The December Bank Statement.

The figures of the Government returns of the chartered banks for December, are published herewith, and they are quite in keeping with those of previous months. So far as the story of Canadian trade and commerce can be gathered from these monthly statements of our financial institutions, the year 1899 has been remarkable for an extraordinary expansion of the business of the country.

No better evidence of the growth of the Dominion during the past year can be given than the figures representing the increase in the principal items of the statements submitted to the Finance Department. But still more interesting than the figures of 1899, in this connection, will be those covering the past quarter of a century.

On the 31st December, 1874, the total paid-up capital of all the chartered banks was $63,212,027. Comparison of the list of banks then in existence with those of 1900 serves as a reminder of periods of gloom and financial disaster. Many of the names in the following list of the chartered banks of 1874 which have since disappeared from Government returns will impress upon us the lessons of deplorable failures, and will also show that one of the best of Bank Acts cannot prevent mismanagement, wrong-doing or excessive competition for the business of any district already fully supplied with banking facilities. To some one of these causes may very properly be attributed the disappearance of nearly every institution on the following list: The Royal Canadian, The St. Lawrence, The Federal, Banque du Peuple, Banque Ville Marie, City Bank, Exchange Bank of Canada, Mechanics Bank, The Metropolitan Bank, Stadacona Bank, Bank of Liverpool, Pictou Bank, Maritime Bank of the Dominion of Canada, Commercial Bank of Manitoba, Bank of Prince Edward Island, Union Bank of Prince Edward Island. It is true that the word "failed" cannot be written against every one of these banks. Some were very wisely absorbed by larger and stronger rivals. Despite the disappearance of such a number of banks, the total amount of paid-up capital remains to-day at much the same figure as in 1874, owing to the increase in capital of existing banks rendered necessary by the growth of business and the demand for more circulating medium. The increase in other items of the Government returns are very satisfactory, as the following table will show:—

	31st Dec., 1874	31st Dec., 1899
	$	$
Bank notes in circulation..........	28,465,192	45 999,753
Capital paid-up..................	63,212 027	63 584,022
Reserve Fund..................	Not reported *	29,967,724
Deposits (Demand)................	35,624,746	99,463 898
" (Notice)..............	33,483,718	173,769,968
Total Liabilities................	126,090,487	336,018,630
Discounts Current..............	139,379,457	226,678,601
Total Assets....................	200,905,145	431,718,345

*Bank Act did not call for statement.

The extraordinary increase of $200,000,000, in deposits during the past twenty-five years is an eloquent bit of testimony to the prosperous condition of the Dominion. These deposits, obtained by the banks largely in agricultural and other districts where the savings of the people are in excess of the industrial enterprise, have been transferred to the centres of industry where capital is in demand. To the branch bank system and the good management and great regularity in the employment of money thus deposited, may surely be attributed the prosperity of many of our banks, and the increase in the wealth of individuals.

During the month of December, the following additions were made to capital and reserve accounts:

Bank	Capital	Reserve Fund.
	$	$
Bank of New Brunswick................	......	100,000
Bank of Nova Scotia......	6,820	156,960
Merchants Bk. of Halifax.....	19,640	98,576
Halifax Banking Company....	......	25,000
Imperial Bk. of Canada....	19,291	12,542
Bank of Hamilton........	860	
Traders Bk. of Canada..............	8,200	
Bank of Ottawa......................	33,189	24,889
Banque d'Hochelaga..................	7,100	
Molson Bank..........	128,500	
Summerside Bank..	......	3,000
Merchants Bk. of P.E.I............	......	15,000

That such a record of prosperity may be continued will be the wish of every patriotic citizen. The Dominion of Canada is making progress at home and abroad, is now sharing in the responsibilities of the Empire, and must strive to maintain the reputation of being the home of an industrious, energetic, contented and thrifty people.

BANK CHANGES.

Mr. J. Pitblado has arrived in Montreal to assume the management of the branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia. Mr. H. A. Richardson is now manager of the same bank at Toronto.

CONTRABAND OF WAR.—The "Times," in a special article discussing the recent speech of Count Von Buelow, as to what constitutes contrabands, and what are the rights of neutrals, says: "We do not doubt that overtures for a full discussion of the subject, if made in a friendly spirit, and on broad grounds of public interest, would be frankly and promptly accepted by the British Government.