

# THE BANK OF MONTREAL

## Proceedings at the 94th Annual Meeting of Shareholders.

The 94th annual general meeting of the Shareholders of the Bank of Montreal was held on Monday, December 4, at noon in the Board Room, at the Bank's headquarters.

Amongst those present were:—Mr. R. B. Angus, Sir Edward Clouston, Bart., Sir William Macdonald, Sir Thomas G. Shaughnessy, Messrs. D. Morrice, H. V. Meredith, E. B. Greenshields, Hon. Robert Mackay, James Ross, W. Molson Macpherson, C. J. Fleet, K.C., Dr. H. B. Yates, G. F. C. Smith, Rev. G. H. Parker (Lennoxville), C. H. Cahan, K.C., William H. Evans, Hugh Paton, George Hooper, Henry Joseph, M. S. Foley, W. R. Miller, John Hamilton, George Durnford, C. S. Garland, W. Blackader, William Stanway, Mr. Archibald, C. Meredith, Mr. Alexander, Bartlett McLennan, James Crathern, P. F. McCaffrey, John Beatty, H. Meredith Smith, H. Dobell, J. B. Learmont, John Patterson, H. B. Scott, C. W. Buchanan, and James Skeoch.

On motion of Mr. W. M. Macpherson, the President, Mr. R. B. Angus, was requested to take the chair.

It was then moved by Mr. C. J. Fleet, K.C., seconded by Dr. H. B. Yates, that Messrs. G. F. C. Smith and Bartlett H. McLennan be appointed to act as Scrutineers, and that Mr. James Aird be the Secretary of the meeting. This was carried unanimously.

### THE ANNUAL REPORT.

Sir Edward Clouston, Bart., the General Manager of the Bank, was then called upon to read the annual report of the Directors to the Shareholders, as on the opposite page.

### THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The president, Mr. R. B. Angus, then moved the adoption of the Report, seconded by the Vice-President, Sir Edward Clouston, Bart. The President said:

I beg to move the adoption of the Report; and in doing so, I have to call the attention of the Shareholders to two important changes in the Annual Statement.

The one that was authorized by you at the Special Meeting of the 5th September and subsequently approved by the Treasury Board, provided for an increase of the Capital Stock by \$1,600,000—mainly with a view of extending to that amount the right to increase the issue of notes in circulation. This appeared to be urgently demanded, as the circulation of this Bank had reached the legal limit, the amount of the paid-up capital; and as other Banks were much in the same position, it was feared that a great scarcity of currency would soon be experienced.

Another considerable change in the Statement at this time will be seen in the treatment of Bank premises account, which for years had been represented by the comparatively insignificant sum of \$600,000, notwithstanding the large expenditure recently incurred for Bank Buildings and for providing suitable accommodations for the increasing business throughout the country. Your Directors have been frequently criticized for having charged the full amount of the cost under this head against the profits of the year, and it has been suggested that we should alter our system to conform to that of other Banks in the published statements. We have, therefore, had a conservative valuation made of the property, which results in the figures now submitted, namely, \$9,088,000, land \$4,735,000 and buildings \$4,353,000, and have taken back less than half that amount or \$4,000,000—more adequately to represent this item in the balance sheet. To adjust bank premises, consequently, the sum of \$3,400,000 has been applied, and the balance carried forward.

The calls on New Stock extend over a period of nine months, and the payments being completed, the capital will stand at \$16,000,000, and the rest at a like amount.

On 15th September last, we sustained a loss of \$271,721.00 by burglary at New Westminster, one of our important branches, where a considerable amount of money had been provided for the payment of wages. A small portion so far has been recovered in addition to the insurance, and the balance has been written off.

The business of the bank has been fairly prosperous during the year, although the employment of spare funds, in call and short loans, has been less productive than usual, the prevailing rates having been extremely low in

New York and London during the whole period. The ordinary deposits show a gratifying increase, while those of a temporary character have to some extent fallen off, as we have been unwilling to encourage them at a higher rate of interest.

The money markets of Great Britain and the Continent of Europe have taken freely of Canadian bonds and stocks, municipal, railway and industrial. There was a brief interval of dullness, but that condition seems to have passed and well vouched for securities are again in good demand. There is ample room for the employment of foreign capital in this rapidly developing country, and it becomes the more imperative that no issue having any taint or doubtful value should be submitted to the foreign investor.

During the year under review Canada has enjoyed a period of great prosperity in almost every department of trade and commerce, and has undoubtedly added largely to her permanent and productive wealth; although this has been more marked in the prairie provinces and British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces have not failed to participate.

The mining industry of British Columbia has taken on a new life, although the prolonged coal strike has seriously interfered with the operation of the mines and lessened their product. The mines in Ontario have been wonderfully productive. The iron and coal of Nova Scotia have had a large output and promise to be more profitable when their organization is more complete.

Manufacturers have been fully occupied, and new industries of every description are springing up in all parts of the Dominion.

In immigration from Europe and the United States, Canada has attracted 348,633 souls to her population, an increase over the previous year of 56,369. This item alone represents a very substantial gain. The value of each immigrant in money and property brought into the country has been variously estimated, and in the aggregate, we know it must be very great; but still more to be valued is the advantage of the advent of so many additional hands, mostly farm labourers, who recall at once to the lands which lie open to their enterprise.

The increasing immigration, the consequent development of new acreage and the various climatic conditions make it difficult to estimate the result of the harvest. For instance, the generally accepted figures for last year ranged from 80 to 95 millions of wheat, while the final out-run showed actually 118 millions in round figures. I have from a capable and well informed source the following estimate for this year: He says with regard to the Western crops:

Early estimates made by competent judges were in the neighbourhood of 200 million bushels. However, since then, these estimates have been reduced to about 180 millions, owing to subsequent unfavourable weather conditions. While the quality this year, as a whole, is not all that could be desired, the average prices being paid for the lower grades are even better than the prices obtainable in many previous years for the higher grades, and consequently the net cash returns will be the largest ever obtained from our Northwest.

When considering the effect of the wheat crop in relation to its influence on the prosperity of our Dominion, the value of the other cereals produced in our Northwest must not be overlooked. If we accept the present estimates of the various important grains, which are as follows:—

Wheat	180,000,000 bushels
Oats	200,000,000 "
Barley	35,000,000 "
Flax	7,000,000 "

the cash value to the farmer, at the average prices prevailing to-day, would be approximately over \$235,000,000, no inconsiderable sum, considering that this is exclusive of the farmers' receipts from various other sources, such as live stock, hay, root crops and dairy products.

Railway construction, especially in the Northwest, continues to manifest great activity; and while in its immediate effect, it benefits the country by the expenditure of money, and the employment of labour, where the lines are judiciously chosen it prepares the way for settlement