

Loans to Dominion & Prov. Govts..	2,381,276	2,372,527
Current loans and discounts	197,105,799	194,123,365
Loans to other banks secured	150,000	150,000
Overdue debts	2,374,904	2,452,155
Real estate	1,012,962	1,097,134
Mortgages on real estate sold	810,929	846,757
Bank premises....	4,638,235	4,643,095
Other assets	1,671,830	1,643,493
Total assets.....	\$306,630,754	\$304,917,753
Average amount of specie held during the month	6,277,119	6,671,435
Av. Dom. notes do..	11,261,002	11,611,280
Loans to directors or their firms....	6,894,747	7,088,150
Greatest amount of notes in circulation during m'n'h	39,318,218	39,024,285

"ESTIMATES" IN LIFE INSURANCE.

It is told that not long ago a life insurance agent in a Western town was soliciting a gentleman of that place to apply for a policy in his company. The agent naturally marshalled all the arguments he could think of in favor of the action he was proposing, but withal kept strictly within the lines of insurance certainties. The gentleman heard the agent out, discussed the matter with him, and finally said: "Well, what you offer me is very good, but Mr. A—, agent of the B— Life Insurance Company, holds out inducements equally attractive, and, besides, estimates that I will realize so much profit (naming a certain sum) out of the policy." "Well, all I have to say to that, sir," replied the agent, "is that I am not dealing in estimates, but in insurance."

Such is the manner in which an article on the subject indicated by the heading is introduced by the *New York Bulletin*, which describes the reply given as a worthy answer of a good agent. "It is the aim of life insurance to approximate the actual cost of carrying out its obligations as nearly as possible. If the rate of mortality were unvarying from one generation to another, if the rate of interest realized on such securities and values as the companies are permitted to hold never changed, and if the expense of carrying on the business were a fixed factor, it would be possible to absolutely foretell the exact cost of every class of policy. But these conditions do not obtain, of course, and therefore it is necessary to add to the net premiums such a sum as will safely cover fluctuations from the laws which have been deduced from the experience of the past. This arrangement is comparable to a practice in engineering. It is proposed, for instance, that a floor must carry a certain weight. The engineer computes that to bear this, the beams, according to the formula of breaking weights, must be of such a size, and then increases this size by what is called "a factor of safety," in order to allow of such imperfections of material and workmanship as cannot be detected. Now, the margin or loading of the net premiums may be termed the factor of safety in life insurance. What the experience of each year, or series of years, demonstrates to have been superfluous in this margin is

given back to the policy-holders in the form of return premiums, "miscalled dividends," and forms the only basis of the frequently flamboyant "estimates of profits."

"There is no element of 'profit' about it; it is simply the return to the policy-holder of a payment exacted from him in the interest of prudence, and the security of his policy from all contingencies. All soundly constituted life insurance companies stand practically on a basis of equality in this respect. If interest rates prevail high, if the health of the community is good, they are all liable to participate in the gains realized from those conditions, and are on the other hand subject to drafts upon the premium-margin when contrary conditions obtain. The most that any of them can honestly do is to say, "Our experience in the past has been thus, and judging from the outlook, we will be able to do in the future thus." But it is mere folly to reduce such expectations to definite figured propositions, and it is certainly not in accordance with a high standard of business ethics for any of the recognized companies to assume a superiority over its rivals on account of such representations. . . ."

The conclusion drawn by the *Bulletin* is that all persons intending to be insured will do better to see that the contract they sign is suited to their particular case and has the intrinsic features that can be guaranteed, than to seek after other inducements of the character described.

MARITIME COMMERCE.

FIRST ARTICLE.

If there is one subject more than another which has been the frequent theme of enthusiastic Canadian writers, it is that which relates to the commerce of the Maritime Provinces. The subject is never exhausted, and it is reproduced from time to time with the fondest iteration. Gray, in an ancient tome, has referred to the maritime resources as the germ of a commerce not exceeded in the palmiest days of the Venetian Republic. Dawson, in spite of a certain mathematical coldness, warms into a gentle enthusiasm when he dwells on maritime resources, while the venerable Haliburton and McGregor, in the early days of maritime history, reveal a power of prophecy that excites wonderment, and the painstaking and indefatigable Gesner marshals columns of facts and figures in relation to maritime resources which challenge admiration. Haliburton, in his style, is as fresh as any of the model artists who paint in modern prose the wonders of travel-land, while the prosaic Martin shows a regard for the modern searcher after commercial data that is well worthy of imitation by others.

It has been said that Canadians have not appreciated to the extent to which they should the resources and commerce of the Maritime Provinces. Perhaps this has been urged in a vexatious spirit, aided by a lack of acquaintance with maritime affairs due to the isolated conditions of the various provinces prior to Confederation. This want of appreciation does not exist now, if, indeed, it ever existed. Not long

since a commis voyageur, who makes semi-annual trips to the Lower Provinces from Toronto, remarked, in the presence of others: "I like the people of the Maritime Provinces; they are resourceful, self-reliant and in full contact with the outside world, possessing all the advantages which that imparts."

And here it seems proper that a reference should be made to what Mill says on a subject kindred, at least, to this: "Among the natural advantages besides soil and climate must be mentioned abundance of mineral productions in convenient situations, and capable of being worked with moderate labor. Such are the coal fields of Great Britain, which do so much to compensate its inhabitants for the disadvantage of climate, and the scarcely inferior resources possessed by this country and the United States in a copious supply of an easily reduced iron ore are at no great depth below the earth's surface, and in close proximity to coal deposits available for working it." But perhaps a greater advantage than all this is a maritime situation, especially when accompanied with good natural harbors, and next to it, great navigable rivers.

In the ancient world, and in the middle ages, the most prosperous communities were not those which had the largest territory or the most fertile soil, but rather those which have been forced by natural sterility to make the utmost use of convenient maritime situation, such as Athens, Tyre, Marseilles, Venice, the free cities of the Baltic and the like, though it is hardly necessary to mention that sterility is not a term applicable to the Maritime Provinces, by far the greater portion of which is fertile. And, in writing of the Maritime Provinces, it may be explained that by these terms are intended New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia, which are known as the Maritime Provinces proper.

Now he who attempts to deal with this subject will, at the beginning, feel the immensity of his task, for it is one that challenges even first-rate ability, for the facts amaze by their greatness.

And what, at least, appears to be in direct conflict with the assertions and predictions of the doubters is, that this trade is steadily increasing, leaving it to be explained that with an increasing maritime commerce, to say nothing of the trade at large, the country is ruined. Surely the politicians in their mad hostility lose sight of certain facts of political economy, which in the heat of party strife may be assailed, but not shaken. The province of New Brunswick is full of interest to him who seeks commercial data. Its people are noted for their hospitality, their business ways, and for a certain independence which may be said to date far into the remote past. This independence is doubtless due to the early independent position which the province occupied prior to Confederation days, when New Brunswick framed its own tariff, regulated its own trade—in short, managed its own affairs with very little interference from outsiders. It was natural, under such circumstances, for the people to be possessed of an independence which