limitation of Light and Area, a part of the Building Code Revision Commission.

George W. Babb, president of the New York Board of Fire Underwriters, said it was the belief of fire underwriters that if a fire started on the upper floors of some of the highest buildings it could not be checked, as the water pressure is insufficient. His board, he said, advocated limiting buildings entirely for office purposes to 125 feet in height and from 20,000 to 30,000 square feet should be the limit of the floor area.

Commissioner Lantry is reported as declaring "that there is no such danger. We have a pressure of 200 pounds, and with our water towers are able to reach the top stories of any of the buildings at present constructed. When the new salt water mains are opened we will be able to play on a blaze even on the upper stories of the new Singer building. The salt water mains will furnish a pressure of 400 pounds, and will be in operation first in the downtown section—the financial district—and as far north as Twenty-third street west to Fourth avenue."



LEGISLATION IS LIKELY TO BE INTRODUCED at the next session of the Newfoundland Parliament in connection with the proposed new banking institution for that colony, which is to be called The National Bank of Newfoundland. The proposition is to place the authorized capital at \$3,000,000, in \$100 shares. The provisional directors purpose placing on the market 10,000 shares at par for the people of the colony. Newfoundland's previous experiments in local banking have not been of an encouraging nature, and the situation in this respect would seem to be one more reason for the island colony to cast in its lot with the Dominion.

VIEWS OF COMMISSIONER CROUSE.

The matter of surety company commitments and reserves is engaging much attention in the United States at present. Actuary S. H. Wolfe some time ago announced his intention of bringing the matter to the fore at this month's National Convention of Insurance Commissioners. The following utterance of Insurance Commissioner Crouse, printed in the annual report of the Maryland department, will be read with considerable interest. It deals also with company taxation.

"This business has grown to such immense proportions in the past few years that it will be necessary to surround it with certain safeguards that will not only be for the benefit of those for whom this protection is made, but also for the companies as well. It was argued with much force that companies should be limited in the risks assumed by them; that no single risk should be taken for more than 10 p.c. of the capital and surplus of the company unless the risk was protected collaterally. While there has been objection raised to these suggestions on the part of some of the companies, because, as they contend, it would be inimical to the smaller companies, it would seem to me that the limitation would be a proper one. From all of the opinions that I have been able to gather on the subject I have ascertained that fully 90 p.c. of all the risks taken by surety companies are open to the fullest competition, leaving not more than 10 p.c. at most that would be beyond the reach of the smaller companies, even if such a limitation as mentioned above were to be enforced. However, the whole subject will be considered in a short time by a committee of insurance commissioners that will investigate the matter, report its suggestions and views at the next annual convention of the commissioners, and, therefore, it would be well to postpone the discussion of it until that time. The committee will at the same time consider the matter of reserves by surety companies which is also of much importance.

"There has been considerable complaint for some time on account of the large fees for licenses prescribed by our laws to be paid by companies from other States doing business here, and I therefore suggest that it would be well if our Legislature should reduce them at its next session. The license fees charged here are larger than those charged in other states, and serve to keep out many companies that otherwise would do business here if it were not for these excessive fees. Owing to the retaliatory laws in force in nearly all the states, companies incorporated here when applying for licenses to transact business in other states are required to pay the same high rates of licenses, and this has militated against the formation and incorporation of companies in this State. I believe that if the reduction were made in this line it would encourage the formation of other companies in this State, and would open the door wider to those of other states who desire to locate here, and in the end would not cause a reduction of revenue, as the difference would be made up by increase of business and the taxes which would be paid upon this increase."