

In Canada call loans are still $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 p.c. The active stocks have shown a rising tendency and complaints of monetary stringency have not been so much in evidence. So perhaps the tension is relaxing. But it will not be wise to look for much improvement in this respect until it is seen how the spring financing is met. Every year with the breaking of spring several great Canadian industries are roused into activity. They call upon the banks for considerable funds. The necessity of providing those funds sometimes causes noticeable hardness in the money markets. It is reasonable enough to expect that during April and early in May money will be in strong demand. After the opening of river navigation some relief is experienced through the shipment to Europe of large quantities of grain and other produce held in warehouse during the winter. Negotiation of the exchange drawn against these shipments puts the banks in funds at New York, and from that centre the money can be transferred here with ease and dispatch. Then later in the summer the dairy exports and exports of other products serve to bring us much cash. It is said that the deep snow in the Northwest is exceedingly favorable for a good season. It makes the land better able to stand a moderate drouth.

OVERHEAD TANKS.

The statement that the Board of Control of Montreal contemplate a veto upon the overhead tanks in connection with automatic sprinkler installations brings to the front a matter which requires serious consideration before any decision is come to. The Board of Control found their objection to these tanks, naturally, upon the terrible disaster caused by the collapse of the tank above the roof of the Herald building last June. It is admitted that these overhead tanks are required in order to reduce fire insurance premiums to the lowest rate, underwriters considering it necessary that sprinklered risks should have two sources of water supply, in case one should fail or prove inadequate.

But this reason should not be allowed to carry weight, if every sprinklered risk tank or even a large proportion of them is liable at any moment to cause such loss of life and destruction of property as occurred last year. Is this so? We do not agree that it is, but believe that a tank constructed on sound lines is a safe means to employ as part of the equipment of a sprinklered risk for fighting fire. To draw a parallel with the argument which has now been heard, it might be suggested that because an unsafe railway bridge gives way from the weight of a train and causes disaster that, therefore, no bridges must be allowed. Since over-

head tanks, as well as railway bridges can be made safe, it seems desirable that the Board of Control should direct their attention to methods which will ensure their safety rather than promulgate a hasty prohibition. The prohibition of the tanks and the consequent cutting off of one of two sources of water supply could only result in a material increase of rates upon the best class of risks, and this, it is easy to see, might lead eventually to the removal of factories from Montreal to other centres where the wiser policy of strict regulation of water tanks rather than their prohibition is in force. The Board of Control, of whose good intentions in this matter we have not the slightest doubt, would be well advised to consult with fire underwriters upon this subject, so that no rash decision is come to, which would in the long run result in a loss to Montreal of both business and population.

MISLEADING INSURANCE ADVERTISING.

A whole page of one of the western daily papers was lately occupied with the prospectus of a newly-formed fire insurance company, with its head office at Winnipeg, inviting subscriptions for its shares. The prospectus is of the familiarly flamboyant type and towards the end of it we find this astonishing paragraph—the italicised words being given black type in the original:—

During the last forty-one years the aggregate amount of fire insurance premiums collected in Canada reached the immense total of \$280,740,166.00, of which, the large sum of \$218,310,047.00 represents the amount of premiums collected by foreign companies, and which, therefore, was taken out of the country to build up foreign companies and enrich foreign shareholders.

The implication of this paragraph that the premiums collected by British and American fire insurance companies are so much profit taken out of the country to "enrich foreign shareholders" would be irresistably comic were it not likely to prove so seriously misleading to persons reading this prospectus or attracted by it. What are the facts? According to the latest Government report on insurance, the premiums received by British and American fire insurance companies in Canada in the forty-one years, 1869-1909, were, as stated, \$218,310,047. But of this amount—and this the prospectus does not state—\$139,480,126, or almost 64 p.c. were paid out in losses. Adding another 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ p.c. for expenses—the recognised allowance—brings the total disbursements of these British and American fire companies in Canada during the 41 years up to practically \$211,500,000. Statistically, this 41 years' showing looks like this:—

Premiums		\$218,310,047
Deduct:		
Losses	\$139,480,126	
Expenses, 33 1-3 p.c., say	72,000,000	
		211,480,126
Balance		\$6,829,921