



LIABILITY OF DIRECTORS.

At a meeting at Toronto this week of the defunct Farmers' Loan company, a letter from Hon. Wm. Mulock, formerly president of the company, was read, in which he offered to pay various sums to the creditors of the concern on account of his liability as a director. Mr. Mulock resigned the presidency of the company when he entered the Dominion cabinet. Mr. Mulock said in his letter that he had decided to invite the creditors to take the opinion of a judge as to his liability as a director of the defunct company. He further offered, that if his liability, if decided in this way, did not absorb all his means, he would give a further sum of \$25,000 to be distributed among the widows or other persons who had invested in the company while he was its president. Another proposition made by Mr. Mulock was to the effect that he would give \$150,000 for the discharge of his liability as a director of the company, without a legal opinion thereon as to the amount of his liability, \$50,000 of this sum to be distributed to widows or other needy persons as before stated.

While this offer from Mr. Mulock may in one sense be considered a very generous proposal, it is perhaps not out of proportion to the moral responsibility resting upon him as president of the Farmers' Loan company. In addition to his actual legal liability as a director of the company, there is certainly a heavy moral responsibility resting upon Mr. Mulock in this matter. The liquidation has shown the most scandalous mismanagement and incompetency, if not worse doings, in connection with the affairs of this loan company. Mr. Mulock claims that he had entire confidence in the management of the company, but this does not release him and the other directors from the moral as well as the legal responsibility resting upon them.

It is altogether too common a thing in Canada for public men to assume the responsibility of directors or officers in stock concerns. Public men of prominence are solicited on account of their influence in bringing business to the company. The best guide which the investing public often have in selecting companies wherein to place their means is the names constituting the board of directors. Public or prominent men who allow their names to be used for purpose of drawing business for a stock concern, have there-

fore a great moral responsibility resting upon them. The greater their influence the greater is that responsibility. Those who accept this responsibility should therefore use due diligence to find out that their institution is worthy of their confidence, lest they influence others to place their means in a rotten concern, such as the Farmers' Loan company proved to be.

FINANCIAL NOTES.

The Union bank has opened a branch at Melita, Man.

Cheques for the final dividend of the Commercial bank of Manitoba were mailed this week.

Molson's bank, Victoria, has decided to build a \$100,000 block at Victoria, B. C., where a branch of the bank will be opened.

A branch of the Molson's bank is being opened in Vancouver, B. C., under the management of H. Lockwood, assistant inspector, who will also act as supervisor of the branches of the bank in the west.

The Peace River District.

Rev. John McDougall, of Morley, writes to the Calgary Herald: "Now that our northern country is attracting attention because of the recent rich gold finds in Klondike and vicinity and there is an opportunity of this country opening up for settlement much earlier than some of us anticipated, I want to say to my fellow Canadians, and through them to the world, that we have in the Peace River region a large area of habitable land, rich soil, good grass, plenty of timber for settlement, and the whole land well watered. These are the surface conditions which meet even the casual observer as one travels through the country which lies north of the site of old Fort Assiniboine, on the Athabasca river. Then when we take into account these facts that the altitude of most of the Peace river country is very much lower than that of either Edmonton or Calgary, that large bodies of water are distributed here and there all over the land, that the evaporation from the lakes and the many flowing streams which debauch into them creates a humidity in the summer season, which, with the long day sunshine is pre-eminently conducive to vegetable growth, and also in a large measure ensures from summer frosts, I say when one thinks of the actual conditions and incontrovertible facts, then one very reasonably comes to the conclusion that on the Peace river, and from 300 to 600 miles north of Calgary, there is an immense region which is doubtless designed by nature for the prosperous homes of many people.

"In connection with this the known quantities in that northern country as to its minerals, are that both gold and coal are found here and there all through it. In the early sixties I communed with men who had washed gold out of the bar of the Peace and its tributaries. Then the trouble was food and supplies. In 1878 I saw for myself the coal in waste and seam on the streams which run from west to east between the Athabasca and the Peace river, and I firmly believe that great mineral development will reward the diligent searchers thereof in that land. As to its mineral wealth the whole country abounds with it and

the quantity is unknown. I for one believe that the Klondike has no monopoly of this factor in the settlement of the hitherto wilderness country. Other rich finds will be made, but in the meantime the hardy settler and real home seker can go into the north land and find all I have mentioned and with this a glorious climate—largely free from summer cyclone or winter blizzard—one in which a dominant race of men may be bread and reared. I have come to the conclusion from personal travel and observation, and also from having conversed with Hudson's Bay officials, miners, trappers, and Indians, during the last nearly forty years of almost constant sojourn in the Northwest country. I will end by saying that if all the area between the 49th parallel and the Athabasca river did not exist, still having the richly endowed country to the north of us, Canada would be possessed of a region full of glorious possibilities.

JOHN McDOUGALL."

Grain and Milling News.

Sir Henri Joly has agreed to the request of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange to make the legal weight of flax seed 56 pounds per bushel so as to agree with the generally accepted commercial usage.

It is rumored that the Ogilvie Milling company contemplate building a steel tank storage plant in Winnipeg of 500,000 bushels' capacity. We would not be surprised at this. There is nothing new, of value, which the Ogilvies do not get.

In the house at Ottawa, recently Dr. Rutherford asked whether the government will take action to assist the farmers of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories in abolishing the elevator monopoly. The premier said that the government is alive to the situation, but no conclusion had yet been reached.

A bonus was passed in aid of a small flour mill to be built in the municipality of St. Charles, near Winnipeg, but according to provincial laws bonuses are not valid without the sanction of the legislature. An effort will be made to get the legislature to legalize the by-law. A flour mill in this municipality, so near to Winnipeg, can prove of very little value, as the Winnipeg mills sell flour to farmers at wholesale prices, and the proposed new mill would not likely receive patronage enough to pay for grease for the machinery. It would likely only prove a loss to those embarking in the enterprise and also a loss to the municipality to the amount of the bonus. The legalizing of bonus by-laws is against the spirit of the law which prohibits bonusing, and only exceptionally weighty reasons should be accepted for legalizing bonuses.

At the annual meeting of the Manitoba Pharmaceutical association, held in Winnipeg, on February 16, a fitting tribute was paid to the late Dr. Fleming, of Brandon. A resolution was passed that the council be requested to look into the matter of dividing the province into districts for the purpose of having councillors representative of such districts. The following members were elected as councillors for the ensuing two years. J. F. Howard, E. D. Martin, C. Flexon, W. Pulford and Alex Campbell, Winnipeg; W. R. Bartlett, Brandon; A. R. Leonard, Stouffville, J.