ENGLISH BANK DIVIDENDS.

Bank earnings in England appear to have been better in the last half year, ended with December, than in the like period of 1886. We find in the *Economist* of January 7th, a comparative list of dividends paid, which bears out the prediction made some months ago in that journal, of maintained if not increased earnings. "So far, the distributions which have been announced bear out this forecast, as is shown by the following figures for the half-years ended December 31, 1887 and 1886:—

	Rate % per Annum. 1887.	1886.
City	10	10
Consolidated	10	10
Imperial	7	7
London Joint Stock	12½	12½
London and Westminster	16	15
Union of London	12½	12½
Adelphi (Liverpool)	8	8
Birmingham Banking	15	15
Birmingham Joint-Stock	20	20
Bristol & West of England	8	8
Capital and Counties	18	18
Halifax and Huddersfield Union	10	10
Liverpool Union	15	15
Liverpool Commercial	12½	12½
London and Yorkshire	6	6
North and South Wales	15	15
North-Western	7	6
Nottingham Joint-Stock	15	15
Wilts and Dorset	24	24

In two cases it will be seen higher dividends are announced, the London and Westminster, and the North-Western (of Liverpool) proposing to pay an increased 1 per cent. per annum, but otherwise the rates are exactly on the same level as last year. "But in several instances," remarks the *Economist*, "where the dividend is unchanged a more profitable business has been done, as is indicated by the balance carried forward, &c. For instance, the Imperial corried forward £1,000 more than it did a year ago, the Union of London £1,000, and the London Joint-Stock £4,300. The London and Westminster appears to have done exceptionally well, for in addition to paying an extra ½ per cent. dividend for the half-year, which requires £7,000, a sum of £10,000 is added to the "Rest," aud £5,900 carried forward, whereas a year ago a sum of £11,595 was carried forward, but nothing added to the Rest."

THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR IN QUEBEC.

Cardinal Taschereau, in his recent circular on the Knights of Labor, says the Holy See, "suspended, until further orders, the effect of the condemnation of the Knights of Labor." And he adds that "among other conditions, the Holy See exacts:

"1. That the Knights of Labor be ready to abandon this society so soon as it shall ordain it. 2. That they sincerely and explicitly promise absolutely to avoid all that may either favor masonic and other condemned societies, or violate the laws either of justice, charity, or of the state. 3. That they abstain from every promise and from every oath by which they would bind themselves to obey blindly all the orders of the society or keep absolute secrecy, even towards lawful authorities."

If the Knights of Labor are to do nothing contrary to the laws either of justice, charity, or the State; if they are not to promise to be bound by what the Order may direct to be done, or to take an oath of secrecy, they will have to reform some of their practices. The refusal to allow non-members of the Order to work with themselves, is contrary to the laws of justice and charity. If the members of the Society did not bind themselves, in advance, to obey orders which its authorities may give, it could not long hold together. At the time the announcement of the decision come to at Rome was made, these conditions were not made public; only half the truth was told; now that the conditions are published, the effect of the decision is quite different from what it was supposed to be.

It is evident that the intention was that these conditions should be rigorously enforced; the Cardinal says, in so many words, that "Catholics who fail in one of these conditions are unworthy the sacraments of the Church." For non-Catholics, this menace has no terrors. He advises Catholics not to join the Society, but advice, if paternal, is not a command, and it leaves those to whom it is addressed at liberty to do as they please: to accept or reject it. The Cardinal insists strongly on forms. He says a Catholic cannot remain in the society, "if in the reception of a member, there are ceremonies resembling or having the appearance of Freemasonry, condemned absolutely in every form it may take." He lays down a rule, the enforcement of which would soon compel every Catholic member to withdraw; the utterance of any thing by a member contrary to religion, to justice, to charity or inimical to the State, unless censured on the spot, should be regarded as a reason for a Catholic to withdraw. Besides all threats to make any one commit an injustice, are to be regarded as attacks on personal liberty, and as a proof that there is something bad in the Society.

If each member were to be judge of what is contrary to justice, charity or State, these directions might become a dead letter. If, in any notorious case, the priest should try to get at the facts, in the confessional; and if the penitent could plead an obligation of secrecy, an answer would be withheld. But this excuse would not suffice, since secrecy in these societies is condemned by Rome, for this very reason, that if it could be pleaded, as a matter of right, the confessor would no longer be able to fathom mysteries which are hid from vulgar eyes. All this, we repeat, only concerns Roman Catholic members of this Society; but in the United States they form a large proportion, in Quebec, a large majority. We do not see how the Knights of Labor can make much headway, under the conditions recited, and the rules laid down by Cardinal Taschereau.

—The town of Windsor, Nova Scotia, does a large business in the shipping of raw plaster to the United States. During the year just passed, 212 cargoes of this article, some 111,392 tons was shipped, the value of which was about $1 per ton. Nova Scotia imports a good deal of prepared plaster for various purposes. Would it not be better for our eastern friends to calcine and grind their own products instead of exporting the raw article and importing the refined?

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS.

CITIZENS' STREET RY. CO, TWINSOE.—In this case the Supreme Court of Indiana held that a street railway company is bound, as a steam railway company is, to carry its passengers with s ecial care. It must have a safe track. Any person is justified in entering one of its cars when it is openly run and the company must use all necessary care to have its vehicles go over the track safely, when the track is being repaired, It is absurd to say that a passenger contributes to his own injury by entering the car where the track is under repairs, if he is hurt by the car leaving the track because of said condition.

WHEAT *vs.* BANK OF LOUISVILLE.—W. & Co. made a general assignment, and at the meeting of creditors it was agreed to accept 50 per cent. in compromise of the firm's debts. The President of the Bank of Louisville was present at this meeting, and as far as he could, made the bank a party to this compromise, but before this agreement was brought to its end the directors of the bank held several meetings, and on discussion of the proposed compromise each of them opposed it, no action, however, being taken. An action was brought by the assignee to settle the trust, and the bank refusing to accept 50 per cent. petitioned to recover its entire demand and succeeded. The Court of Appeals for Kentucky said that if the President of the bank had power to compromise the debt, it must be traced to the assent of the board of directors, either express or implied. "No custom is shown here of his right to act. In truth, the position of president of a bank is one of dignity rather than power. There is an indefinite general responsibility attached to the place. He is expected to watch more closely the daily transactions of the bank than the other directors, and while they, or usage, may confer on him special powers and extend his authority, yet that power inherent in the position is very slight. The limitation in the power of the President forbids him to surrender or release claims of the bank against any person, from whatsoever source arising, or to stay the collection of an execution against the estate of a judgment debtor, for either of these acts is the exercise of a discretionary authority over the affairs and property of the bank which is the peculiar and exclusive province of the directors."

ROMMEL *vs.* SCHANBACHER.—S. kept a public saloon. R. went into it and there found F. and they both became intoxicated from liquor which had been supplied to them by S. Whilst R. was standing outside the bar talking to S. who was inside, F. pinned a piece of paper to R.'s back and set fire to it. The fire lighted R.'s clothes, and he was severely burned and he sued S. for damages because of his failure to protect him from the acts of F. The chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, in giving judgment said: "There is no doubt S. from the position he occupied had a full view of the room outside the bar. If in fact he did see F. setting fire to the plaintiff and did not interfere to protect his guest from so flagrant an outrage, his responsibility for the consequences is undoubted. If, on the other hand, he was guilty of making F. drunk, or if F. came to his premises drunk and he knew the fact, he was bound to see that he did no injury to his customers. All this is a plain matter of common law. Where one enters a saloon or tavern, opened for the entertainment of the public, the proprietor is bound to see that he is properly protected from the assaults