

how much is the total now outstanding under the head of bad debts. Then the amount of overdue bills should on no account be concealed, as has been clearly established in the examinations at the Mansion House, during the past week, into the case of Overend, Gurney & Co., limited. The amount of loans on which the interest is in arrear should also be clearly stated, and it might be prudent to ask what amount is owing by directors for loans and bills discounted, as managers have often very little power of ascertaining the worth of the security offered by members of the Board when they decline to answer questions. The amount lent on shares in companies is a very important subject for inquiry, and when money has been advanced on a company's own shares, it is obvious that it is a diminution of capital rather than a loan. Auditors should be able to certify that the balance-sheets which have been placed before them, and they should also have the advances so classified that they can easily separate the loans on goods and warrants, the loans on land and houses, and the loans on stock or shares in various companies. The present opportunity should not be lost of endeavoring to place before the Board of Trade all information likely to secure the most accurate details.—*Investors' Guardian*

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SECURITIES.—The following table exhibits the fluctuations in Canada 5's & 6's for 1868:—

		5 per cents. Jan. & July.	6 per cents. Jan. & July.
January	10.....	84	99½
January	24.....	93	99
July	7.....	86	99½
July	22.....	87	100
March	7.....	87	100
March	21.....	87	100½
April	4.....	87	100½
April	18.....	87½	102½
May	2.....	89½	103½
May	16.....	92	104
May	30.....	93½	105½
June	13.....	94	107
June	27.....	94½	107½
July	11.....	94	103
July	25.....	92	104
August	8.....	92	104
August	22.....	92	104
September	5.....	91	104
September	19.....	92	105
October	3.....	92	105
October	17.....	92	104
October	31.....	93½	107½
November	7.....	94	108
November	21.....	94	108½
December	5.....	95	108
December	19.....	94½	107½

#### SAVINGS BANKS.

Mr. Keyes, in his report to the N.Y. Legislature, says:—If a savings bank were subject to contingencies in its business, if it were possible to protect every institution from any probable loss, no surplus would be required. But this we have shown and know to be impracticable. The profoundest wisdom, the most pretending sagacity, the most consummate financial skill, is vain to place any one of these institutions upon a basis of absolute exemption from loss. These quantities with strict integrity and conscientious care, may greatly diminish the chances of misfortune, but cannot eliminate them altogether. It must needs be that, sooner or later, slight and heavy losses will come. A bank of issue in which savings deposits are kept may fail, a claim for insurance may be successfully resisted, skillful burglars may get access to the cash, investments may sometimes be made at a premium that only return par on the day of redemption or securities may sometimes be diverted at a discount to meet unexpected emergencies. In these and many other ways which we need not enumerate, savings banks are exposed to perils, which all cannot be so for-

tunate as to escape. We can only guard against needless exposure to these perils, and provide a means whereby the severity of the misfortune, when it comes, shall be greatly mitigated; means that will enable the institution to sustain its losses without impairing its ability to meet in full the demands of every depositor. But this can only be done by the accumulation of a surplus of assets over all liabilities for the purpose of meeting such contingencies. In no other way can perfect security against loss be secured to the depositor. In this way it can be assured; and yet, strangely enough, the provisions of the statutes in regard to this surplus, upon which the security of the depositor so greatly depends, are only permissive. If anything connected with the management of savings banks should be obligatory this should be. If anything the discretion of trustees should be controlled by law, this, upon which so much depends, should surely be thus controlled.

On the question of the rate of interest to be paid to depositors, in connection with the formation of a surplus fund Mr. Keyes says:—

No savings bank should be permitted to declare more than five per cent. dividends until it has accumulated a surplus of at least five per cent. of its assets.

With regard to savings banks to be organized hereafter, such a provision is practicable, and would have the salutary effect of checking the mania for organizing such institutions in localities already sufficiently accommodated. To make such a requirement of savings banks already organized, might lead to consequences not only perilous to their own integrity, but embarrassing in kindred institutions. Concerning these, it will be better to leave them at liberty to declare such dividends as they can, from actual earnings, after paying necessary expenses, and putting aside one-half per cent. per annum to account.

STERLING EXCHANGE.—The course of sterling exchange for three years is shown by the following figures, which represent the bank selling rates in Toronto, on the 1st and 15th of each month:—

	1867.	1867.	1868.
January 1.....	9½ to 9½	9½ to 9½	10½ to 10½
" 15.....	9½ " 9½	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
February 1.....	8 " 8	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	8 " 8	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
March 1.....	9 " 9	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	9 " 9	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
April 1.....	8 " 8	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	8 " 8	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
May 1.....	9 " 9	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	9 " 9	9½ " 9½	10½ " 10½
June 1.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
July 1.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
August 1.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
Sept. 1.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
Oct. 1.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
Nov. 1.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
Dec. 1.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½
" 15.....	10 " 10	10½ " 10½	10½ " 10½

The name of Mr. Buchanan, of the late agency of the Bank of Montreal, at St. Catharines, is mentioned in connection with a vacant managership at Banff. Much sympathy is expressed for him on account of the robbery of his agency.

The *Lightning Express* says there is no better point in the great North-West peninsula for banking agencies, than Elora, and calls loudly for more banking accommodation than is afforded by a country Agency of the Bank of Montreal.

#### INDEBTEDNESS OF BELLEVILLE.

The Mayor of Belleville in addressing the Council on Monday last made the following statement:—

The present indebtedness of the town in the form of outstanding debentures is about \$54,000, which is made up as follows, viz:

A debenture overdue, bearing 8 per cent. interest.....	\$ 5,000
Debentures to Trust and Loan Company, overdue, 8 per cent. interest.....	14,000
Debentures issued in 1865, bearing 6 per cent. interest.....	10,000
Against which there is a county debenture in the sinking fund for \$1,600 with interest for two years, leaving a balance in round numbers that will be due in less than five years of.....	14,000
Balance due the Receiver General bearing 5 per cent. interest, and which will be paid off in about eight years by the yearly payment of \$1,600.....	9,000
Debentures issued last year bearing 7½ per cent. interest, and due in twenty years.....	12,000
Making the total of.....	\$54,000
\$19,000 being now over due, and \$14,000 falling due in less than five years.	

THE MONTREAL TELEGRAPH COMPANY have recently made some sweeping reductions in their Tariff of Charges, applicable throughout the whole of the Dominion. In many instances the reduction is equal to making the new Tariff less than one-half the old rate on lengthy messages. The press rate from St. John to Montreal or Ottawa is now but half what it was a fortnight ago, and we presume that Halifax and other Maritime Cities share in these advantages. The Company, we believe, will be gainers by this liberal policy, and an important public result—the speedy and cheap exchange of commercial, political and other news between the principal cities of the Dominion—will be brought about through the Company's instrumentality.

#### LAND GRANTS.

Congress up to March last, had granted in all to various Western and Southern States over 57,000,000 acres lands for railroad purposes. It has given beside over 17,000,000 acres to canals and similar improvements. The Pacific Railroad and branches have received 124,000,000 acres, and if to this is added the even numbered sections along those routes, which the Secretary of the Interior decided to be closed for settlement, it will appear that nearly one-third of the entire public domain has been made over to the control of railroad companies. "The quantity of lands conveyed by these grants," says the Commissioner of the General Land Office, "is of empire extent, exceeding in the aggregate, by more than 5,000,000 of acres, the entire areas of the six New England States, added to the surface of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia." He says the grants to the Pacific railway lines alone "are within about a fourth of being the united area of England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey, the Isle of Man, and the Islands of the British seas, and within less than a tenth of being equal to the French empire proper."

In 1860 and 1861 the Government sold 234,000 acres of Delaware lands to the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western road. In 1866 it sold 92,000 acres of Delaware lands to the Missouri river road, and in 1859 it disposed of 278,200 acres to only 33 purchasers. Among them were the following: The Hon. Hugh McCulloch, 7,014 acres; Perry Fuller and McDonald, 39,058 acres; John McManus, 142,915 acres; Robert R. Stevens, 51,630