

longer outlook, that can be made sure only by the proper employment of present opportunities and of accessions of capital from abroad.

There has been no change in Canadian money rates. Call loans range from 5 to 5½ per cent. Several new industrial mergers are now being talked of; among them are the cereal mills and the canning factories. These, of course, will constitute a fresh demand upon the loanable resources of the banks. Taking the banks as a whole, it can be seen that the industrial revival in 1909 did not result in materially reducing their proportion of quick assets to liabilities. But when the individual institutions are taken there are some which appear to have resources pretty fully employed.

Besides the mergers there are some entirely new enterprises being floated in Montreal and Toronto from time to time. One involving a bond issue of \$1,750,000 is that of the Sterling Coal Co.

Dispatches from London announce that the last Canadian loan of £4,000,000 3½ p.c. stock has been well taken by investors. The payments on this loan, like those of the previous issues of the Government, are spread over several months. The last payment of 50 p.c. is to be made on 1st April, 1910. As the issue is for the purpose of retiring a 4 p.c. loan due 1st July, 1910, the transaction will not involve the transfer of any new funds to Canada. Allowing for the discount on the bonds and for the advance interest paid on instalments—there should result a saving of at least ¼ p.c. per annum in the charge of carrying this loan. Probably it will be necessary for the Finance Minister to issue a new loan before very long to provide funds for railway construction and other public works. It is satisfactory to note that this last Canadian issue has been placed on better terms, as regards interest, than those secured by the German Government for a bond issue just made by it. The fact illustrates the value to Canada of the preference she enjoys in the London financial markets.

RAILROADS AND THE GOVERNMENT.

It is a pretty safe guess that President Taft had looked into the working of the Canadian Railway Commission before he prepared that part of his recent recommendations to Congress dealing with federal supervision of railroads. As was some time ago pointed out by a member of the Canadian commission, Mr. S. J. McLean, the powers possessed by that body are wider than those now held by the Inter-State Commerce Commission—particularly in the matter of control over rates. Then, too, the Canadian body has the status of a court, so that its findings cannot be nullified by over-ruling, except through appeal to the Supreme Court direct and then only where questions of law or jurisdiction are involved.

President Taft has recommended that the Interstate Commerce Commission be empowered to pass upon freight classifications and to forbid rate increases that are found unreasonable. While the commission is not to be given court status, it is proposed to establish a special Court of Commerce to hear and determine appeals from the commission, the only appeal from this court lying in the United States Supreme Court.

A WINSTONIAN PROJECT.

At midweek there was inaugurated throughout Great Britain the new system of National Labour Exchanges, created by the Government with a view to lessening unemployment. This plan is more generally approved than the proposed unemployment insurance scheme.

Unemployment insurance was one of the chief talking-points of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill when campaigning for the labour vote. As outlined by the former, the scheme would involve the passing of a compulsory and contributory unemployment insurance bill, which would deal with the affairs of upwards of 2,250,000 adult workers, skilled and unskilled alike. The shipbuilding, engineering and allied trades would first come under consideration, while, side by side with the scheme, facilities would be extended for voluntary insurance, aided by the state. The new plan would be carried on in conjunction with the 250 labour exchanges, now opened or soon to be opened throughout the kingdom. "These exchanges," Mr. Churchill said, "will give labour a scientific market and the advantages which modern civilization has conferred on all the classes. The insurance plan will improve the standard of labour and will equally benefit employer and artisan."

If Winston says so, it *must* be so.

LIFE COMPANY INVESTMENTS.

A life insurance company, owing to the nature of its obligations, should invariably have a large proportion of resources in securities maturing at the end of a long period, rather than in short-term investments. THE CHRONICLE has always maintained that a company depending too largely upon real estate mortgages (with the consequent necessity for more frequent re-investing of funds and constant supervision) may not fare so well eventually.

Interesting in this connection is a paragraph in the annual report of the directors of the Confederation Life Association—in which it is pointed out that the company invested somewhat largely in municipal debentures and high-class stocks during 1909, thus taking advantage of the fairly high rates of interest prevailing. By so doing the company secured "long-dated investments, certain to increase largely in value, while yielding a good rate of interest in the meantime."

ANOTHER MINING HORROR.

One touch of nature makes the whole world akin, and the great mining disaster at Las Esperanzas, Mexico, on Wednesday, brings Mexico into close touch with Canada. Sixty-eight lives are known to have been lost. On Monday a similar accident at Primero, Colorado, caused seventy-five deaths. Perhaps the worst feature about these mining explosions is the possibility of many of the men dying lingering deaths from starvation and the uncertainty above ground as to their fate. It has been suggested that in all coal mines there should be a certain amount of food and water cached, to prevent the worst horrors of a mining disaster. The mine owners should do it willingly and the law should insist upon their doing it willingly or not.