

I examined carefully the books of the association and I satisfied myself that the bank was being conducted on safe business lines. I traced the dealings with the bank of individuals whose names I selected at random from its list of shareholders. I ascertained that the first payment was a small contribution to the funds of the bank of 10 cents, and then followed in several cases small payments of about 25 cents at a time, until the sum of \$5 stood to the credit of the subscriber, when he became a qualified member or a shareholder in the bank to that amount.

In several instances I noticed that the members of the bank had borrowed small sums of \$25, \$20 and \$15, and that these advances had been repaid sometimes in small instalments, sometimes by single payment. The punctuality with which these small loans had been repaid proved that the existence of this bank had been of real use to the people of Lévis who were its members.

Further, the usefulness of the bank was demonstrated by the fact that over \$200,000 had been loaned in small amounts since it was established six years ago, and I was not surprised to learn that this bank, like the co-operative and agricultural banks in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, France, Ireland and India, notwithstanding the large number of its transactions had not lost a single cent.

The soundness of these credit banks may appear strange at first sight to business men, but those who realize the golden truth that the average man would rather die than fail to loyally respond to a trust imposed in him, will not be surprised, and it must be remembered that the members of a co-operative bank like Monsieur Desjardins' bank at Lévis, are something higher than the average man. No man is allowed to borrow from the Lévis Bank unless he is a member, and no man can be a member unless he is voted unanimously by ballot to be a man worthy of being associated with the existing members of the bank. Thus, only men and women who are known by the common consent of the people among whom they live, to be straight, thrifty and honourable persons can hope for admission to the membership of Monsieur Desjardins' bank. Then, as an additional security against improper loss, after the members of the bank have secured by the fact of their membership this mark of popular confidence and esteem, it is impossible for anyone to obtain a loan unless the management is satisfied that in view of all the circumstances the loan is one which should be made.

Now, nobody who has any acquaintance with the life of the people can doubt that the establishment of a bank, formed on the basis of mutual knowledge and confidence for the mutual assistance of each other, must be of service not only to the members, but to the whole district in which they live. To those who are engaged in business come opportunities from time to time of making a cheap purchase if only the money with which to make the purchase is forthcoming, and the poorer they are the more important it is that they should have the power of seizing profitable opportunities.

The farmer, for instance, while he is waiting for his crop to ripen, wants money in order to make a cheap purchase which will help the farm, or it may frequently happen to those members who are not farmers that the ability to make a cash payment in the middle of the month will enable them to secure an advantage which will benefit the whole family, but which they would not be able to make without a loan, in view of the fact that their salary is not paid until the end of the month. Here comes in Monsieur Desjardins' bank. The member goes to the bank, explains the circumstances, obtains the loan, secures the advantage, and when he has sold his crop or received his salary he repays to the bank the loan he has borrowed from it. The bank has received in the interval a good interest, and the member has been able to secure the advantage of a good bargain.

The remarkable and most encouraging success which has followed the establishment of agricultural banks in continental Europe and in Ireland and in India, is attributed not only to the care with which the bank refuses to admit into its membership anyone whose honesty, thrift and general good character are not a matter of common repute, and to the rule which requires that every applicant for a loan must state what he proposes to do with the money, and the term for which it is required, and to