

to retire their issues and wind up their business. The three banks earliest started under the Act soon applied for charters and secured them.

Of these the Zimmerman Bank had the shortest life. Founded in 1854 by a person of means, it was to an unusual degree the creature of one man. It seems, however, to have been well and honorably managed by the capitalist whose name it bore. In 1858 the charter of 1855 was amended by changing the name of the institution to the "Bank of Clifton," and extending the time for the subscription and payment in full of its capital stock. But in spite of these favors and of the extraordinary privilege "that the bank notes and bills in circulation shall be of whatsoever value the Directors shall think fit to issue the same, but none shall be under the value of 5 shillings (\$1)," the bank was soon wound up after the death of Mr. Zimmerman. In 1863 its charter was repealed.

The Bank of the Niagara District, with its head office in St. Catharines, Canada West, found difficulty from the first in securing the capital required by its charter. The Act of 1855 required subscription and payment in full of the million dollars in five years. In 1857 an indulgent Legislature extended the term to 1861; in 1861 to 1866; in 1863 the capital stock requirement was reduced to \$400,000, and the time for paying it up extended to 1865. The bank had a fairly successful career until it suffered large losses through the failures of Jay Cooke & Co., and others, in 1873. Hardly able longer to carry on an independent business, it was amalgamated early in 1875 with the Imperial Bank of Canada. The shares of the Niagara District Bank were exchanged for those of the Imperial, according to the relative value of the two stocks, and thereafter the former bank disappeared as a separate institution.

Out of the five originally "free banks," but one, the Molsons' Bank of Montreal, has survived, and is now an institution of standing and importance.

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