

ARE THE RISKS OF BUSINESS INCREASING?

There is evidence that the risks of business in all commercial countries are not only growing heavier from local causes, but that these risks have received from great general causes an increased force during several years past. Whether this new movement is still accelerating its pace is a question well worthy of a most thorough and patient investigation. The losses and the risks incident to mercantile and industrial enterprises are on all sides reported to have reached a point heretofore unknown. No exaggeration in the estimates of present misfortunes may reasonably be expected. There is abundant evidence to sustain the conclusion that some wide-spread general influences are at work to disturb the industrial mechanism, and to shake the financial equilibrium all over the world. Among these causes, two or three may be cited with a view to stimulate inquiry.

In the first place, we must look back to the gold discoveries of 1848. Never in the history of modern commerce has any event occurred of greater importance. The civilization of the nineteenth century seemed at that time to be exposed to imminent peril. Throughout Europe political discontent and social suffering were ripening into revolution. The gold discoveries of Australia and California were just in time to relieve distress and assuage political tumult. The influx of the precious metals gave a new lease of life to the weaker monarchies of Europe. It enriched the people and fed the hungry; it gave the operative classes work and satisfied the poor. It overwhelmed and scattered the threatening storms by the sunshine of material prosperity. English statesmen amuse themselves by attributing this happy change—some to their wise fiscal arrangements, others to the Bank Act of 1844, and others again to a multitude of subordinate causes, each of which happened at a critical time, but had really little influence in effecting the economic revolution which gave life and activity to the paralyzed industries of Christendom. Throughout the Old World and the New the commerce, the industry and the productive power of every nation partook, according to its inherent vitality, of the impulse of this plenteous stream of gold which poured into the channels of finance and international trade.

Secondly, let us look at the marvellous results which have been developed during the last quarter of a century by the forces thus let loose in the arena of economic growth. The commerce of Europe has increased fivefold. Its wealth, though depleted by the most costly wars, has augmented enormously. Its area has been covered by a network of railroads and telegraphs its banking and financial institutions have been multiplied to afford facilities for its merchants, manufacturers and men of capital; and its whole industrial organism has advanced, "not by steps, but by leaps and bounds."

Thirdly, we will mention but one other fact as suitable to direct the inquiry on the subject before us. The process of excessive production has thus been going on throughout every nation in Europe, and it has been equally rapid in this country. Over-production has culminated in over competition. To this, and its twin brother, over-speculation, a large proportion of the new risks of business are undoubtedly due. In the present state of the evidence on this question, it is quite useless to attempt to forecast the immediate future in respect to it. The facts, however, are very suggestive. They should inspire mercantile men with caution, and with the laudable resolve to do a safe business rather than a large one, to economize their expenses and to control their risks and ventures by the rigid limits of their assured means.

RULES FOR BANK CUSTOMERS.

The annexed rules are recommended by an American paper to the attention of those who do business at the banks. A great deal of time and annoyance may be saved—by not following them:—

Rule 1.—If you have any business with a bank, put it off until 3 o'clock, or, if possible, a little later, as it looks more business-like to rush in as the bank is closing.

Rule 2.—Never put stamps on your cheques before you get to the bank, but give the cashier two cents, and ask him to lick it and cancel it for you; the cashier expects to lick all the stamps, and it is a source of disappointment to him when people insist on doing it themselves, and will save him buying his lunch.

Rule 3.—In depositing money, try to get it upside down and wrong end foremost, so that the cashier may have a little exercise in straightening it up before counting it.

Rule 4.—It is best not to take your bank book with you, but call at another time and have it entered. You can thus make two trips to the bank where one would answer.

Rule 5.—If a cheque is made payable to your order be careful not to endorse it before handing it to the cashier, but let him return it to you and wait while you endorse it; this helps to pass the time, and is a pleasure and relief to the cashier.

Rule 6.—If a cheque payable to your order is drawn on a bank where you are not known, and the cashier asks you to get yourself identified, be sure and treat this request as an insult, and do not fail to get very "mad" about it. He will then think you are a Judge or a Member of Congress, and feel ashamed at not recognising such a notable person.

Rule 7.—You can generally save time when making a deposit by counting down your money to the cashier, as you can nearly always count more speedily and correctly than he can.

Rule 8.—If you can make a deposit of 100 dollars, and give a cheque for 50 dollars, it is a good thing to call frequently at the bank and ask how your account stands, as it impresses the officers favourably with your business qualifications.

Rule 9.—Never keep any record when your notes fall due; and then if they are protested censure the bank for not giving you notice.

Rule 10.—Always date your cheque a-head it is a never-failing sign that you keep a good balance in bank; or if you do not wish it generally known that you are doing a good business do not deposit your money until about the time you expect your cheque will be in.

Rule 11.—When you order back a collection be sure and not give the amount or the day when it is due, as it gives the bank officer a chance to look over all his collection books in finding it, and impress him with the idea that your transactions are so immense that you cannot keep an account of them.

A strict observance of the foregoing rules will make your accounts desirable for any bank, and make you a general favourite with all the bank officers.

OIL MATTERS IN PETROLIA.

(From our own Correspondent.)

PETROLIA, April 25, 1876.

Many wells are going down but as yet none of any note have been struck, there is no doubt though that a great area of new supposed oil land will be developed this year. The term of the Oil Association of London expires in July next and it has yet to be seen whether they will be enabled to reconstruct it, if they do not, refined will be worth 16 to 17c per gal., and possibly less, at the same time it is likely that Crude

oil may be worth from \$1.00 to 1.25 per barrel against 85c, now their break up will also resuscitate the barrel trade which at present is controlled by them, they being the only refiners in the Dominion. They now pay some 80 to 85c for second-hand R. barrels at London, but in an open market the same barrels would bring over one dollar each. The stock of refined oil in dealers hands is very limited, no person feeling safe in holding more than actual requirements demand. The stock in warehouse last June was only some 4,000 barrels (against over 21,000 barrels the previous June), and this year it promises to be still less. One thing pointing to the London monopoly still attempting to make up another arrangement is the fact that they have purchased over 100,000 barrels of crude oil, so that should an open market be the order of the day, low prices and keen competition will be the result. Should the proposed shipment by the Association of 1,000 barrels of refined oil to England prove a success, it will cause a new era in the oil trade of this country, in connection with which I will quote from the *Advertiser* the following: "We have it from the highest authority, a member of the London Society of Arts, England, that such modifications and treatments of Canadian oils are now being perfected as will place our oils in the very first rank, despite all that America can do."

Shipments of oil from here from April 13th to 21st: Crude, 1 960 brls.; Distilled, 600 brls.; Refined, 112 brls. From July 1st, 1875, to 20th April, 1876: Crude, 175,743 brls.; Distilled, 6,145 brls.; Refined, 11,915 brls.

MIDLAND RAILWAY OF CANADA.—Statement of traffic receipts for week ending April 14th 1876, in comparison with same period last year. Passengers, \$1,792.96; Freight, \$3,395.24; Mails and Express, \$240.08; Total, \$5,428.28. Same week last year, \$5,981.23; Decrease, \$552.95. Total traffic to date, \$65,406.82; Total year previous, \$56,423.44; Increase, \$8,983.38.

—The report of the Union Bank of P. E. Island for last year is deserving of some attention, from the remarkable progress which the Bank has made in little more than a year. In September '74 the Bank had a capital of \$97,333, and its deposits were \$199,546. It was also supposed to have a balance of undivided profits, amounting to \$36,000, but its affairs had been so badly managed, and its books so disgracefully kept, that when the present Cashier took charge it was found that the concern had barely enough assets to meet its liabilities, and leave its capital intact. The books were checked back for about six years, and several large sums due the Bank, which had been entirely lost sight of, were recovered. In the short time that has elapsed the Bank's deposits have grown to \$336,872. Its capital has been increased to \$146,000, and a Reserve Fund (an entirely new feature in P. E. Island banking) has been created, which already amounts to \$25,000. In other words, the present management has increased the net yearly earnings by at least \$10,000 over and above the interest on capital, a result which must be very gratifying to the shareholders. The Bank is now, we believe, in the hands of a thoroughly well trained banker, and the above result of his labors in so short a space of time is about as good an illustration as can be found of the advantage of "professional" banking.—*Halifax Herald*.

—Rapid progress is being made with the Western Counties Railway between Yarmouth and Digby, N.S. Only six miles of the Yarmouth end remains to be graded, and not more than a third of the section between Digby and Weymouth. As soon as the frost is out of the ground track-laying will begin, and one-half of the line will be ready in a few months, the whole before the end of the year.