

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

At the annual meeting of the Ocean Accident & Guarantee Company on the 22nd ult., the Chairman, Sir Thomas Hewitt, K.C., in referring to Workmen's compensation in England said:—"It is a source of considerable anxiety and trouble, and, by reason of the insufficient premiums, we and other companies, with few exceptions, have to bear the unpleasant aspect of an account which shows a loss. Undue competition is without doubt the cause. Our corporation cannot, of course, endeavor to supply the deficiency by attempting to make settlements with injured persons on a basis other than is fair and ample. I fear that some of our brethren who are less experienced than ourselves are not awake to the accumulating trouble looming in the distance. A few years ago we took alarm at this increasing and insidious liability, and sternly adopted measures of precaution, and have subsequently rendered them sufficiently adequate. The number of claims for compensation in workmen's insurance during the past year has been 33,509, and the number of fatal cases has been no less than 300. The percentage of claims is still increasing day by day, which shows that the experience in claim making is growing wider and more rampant. The claims ratio of the forty-one offices forming the Accident Offices Association was no less than 65.09, calculated on sums put aside for claims, but I fear that instead of 65 per cent., it will be much higher. The combined returns of the outside companies showed a claims ratio of 69.21, but the average provision by them for claims was £11 12s 2d, compared with £19 18s 9d of the above more important companies. Some recent decisions of the Law Courts have greatly widened the liability of employers and rendered the adequacy of rates now fixed greatly fallacious. As old lawyer, I may be forgiven if I mention that the effect of one decision is that in case of an injury to a youth he can year after year claim an increase of compensation up to half of that "which he would probably have been earning" but for the accident. Again, it has been decided that sunstroke is a "personal injury by accident." Also that gratuities must be taken as part of a workman's earnings for the purpose of compensation. Further, that where a husband and three sons contribute to the support of a widow, she is partly dependent on each, and the judge can award a maximum fund of twelve years' wages, not exceeding £1,200. Also, that a ship's stoker fatally overcome by the heat of the stokehold when in a weak condition of health "had sustained personal injury by accident," entitling his representatives to receive compensation; and, lastly, that a man without any unusual strain dying from heart disease whilst at work has met

with an accident within the meaning of the Act. These and similar cases indicate a constant increasing liability on employers and their insuring companies. Domestic insurance business is by no means a sinecure, the number of our fatal cases since the passing of the 1907 Act having increased to 60, with claims for injuries to no less than 10,000."

**CANADIAN BANKING PROFITS, II.**

In the second article on this subject the disposition of the profits is dealt with. It is seen from the figures of the table that the twenty-nine boards of directors had the large sum of \$18,921,375 to dispose of. The total of the ordinary earnings is greater by \$325,000 than the total shown on the table published last week. The difference arises out of the necessity of including in this second table the amount of \$300,000, "recoveries from debts written off" reported by the Bank of Commerce, and the \$25,000 representing the composition of the Sovereign Bank of Canada debt to the Bank of Nova Scotia. It will be remembered that in presenting its annual report for 1908 the Bank of Nova Scotia showed an appropriation of \$50,000 to cover possible loss under the guarantee of the Sovereign's liabilities. Whereupon the liquidators of the Sovereign declared that no loss was anticipated and they offered to pay the Nova Scotia's loan and release it from the guarantee if it would accept \$25,000 less than the amount of the debt. The offer was taken and acted upon.

With regard to the table presented to-day it is to be borne in mind that some banks make their appropriations for premises before declaring the profits—the Bank of Montreal being a notable example; others make appropriations from profits in addition to the amounts written off as per the annual report. And, with regard to the appropriations for depreciation, etc., the general practice is to make them before the declaration. The few items shown in this column represent appropriations for some special transactions or happenings.

The number of banks reporting appropriations in support of officers' pension funds and officers' guarantee funds increase year by year notwithstanding the decrease in the number of banks in operation. Some institutions which have not as yet inaugurated a pension fund provide for their aged or disabled employees by means of grants from current earnings. Probably most of the pension funds, are as yet too recently inaugurated to be self-supporting.

In the third and concluding article, which will appear next week the totals and results shown in the two tables will be compared in tabular form with the results of previous years.