

The Economist,

WEEKLY COMMERCIAL TIMES,

Bankers' Gazette, and Railway Monitor:

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The Economist.

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MONTHLY TRADE SUPPLEMENT.

On November 14th was published the Thirty-Fifth of a series of Monthly Trade Supplements. It is intended that each Supplement shall contain a number of articles on our various industries, together with information on subjects of special interest to our manufacturers and traders. Careful digests will be made of the reports on the trade of foreign countries, furnished by our Consuls, and similar summaries given of the commercial and statistical reports which are regularly issued by several Foreign Governments. Special attention will likewise be devoted to statistics of production and consumption, both at home and abroad, the Monthly Board of Trade Returns being given in their practical entirety.

These Monthly Supplements are issued gratis to all subscribers to the ECONOMIST.

THE MONEY MARKET.

THE Bank reserve having been strengthened a little by the return of notes and coin from internal circulation, the market has become a shade easier, and although 2½ per cent. is still the nominal rate for best three months' bills, business is done slightly under that figure. At present, there would seem to be a pause in the borrowings of the Bank, and some of the loans it recently negotiated when seeking to raise the value of money in the market have apparently not been renewed. And it is natural enough that the Bank should be strongly disinclined to continue borrowing, as, owing to the advance in rates, the operation is much more onerous than when it was first begun. Possibly, therefore, the directors may now be inclined to let the market take its course, although, for reasons we have formerly stated, that would be a risky policy, especially as they must know that as the end of the year approaches they will naturally gain a somewhat better control over it. Not only does the demand for money quicken then, but dealers know that the time is at hand when, through the collection of the assessed taxes, money is swept out of the market into the Government account at the Bank, which can then make its rate effective; and knowing this, they become less inclined to tie up their money at rates much below that of the Bank.

So far as the internal movements of money go, there is

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nothing to point to any advance in the value of money. Gold is coming back from Ireland, and will continue to come back, although, probably, some of the amounts sent there at the time of the run upon the Bank of Ireland will be more permanently retained. The Scotch banks, also, will soon be returning the coin they took North to hold against the "term" expansion of their note circulation. And these movements may be expected to counteract the temporary expansion in the circulation consequent upon the General Election. Moreover, although there are now more confident hopes of an early revival of trade here, and also a more substantial basis upon which those hopes may rest, the improvement will take time to make its influence felt upon rates. It is consequently upon the foreign demand for gold that the course of the market mainly depends. At present, although the German demand remains unsatisfied, it can be met without recourse to the Bank, and so long as that is the case, it will not have much effect. But the drop in the New York exchange suggests the possibility of gold having to be shipped thither, and if withdrawals of any magnitude were made, the Bank would be compelled at once to raise its rate. At present there does not seem much probability of any large amounts being taken for that quarter, but the whole position is so uncertain, that it is impossible to see any distance ahead.

In connection with the periodic movements of gold to Scotland, a suggestion has been made to us, which, if adopted, would be attended with very considerable advantages, and to which we can see no objection. It is well known that the gold sent North in May and November is not needed for the purpose of circulation. It is held as a backing to the enlarged note issues of the Scotch banks, and more frequently than not it is never taken out of the boxes in which it is dispatched from London. And what is suggested to us is, that all the trouble, the expense, and the loss from abrasion attendant upon moving this coin to and from London might be obviated if the gold were deposited in a special vault at the Bank of England, and held there specially on account of the Scotch banks. The gold so held would not be reckoned as part of the stock of bullion belonging to the Bank of England, and the provisions of the Acts governing the currency arrangements of the country would thus be practically as fully complied with as at present, the only difference being, that the gold, instead of being held in the head offices of the Scotch banks, would be held at the sole disposition of the Scotch banks in a vault in London. A similar arrangement might also be made on the part of the Irish banks, and costly, but practically useless, movements of bullion thus be avoided.

BANK RATE and MARKET RATE.

	Yesterday.	Last Week.	A Fort-night Ago.	Three Weeks Ago.	A Month Ago.
Bank rate.....	3	3	2	2	2
Market rate...	2½	2½	2	1½ 1½	1½

LONDON MARKET RATE Compared with FOREIGN MARKET RATES (+ above: - below.)

	Yesterday	Last Week.	A Fort-night Ago.	Three Weeks Ago.	A Month Ago.
With Paris	% same	% same	%	%	%
" Berlin	+ ¼	+ ¼	- ¼	- ¼	- ¼
" Amsterdam	+ ¼	+ ¼	- ¼	- ¼	- ¼
" New York call money	- 1	same	- ¼	- 1½	- 1

RATES of EXCHANGE.

	Yesterday.	Last Week.	A Fort-night Ago.	Three Weeks Ago.	A Month Ago.
France	Per Mille. ½ agst us	Per Mille. ½ agst us	Per Mille. 1½ agst us	Per Mille. 1 agst us	Per Mille. ¾ agst us
Germany	4½ agst us	4½ agst us	4½ agst us	4½ agst us	4½ agst us
Holland	5½ agst us	4½ agst us	2 agst us	3 agst us	3 agst us
New York	4½ agst us	3½ agst us	3½ agst us	3½ agst us	2½ agst us

THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

THE Parliament of 1880 has been dissolved, and within a few hours of the issue of this journal the new elections will have been commenced. They will have been finished, with perhaps an exception or two, by this day fortnight, and within ten days enough will be known to enable politicians to form a sufficiently clear forecast of the future

strength of parties. It is time, therefore, to ask whether there is any sufficient reason for the vague belief now prevalent that the new House of Commons will differ in any striking way from the Houses which have preceded it; whether, that is, its tone will be new, or its leading men belong in any marked degree to a new stratum of society. That this is believed is certain, but the belief rests upon rather insufficient foundation. One change of great importance there will no doubt be. The Irish representation, instead of consisting of seventy gentlemen, very like English gentlemen of the same class, and thirty-three Irreconcilables, drawn for the most part from a lower order, will consist of from eighty to ninety Irreconcilables, only a few of whom will be gentlemen in the society sense, and from fifteen to twenty-five Members from Ulster, all strong Tories, devoted to the defence of the English connection. The large body of Parnellites will undoubtedly exercise great weight in the House, and from their power of lengthy, and sometimes of eloquent, speech, their regular attendance, and their indisposition to comply with rules, will, to a certain extent, modify deliberations. The mere noise they will make will, indeed, affect the outward order of the House of Commons. It may be necessary to modify the rules to meet the effects of their arrival, and it is possible, as we said last week, that they may from the very first raise the question of a reform of procedure to the first position in the order of public business, and for a time arrest the consideration of any of the proposals to be mentioned in the Queen's Speech.

This change has, however, been discounted, and its effect will depend so much upon circumstances and upon the policy of Mr Parnell, that we shall confine ourselves in our subsequent remarks to the representation of Great Britain. Will that be greatly changed in character? We do not see any clear reason to believe that it will. An extraordinarily large number of new candidates are, it is true, coming forward, and it is supposed that nearly three hundred new members will be elected; but great as the results of that change in the *personnel* of the House may prove, it does not necessarily involve a change in the character of the representative body. Nothing is more remarkable in this election than the absence of any definite new class among the candidates for Parliament. Entrance has become decidedly easier, the expenses, especially for county seats, have been immensely reduced, and from the size of the constituencies personal capacity has acquired a new value, but no new class has made its appearance. We might have expected a large number of actual working men, like Mr Burt, but there will not, we are told, be more than half-a-dozen. We should ourselves have looked for a few peasants, such as find a place in most continental Parliaments, but there will not be even one, the two or three men so-called being usually unconnected with land. Speculators used to predict an amazing rush of tenant farmers; but their chance was diminished by the one seat clause, which destroyed the possibility of convenient compromises, and though a member or two may call himself a tenant-farmer, their direct representation will be exceedingly small. There will be a few more local notabilities, a few more adventurers, who will seek City employment, and a few less of the greater county gentry; but the main change will be the introduction of a largely increased number of professional men, chiefly lawyers. It is asserted that two hundred at least of the latter will be returned, and asked laughingly what the suitors are to do if their advocates are all conducting the business of the country. In fact, in constituencies taken to some extent by surprise, and a little at sea as to results, lawyers have been found the most acceptable candidates, especially for new county districts. They make themselves acceptable to the new Committees; they talk easily to the electors; and though they have as many convictions as their neighbours, they have a certain readiness in consenting to speak from a brief. The advent of professional men in such large numbers is undoubtedly a new feature, but we do not know that it will be a very perceptible one. There always have been many lawyers in the House. They belong to all classes; they are as well educated as the squires, and in the same way; they understand business, they are singularly open to social impressions, and they are in many respects naturally conservative. They are, for instance, in favour of orderly and rather rigid rules of procedure; they

dislike, by temperament, rash or large innovations; and they see when broad measures are proposed a great many practical difficulties. The late Lord Cairns was the highest type of the class; and though not precisely a statesman, except when Irish affairs were under discussion, he was one of the most solidly competent men who ever sat in a Cabinet. The new lawyers are not likely to be up to his level, or near it, but they will be, whatever their politics, largely of his temper, unwilling to attempt revolutionary acts, indisposed to disorder of any kind, and apt to regard the country as a kind of jury, which is to be coaxed, and argued, and chatted into common sense. They are inclined, too, to defer to leaders, for the leaders will be the Government, and if they are at all self-seeking men, it is to the Government that they will look for advancement. They will be for most purposes as good members as the squires and local magnates, while they will be better informed, and more accustomed to attend to a variety of business. They will be undoubtedly a little more disposed to receive orders from constituents, but we do not know that the legal Members of the House are unusually servile, or over disposed to surrender judgments which their profession has trained them rather to maintain *against* their clients. The new men will be like their predecessors, and except in one respect, which we shall presently mention, we shall expect to see a House substantially but little changed. It will still contain at least five hundred educated Englishmen and Scotchmen, and in these islands educated men are even singularly similar. They differ exceedingly, as elsewhere, in abilities, in knowledge, and in position, but they have a large common fund of opinions, understand one another easily and well, and are by no means indisposed to be sceptical as to the possibility of too rapid advance. Moreover, the House will still be guided by its old leaders, and it is the leaders who in a public meeting governed by strict rules gradually inspire it with a tone.

The greatest change we fear in the House of Commons will be a decrease in its power of doing work, owing to an increase in the inclination of members to display themselves in public. The seats of the members used to depend upon the support of small committees, who, especially in the counties, could always prevent the dismissal of an old member. They, consequently, were not forced to speak, and as a majority disliked speaking, they remained silent, and allowed public business to proceed. The new members, on the contrary, will be dependant on their constituents, and will desire to show themselves efficient in their eyes. This can only be done by speaking, and the number anxious to take part in debate will therefore be very large, so large probably as to lengthen every important debate. This will greatly reduce the time available for work, already much too short, and may seriously reduce both the efficiency and popularity of the House. It may be found necessary to limit this exuberance of talk, and the devices adopted for that end will probably affect proceedings much more than the *Clôture*. At present the idea is to fix an arbitrary time, which must not be exceeded; but this will not be found effective. Experience shows that a limit of time only tempts more members to rise, and even a ten-minute rule would not enable a House of talkers to get through its work. The remedy must be sought, we suspect, in limiting the occasions rather than the length of debates, and this will involve a recurrence to silent voting, such as will materially modify the aspect of business within the House of Commons, and perhaps in the end affect the class of men who will seek seats. For the present, however, we expect an excessively, or it may be even egregiously, talkative House of Commons, but one in other respects but little changed.

ENGLAND AND THE EAST.

THE dissolution of Parliament at a time when war has just broken out in two different continents reminds us that the political reforms and constitutional changes which have during the last fifty years transformed the governments of so large a part of the civilised world, have not brought mankind appreciably nearer to the universal reign of peace. It is true that it would be

difficult to imagine two enterprises more radically different in their origin, and in their moral and political aspects, than the English invasion of Burmah, which has been begun this week in such workmanlike fashion, and the Servian attack upon Bulgaria. So long as civilised and uncivilised races are brought into contact by the industrial and commercial activity of the Western world, operations such as those in which we are reluctantly engaged on the Irrawaddy must from time to time be inevitable. Arbitration is out of the question with a barbarous despot like Theebaw; and as no State can permit its subjects, engaged in the legitimate pursuit of trade and exercising rights given to them by contract, to be plundered at pleasure, there must always be occasions when redress will have to be sought, in the only way in which it can be obtained—by force of arms. The luccameering adventure of the Servians, on the other hand, is a specimen of a class of wars, needless, unjustifiable, and profitless, of which history is full, and which the progress of civilisation and the development of international morality might fairly be expected to have rendered impossible. No event of recent times has illustrated in more startling fashion the persistent vitality in communities of men, and their unabashed display, of passions and cupidities by which decent people in private life have ceased to be dominated, or which, at any rate, they refuse to acknowledge, and are ashamed to exhibit. There is hardly an attempt in the cynical declarations which the Servian Government has put forward to disguise or to justify the motives of its present policy of aggression. The "intolerable hardship," which Servia alleges must result to her from a "disturbance of the equilibrium" in the Balkan Peninsula, amounts to nothing more than a confession of malevolent jealousy at the good fortune of a neighbouring State, which has enlarged its own boundaries without encroaching upon an inch of Servian territory. Such a very unheroic piece of criminality would, in any well-governed community, provoke a cry for the intervention of the police. And one of the most regrettable features of the situation is, that it reveals the melancholy impotence of the acknowledged guardians of the peace of Europe. At the very time when Servia was, as everyone knew, mobilising her troops and concocting a pretext for the invasion of Bulgaria, the Great Powers were assembled in conference at Constantinople, and were apparently engaged in splitting hairs as to the terms and the form in which they should convey to Prince Alexander their disapproval of the Bulgarian union. The weakness of the European concert has never been more conspicuously exhibited. It may be said that the Great Powers will, sooner or later, make themselves felt, and that Servia will not be permitted to keep her unrighteous gains. But experience shows that Europe is ready enough to listen to and accept the plea of *fait accompli*. And even if it were not so, the main function of the European concert is, or ought to be, not to undo mischief after it has been done, but to exercise a controlling and disciplinary authority over the unruly ambitions and cupidities of small and adventurous States.

Our direct interest in the rearrangement of the State system of the Balkan Peninsula is very slight. But it is satisfactory to observe that English policy under Lord Salisbury is being directed, not obtrusively, but we may hope effectively, to the same ends which would have found favour with his predecessors, and which are generally approved by public opinion in this country. Mr Gladstone, in his speech the other day at West Calder, frankly and generously recognised the correctness of the attitude which our Ambassador at Constantinople has been ordered to assume. It is easy, of course, for partisan critics to discern a marked change between the aims of Lord Salisbury's present policy and that which, under the inspiration of Lord Beaconsfield, he pursued at the Congress of Berlin. Nor is the accusation of inconsistency sufficiently met by a mere assertion that the conditions of the problem have altered. These recriminations may be left to electioneering orators; the important thing for the country to observe, is that the lines of its policy in the East are now fixed by the joint assent of the two great parties, and that they are likely to remain unaffected by

changes of Administration. To foster, without forcing into premature vitality, the germs of independent life in the backward, but growing nationalities of the Balkans, and to maintain, for a time at least, the outward fabric of the Ottoman Empire—not because it is a good thing in itself, but because it offers a provisional safeguard against the disastrous rivalry of competing ambitions, which its removal would let loose: such is the guiding purpose of our diplomacy in Eastern Europe. It incapacitates us to take sides as the intimate allies either of the Three Empires or of the Sultan. But it compels us, as recent events have shown, to exercise a moderating influence, which, when effectively and resolutely applied, may be of the greatest service both to liberty and to peace.

INVESTMENTS IN AUSTRALIA BY BRITISH INSURANCE SOCIETIES.

It is announced that the Scottish Widows' Fund, the largest, and in some respects the most influential, of our life assurance societies, is about to despatch a special agent to Australia to represent it there, "on matters of investment in the Australasian colonies." And in this announcement there is a great deal more than meets the eye. Hitherto, so far as can be gathered from its accounts, the Scottish Widows' Fund has not had a penny invested in Australia. Its investments have been limited to the United Kingdom, and the intimation that it is now about to extend its operations to the Antipodes must be taken as indicating that our insurance companies are finding it so difficult to employ the enormous funds they control at adequately remunerative rates at home, that they are forced to go abroad to find more profitable outlets for their capital.

In order to appreciate the importance of this movement, it is necessary first of all to see what is the amount of the loanable funds held by our insurance societies, and how these are at present invested. On both these points the latest information is that contained in the annual volume of life assurance returns issued by the Board of Trade in July last, in which the total assets of the companies are classified thus:—

SUMMARY of TOTAL ASSETS.

	1883-4.	1882-3.	1881-2.	1880-1.
	£	£	£	£
Mortgages	74,282,393	72,634,057	71,151,812	70,787,079
Loans on policies	7,806,172	7,544,874	7,302,675	7,157,500
Do rates and rent-charges	21,095,748	21,013,617	19,241,989	19,354,056
British Government securities	4,662,518	4,766,929	5,027,962	4,886,923
Indian and Colonial Govm't. securities	9,380,817	8,808,808	8,269,256	7,058,688
Foreign Government securities	4,066,533	4,286,736	4,320,624	4,412,007
Debentures	12,204,869	11,494,305	11,292,358	10,569,636
Shares and stocks	9,929,528	9,807,588	8,745,611	7,938,771
Companies' ownshares	618,690	593,530	577,761	565,936
Land and house property and ground-rents	8,890,157	8,416,872	8,320,287	7,279,364
Life interest and reversions	2,949,862	2,934,861	2,830,325	2,687,290
Loans on personal security	1,389,050	1,447,390	1,518,367	1,803,641
Agents' balances and outstanding prems.	3,433,696	3,293,896	3,193,933	2,969,641
Outstanding interest	1,495,159	1,461,375	1,420,067	1,367,162
Cash, bills, stamps, &c.	4,288,278	3,846,333	4,461,772	4,473,945
Customs timber measuring balances, &c.	2,702	2,872	4,325	10,147
Book-room grant (Itinerant Methodist)	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Sundries	4,407	80,051	12,859	12,896
Deficiencies, preliminary expenses, &c.	83,018	113,783	158,377	72,963
	166,658,597	162,622,879	157,875,360	153,482,645

Nearly one-half of the total investments, it will be noted, are in the shape of mortgages, and of the 74½ millions classed under that head, nearly 72½ millions consist of mortgages on property, life interests, and rates in the United Kingdom, and only a little more than 1½ million are made up of mortgages upon property outside of the United

Kingdom. Moreover, out of the 95 companies whose assets are summarised, there were only 16 who, in 1883-4, had money lent on mortgages abroad, and out of these 16 there were only half-a-dozen whose investments of this class exceeded 100,000*l.* These 16 offices and the amount they had invested are:—

Office.	Total Investments. £	Invested in Mortgages on Property out of United Kingdom. £
Briton Medical and General.....	609,900	500
Commercial Union.....	1,720,700	50,200
Equity and Law.....	1,873,300	1,600
Liverpool, London, and Globe...	6,396,600	514,600
London and Lancashire	283,200	29,400
London, Edinburgh, & Glasgow	46,300	4,900
North British and Mercantile ...	5,932,700	31,900
Northern	2,717,900	126,100
Queen	928,900	140,600
Scottish Amicable	2,547,800	1,300
Scottish Equitable.....	2,690,200	14,500
Scottish Provident.....	4,587,400	1,200
Scottish Union and National ...	270,400	121,800
Standard	5,675,400	389,000
Star	2,076,600	148,600
Universal.....	1,057,700	1,900
	39,415,000	1,578,100

It will probably be found that all of the above offices which have any material amount invested in foreign mortgages have made the investments in connection with the fire insurance business they transact abroad. In any case, however, it is evident that the amount as yet invested by the companies on the security of property outside of the United Kingdom is quite insignificant, and if the step now taken by the Scottish Widows' Fund cannot be spoken of as an altogether new departure, it is, at all events, the first serious attempt made by any British assurance society to include the colonies in the field of its investments.

For this breaking of fresh ground good reasons can be shown. As we pointed out in a recent issue,* the yield of first-class securities has for some years past been tending steadily downwards, and on this class of their investments the insurance offices have been obtaining a diminishing return. Then, again, with regard to the loans on the security of rates, which have bulked largely in the investments of the offices, there has latterly been a two-fold process of contraction. For one thing, the best of the municipalities and corporate bodies have found it more profitable to come into the market for a public loan than to borrow the money they need from the insurance offices. And not only has the home investment field been thus narrowed, but the rate of interest obtainable has also been curtailed, because the success of the public loans has done something towards establishing a lower standard of payment for private loans of the same class. This double process of curtailment, moreover, is not unlikely to continue, and to become still more marked. Some large measure of local government reform is almost certain to be carried within the next year or two, and whatever else that reform may accomplish, it will certainly provide for the consolidation of governing bodies, so as to place control in fewer hands, and extend the control over wider areas than at present. The new local authorities will be much more considerable bodies than those they replace, and will consequently be able to command a better market for their loans.

And the position of the offices with regard to mortgages on property in the United Kingdom is still more difficult. The nationalist agitation in Ireland has practically closed that portion of the kingdom against investments of capital, and the insurance offices, who formerly lent freely on Irish property, will not now lend on any terms, and are solely concerned to realise as promptly, and with as little loss as possible, the many millions they have advanced. Thus compelled to confine their operations to England and Scotland, the offices have greater difficulty than formerly in placing their funds, and competing more keenly with each other, they give borrowers the opportunity to beat down rates. Looking forward, moreover, the offices see that impending legislation may in some directions restrict this, the main branch of their

* See ECONOMIST, November 7th, p. 1350.

investment business, because there is sure to be some limitation of the power to tie up land, and to create in connection with it an infinity of life and reversionary interests. This, of course, may be offset in other ways. A more absolute ownership of land may lead to an increase of borrowing upon the security of the land, so as to develop to the utmost its productive capacity; but it will take some time before legislation shapes itself and its effects can be gauged, and during this transition stage at all events lenders will desire to act with caution.

How far these various circumstances have affected the insurance offices during the past few years a few instances will suffice to show. It would be invidious to single out individual offices, because people who have not gone into the subject might think that these had been selected because they had fared worse than their neighbours; but in the following statement we have given the rate of interest realised on their investments in the years 1880 and 1883-4 respectively of all the offices whose valuation returns are included in the volume of accounts last issued by the Board of Trade:—

AVERAGE RATE OF INTEREST at which the LIFE ASSURANCE FUNDS were INVESTED.

Office.	1883-4.			1880.		
	£	s	d	£	s	d
A.	4	3	1	4	6	10
B.	4	6	6	4	6	7
C.	4	8	7	4	10	6
D.	4	6	8	4	8	2
E.	4	10	2	4	9	8
F.	4	8	4	4	3	5
G.	3	10	0	3	0	0
H.	4	5	4	4	6	9
I.	4	10	9	4	12	7
K.	4	15	5	4	16	2
L.	4	7	11	4	9	10
M.	4	7	1	4	10	11
N.	3	15	0	3	18	8
O.	4	2	6	3	18	9
P.	4	2	11	4	7	4

The falling-off, although general, has not been heavy, but a decrease of even $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent upon funds amounting to 150,000,000*l* is a considerable item, and as any reduction of the interest-earning power of the office, by cutting into the amount distributable as bonuses, lessens their attractiveness to insurers, the steady decline in the average return upon their investments is naturally a matter of serious concern to them.

It is to counteract this decline that the Scottish Widows' Fund now goes to Australia, and it is obvious that since it has determined to invest there, its investments must be on a large scale. It would be of no use pottering over small investments, because the cost would outrun the profit. A special agency means a considerable expense, and would only be established to facilitate large investments. There would, in fact, be nothing surprising if in the course of a year or two this one office were found to have lent out upon Australian property two or three times as much as the total amount of all the present investments of the whole of our insurance offices in mortgages on property out of the Kingdom. Nor do we doubt that such an amount could be readily and safely placed at fully 1 per cent. more than is now obtained for similar investments in the United Kingdom. And consequently, the probability, it seems to us, is, that other offices will follow the lead set them by the Scottish Widows' Society. A considerable flow of insurance funds to Australia thus appears to be imminent, and if that be directed with care and judgment, there is nothing in it to be regretted. What we are curious to see, however, is, whether Australia may not give as well as take. There are Australian insurance societies—notably the Australian Mutual—which, as regards stability, need not fear comparison with the best of our home offices. They have, too, this advantage over British offices, that their whole funds are invested at the higher rate of interest current in the colonies, whereas only a portion of the funds of the home offices can at any time be so invested. Consequently, they are able to offer, in some ways, greater inducements and advantages to insurers than our own offices, and if they were to come here in friendly competition with the home institutions, the result might be beneficial to them and to British insurers as well.

A GLANCE AT THE AREAS OF RELATIVE DEPRESSION IN THE STOCK MARKETS.

EVERY now and again within the past few weeks it has seemed as if a great rise in securities on the Stock Exchange were certain to occur, not so much because the outlook has definitely improved, as because the future is viewed with more confidence, and a distinct revival of trade in the near future is regarded as highly probable. At present the most important fact in support of these views is the undoubted improvement in the United States, which will certainly react here if it gains ground and becomes established. Great confidence on the part of the public seems to exist across the Atlantic, and the result is a continuous advance in American railway securities. And there can be no doubt that the latter is exercising a strong influence upon prices generally on the London Stock Exchange, which, although at present somewhat neutralised by the troubled aspect of affairs in the Balkans, and the absence of any improvement in the home trade, would no doubt act with considerable effect if the outlook were to clear definitely in either respect. Briefly, in fact, the temper of the markets is such that a very little encouragement would in all probability lead to a general and extensive rise in prices. Last week there was a distinct tendency to buy many classes of securities which have been neglected for a length of time, but this is now less pronounced. At any time, however, it may revive, and a distinct change for the better in trade, which may not be long delayed, is pretty certain to cause a considerable advance. In view of this, it may be well to glance at the various markets, and note in a rough way where the depression has been most intense, so as to form some idea of where a rise is likely to be most pronounced.

Taken as a whole, Foreign Government securities are best omitted, since they are much less influenced by commercial considerations than by those of a more purely political character. In the absence, however, of counteracting causes, prices would undoubtedly advance in sympathy with a general rise in other directions, although the extent of such a movement would no doubt be limited. And in most instances, it must be remembered, prices already stand high. At the same time, there are a number of low-priced stocks in this department, termed the "rubbish" of the market, which, although possessing no present, and perhaps next to no prospective value, would very probably be taken up by speculators in view of the well-known fact that whenever there is a revival in the stock markets, the public usually make a rush to buy such issues, because, it is said, "they look cheap."

In railway securities, which form the most important class of all, we will just glance at the issues of the Home lines first, and in order to see the relative height of present prices, it is well to compare them with the highest points touched in the current and six preceding years:—

	Price Nov. 20.	Highest Price Touched in						
		1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879
Caledonian.....	102½	102½	104	113	112½	115½	117½	107½
Great Eastern	64½	69½	69½	78	79	74	69½	61½
Great Northern, Ordinary	112½	113	116½	124½	132½	133½	128½	124
Great Western	138½	140½	145	148	149	139½	132½	113½
London & Brighton, "A"	97½	104½	108½	120½	146½	148½	164	135½
Lon., Chatham & Dover, Ord	19½	18½	24½	29	32½	34½	36½	28½
London & North-Western.	166	170	174	178½	180	172½	166	149½
Manch., Sheffield, &c., Ord	72	74½	84½	92½	95	98½	98½	83½
Metropolitan	107½	113½	118½	121	124½	125	126½	124
Metropolitan District.....	44½	60½	71½	62½	65½	82	85½	84½
Midland	130½	134	137	137½	143	143	144½	137½
North British	94½	97	106½	106½	103½	96½	95½	91½
North-Eastern	159½	157½	172½	174½	179	178½	177½	151
South-Eastern, "A"	95½	101	112½	122½	132	134½	136½	124½

If the comparison is carried back for several years farther, say, to 1873, we do not find that higher prices were touched, except in the case of the Scotch stocks. Caledonian being in the "one hundred and thirties" during 1875-6-7, and North British almost as high in 1875-6. In these and the other speculative issues given above, there is evidently room for very striking movements, and although the conditions may now be widely different from what they were a few years ago, when Brighton "A" reached the phenomenal price of 164, or 65 per cent. above

the current price, yet history is apt to repeat itself, and it is, we think, very unlikely that the Home railway market will continue to remain as inert and sluggish as it has been for the past two or three years. In the case of stocks of an investment character, prices are usually about from 10 to 15 per cent. below the highest prices touched during the past ten years, and in view of the great reduction of dividends which has occurred, this seems a comparatively small decline. It would appear, therefore, that, apart from the purely gambling issues, quite a moderate rise in prices would go a long way towards discounting the entire recent loss in values, although it is quite certain that a considerable time must elapse before the diminution in dividends is made good.

As regards American and Canadian railway securities, the facts connected with the immense decline in prices since 1881, and the great recovery which has been established in the past few months, are well known. The present relative position of prices is best seen by a comparison with the highest points touched in 1879 and 1881:—

	Prices Nov. 20.	Highest Prices Touched in 1881.	Highest Prices Touched in 1879.
Central Pacific	49½	102½	97½
Chicago, Milwaukee, &c.	101½	129½	82½
Denver and Rio Grande	24½	113½	86½
Illinois Central	143	146½	100½
Lake Shore	92½	135½	108
Louisville and Nashville	53½	110½	89½
New York Central	110½	155	139
New York, Lake Erie, & W.	28½	52½	49
Pennsylvania	57½	70½	51½
Philadelphia and Reading	13½	37½	37½
Union Pacific	64	131½	95
Wabash, Preference	24½	96½	78
Grand Trunk, Ordinary	12	26½	16½
Do 1st Preference	63½	106½	70½
Do 2nd Preference	48	98½	54
Do 3rd Preference	25½	54	28½

The prices of 1879 are usually considered to compare somewhat equally with the present time, since the first definite improvement after the events of 1873 then became apparent. The prices of 1881, on the other hand, were exceptionally high, and were greatly inflated, from a variety of causes, which, as we have said before, are scarcely likely to again coincide. And not only are the external conditions now different, but in many instances the companies themselves have undergone vital changes. And in comparing prices, these facts need to be clearly kept in mind. In glancing over the list of other foreign railways, a great expansion in their number is apparent, owing chiefly to development in South America, and, as a result of these and other changes, any comparison of prices would be too imperfect to be of value.

After railway securities, bank shares are perhaps the most important class of securities. Values in this section would no doubt sympathise with any general improvement, and in a few cases they are now low, but, as a whole, they certainly do not show any marked traces of the depression of the past few years. This is, however, by no means the case with insurance shares, which, although now above the worst points touched recently, are, as a whole, greatly below the best points of a few years ago, as the following figures of a few leading issues show:—

	Price Nov. 20.	Highest Prices Touched in						
		1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879
Alliance (B. and F.)	36½	38½	39½	41	41	40½	36	31½
Commercial Union	16	17½	19½	22½	26	30	26	20½
Guardian	60	65	67½	70	76	82	73	70
Indemnity Marine	15	15½	16	17½	21	19	108	101
London	45	52½	57	41½	65½	69	66	66
Northern	45	45	43½	49½	54½	59½	55	42½

A few issues have been well supported, but altogether the market value of insurance shares is relatively at low water. The causes of this are well known, and in this, as in other cases, we merely draw attention to the extent of the depression, without hazarding any opinion as to the extent of the probable recovery. Gas shares now stand

at higher points than they have done for many years, but this cannot be asserted of Water issues, or, at least, those of the London companies. With the exception of Atlantic descriptions, Telegraph securities have held their ground well during recent years. Tramway shares have also mostly kept up in price satisfactorily. In shipping shares, we naturally come to a point of extreme depression, as the following figures show:—

	Price Nov. 20.	Highest Price Touched in						
		1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879
Amazon Steam	6½	9	12½	14½	15	14	14	11
Castle Mail Packets	12½	13	14	18½	23
Cunard, 10/ shares	3	10½	13½	17	21	24½	24	...
General, Steam, 15/ shares	9	15	19	24	22	30	31	30
Merchant Shipping	1½	3½	5½	11	11½	10	11	11
National Steam	1½	2½	5½	7	8½	10	10	10
Royal Mail	44½	54	55	60	65	66	78	72
Union Steamship	16	17	17	25½	30	32	30	28

Peninsular and Oriental shares have almost alone remained comparatively steady. Even more extreme depression is naturally reached when we get to iron and coal shares, but here it is practically useless to give any comparative prices. Nearly all but a few well-placed companies have passed out of the dividend list altogether, and in many instances shares are selling at nominal and merely "rubbish" prices. And yet there can be little doubt that a distinct revival in trade would especially influence both these and shipping shares. Hence, when the change comes, the revulsion may be all the more pronounced. Mining shares have almost reached a lower point than those of the iron and coal companies. Numberless issues have been wiped out altogether, and amongst the survivors few indeed are the number in anything like a healthy state. But it may be noted that here, where perhaps the tide ebbed lower than anywhere else, the signs of a turn are most distinct. In the intricate mass of more or less unclassified commercial and financial undertakings, it is difficult to pick out any salient point, but it may be noted that perhaps the most extreme depression is to be found in foreign and colonial land and cattle companies. Electric light shares are also, of course, at a very low point, but so many issues have now dropped out altogether, that they do not form an important class of investments.

From what has been said, an idea can be formed of the areas of relative depression in the stock markets, which will give some indication of where to look for the most considerable recovery when a general and decided advance in prices occurs, although, of course, there is not any exact or necessary connection between the two movements. As a whole, however, one may expect that where the depression has been greatest, there also will be the line of least resistance when a general upward movement is in progress. Investors, however, will need great judgment when they again commence to buy freely, especially in view of the fact that a great upward rush in nearly all very low-priced issues may be expected, in which utter rubbish, and securities really worth buying, will be indiscriminately mixed up. The great thing to do will be to withstand purely speculative influences, and only to buy securities the intrinsic value of which can be to some extent proved. Otherwise more bad than good bargains will be made, and the "House" will carry off the bulk of the profits.

THE REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON TRADE DEPRESSION.

WHILE we look upon the Royal Commission on Trade Depression as little better than a somewhat expensive sham, we must do it the justice of acknowledging that it is showing commendable promptitude in publishing the reports of its proceedings. Already one volume, containing the minutes of the evidence that had been led up to the middle of last month, together with a large mass of statistics, and the replies of Chambers of Commerce and trading associations to the questions addressed to them, has been issued, and Lord Iddesleigh leads us to

expect that another volume will shortly be in the hands of the public. The present volume, moreover, is, in its way, distinctly interesting and instructive. It throws a good deal of light upon the working of the public departments that are most intimately connected with the trade and commerce of the country, and it brings together a considerable body of carefully-arranged statistics, which reflect more or less clearly the movements of business. Interesting, however, as all this is, we fail to see its utility. It is all very well that the Board of Trade should be called upon to give a list of the publications it edits and issues, and that the Customs Department should be made to explain the routine of its operations for the collection of statistics, and that the Inland Revenue Department should be asked to elucidate the movements recorded in the revenues under its charge. But for the obtaining of such information the ponderous machinery of a Royal Commission is altogether superfluous. Nothing has thus far been elicited by the investigation, which, if the Government needed instruction, could not have been obtained in a few hours' talk with the heads of the various Departments, and nothing, we may add, which has not long been known to all who cared to take the trouble to inquire. Possibly the members of the Commission may have had their minds improved, and their ideas expanded by contact with the official witnesses. But it was not for their education that the inquiry was instituted. The Commissioners were to teach the Government, not the Government the Commissioners, which is about all that has yet been done.

It would be a waste of time to go at any length into the evidence, but it may be well briefly to indicate its general drift. The first witness, Mr R. Giffen, of the Board of Trade, confined himself mainly to giving a catalogue and indicating the general character of the publications regularly issued by his Department, his evidence being supplemented by a series of tabular statements, in which the previously published statistics of our foreign trade, &c., are clearly analysed. More than once an attempt was made to get from Mr Giffen an expression of his own opinion upon some of the points raised, but in most instances he refused to be drawn, and contented himself with reminding the Commissioners that his function was to supply the data upon which they might base opinions of their own. On one point, however, he was less reticent, and it is a matter to which we have frequently found it necessary to allude—the paucity, namely, of statistics of home production and consumption. “There is no doubt,” he said, “that partly through the factory inspectors, and partly in other ways, some information could be obtained as to home production more than what we obtain now, and my own opinion is, that more earnest effort ought to be made to get these particulars, and also to get returns as to wages in the different trades, of which the Government is not now in possession.” This is an opinion in which all who have any knowledge of the subject will most cordially concur, and it would be well if the Government would at once commission Mr Giffen to institute the inquiry he recommends. There is no one who knows better than he what information is needed, who could be more fully trusted to attempt no more than there is a reasonable prospect of accomplishing, or who could present in better form the results of the investigation.

Interesting evidence as to the tariff policy of foreign countries was given by Mr C. M. Kennedy, C.B., of the Foreign Office; and Mr Seldon, the head of the Statistical Department of the Board of Customs, explained in detail how the accounts of the foreign trade and the shipping of the country are prepared. Neither of these gentlemen, however, was called upon to go beyond facts which are already sufficiently well known. It was somewhat different with Mr Harding, the Chief Official Receiver in Bankruptcy, who had a good deal to say about the operation of the new Bankruptcy Act, and also as to the influence upon trade of the Limited Liability Acts. As to the Bankruptcy Act, he is convinced that under it there has been a large increase in the number of private arrangements, and he made the sensible suggestion, that provision should be made for the registration of all deeds embodying arrangements of this kind, together with a statement of the bankrupt's affairs, the causes of his failure, and

the amount of the dividends paid. Of the operation of the Limited Act, Mr Harding spoke somewhat dubiously. On the whole, he thinks they have done rather more harm than good, as they have induced a great deal of unwise speculation. This speculation, however, he is of opinion has not affected trade, nor has it increased the production of our various manufactures, “any more than any combination of capital in the hands of two or three individuals.” To us those two opinions seem somewhat contradictory. The effect of the Limited Liability Acts has undoubtedly been to attract into industrial enterprise the money of capitalists, which would otherwise never have found its way into that channel. It is true that this money has not influenced trade any more, if, indeed, so much, as would an equal amount of capital in the hands of a few individuals. But then it would have been impossible for a few individuals to have gained command of the vast amount of capital which the creation of joint-stock companies has called forth, and whether for good or bad—on the whole, we should say for good—the Limited Liability Acts must have exerted a very considerable influence upon the trade of the nation.

Bearing upon this point, some figures given by Mr Purcell, the Registrar of Joint-Stock Companies, may be quoted with advantage. The total number of joint-stock companies registered under the Acts amounted in April last to 26,060, with a paid-up capital of 495,000,000*l.* Of these 26,060, only 9,300 have continued to carry on business, so that the proportion of successful to unsuccessful companies would appear to be about 36 per cent. In reality, however, the proportion is, Mr Purcell thinks, about 50 per cent., because many defunct companies having been re-registered, or having fulfilled the object for which they were established, cannot properly be classed as unsuccessful. Many companies are, of course, floated with no intention on the part of promoters to carry them to a successful conclusion. They are conceived in fraud and brought forth in iniquity, and if they prove successful in fleecing a number of over-credulous investors, they have quite served their purpose. As a partial remedy for this state of things, Mr Harding revives an old suggestion, that the liability of the directors of joint-stock companies should be extended, and, in some cases, made unlimited. This proposal, however, is open to the objection that if the director is weighted with too great a responsibility for the liabilities of the undertaking, men of substance will not accept the position; but there is certainly a good deal to be said in favour of a recommendation by Mr Purcell, that every joint-stock company should be compelled to lodge with the Registrar an annual balance-sheet. Some joint-stock undertakings are far too reticent about their affairs, and if their proprietors are given the privilege of limiting their liability, it is only right that they should be called upon to give definite information as to how they stand.

Amongst much that is interesting in the evidence of Mr Algernon West, C.B., the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, three items are specially noteworthy. Of these, the first is the estimate formed by the Department of the reduction in the capital value of land during the past five years. Comparing 1884-5 with 1879-80, the net assessments of landed property show a decline of 5,000,000*l.*, and capitalising that sum at thirty years' purchase, we have a total depreciation in the capital value of the land of 150,000,000*l.* The actual decline in yearly value was, Mr West thinks, really something more than 5,000,000*l.*, as it is believed that when the new valuation of property was made in 1882-3, many owners of landed estates did not take the opportunity of proving their claim to a reduced assessment. On the other hand, however, a good deal of agricultural land has during the five years been turned to a more profitable use by building upon it, and a considerable allowance must be made for this. On the whole, therefore, the estimate of 150,000,000*l.* may probably be accepted as somewhat near the mark. Another matter to which Mr West called attention is the assertion frequently made by Fair-traders and others, that owing to the depression of trade we have latterly been living on our capital, and diminishing the amount of our investments in foreign securities. For this assertion he holds there is no warrant, and in support of his contention he gave the following table, which shows the amounts

assessed to income tax as the return upon foreign investments :—

Year Ending April 5.	Foreign and Colonial Government Securities.	Other Foreign and Colonial Securities and Possessions.	Railways Out of the United Kingdom.	Total.
	£	£	£	£
1884.....	20,400,000	9,700,000	3,800,000	33,900,000
1883.....	19,900,000	8,800,000	3,300,000	32,000,000
1882.....	19,500,000	8,400,000	2,700,000	30,600,000
1881.....	19,300,000	8,000,000	2,600,000	29,900,000
1880.....	19,300,000	7,200,000	2,100,000	28,600,000
1879.....	18,900,000	7,200,000	2,400,000	28,500,000
1877.....	19,100,000	7,400,000	1,700,000	28,200,000
1873.....	19,200,000	4,500,000	Cannot be distinguished	...

These totals do not include the return upon capital invested abroad in trade by merchants. They represent simply the return upon what may be designated Stock Exchange investments; and while part of the increase shown may be attributed to an improvement in the yield of some investments, and some of it possibly to a more careful assessment and collection of the tax, still the table, we think, proves conclusively enough that the volume of our investment, instead of diminishing, as has been asserted, has been increasing. Lastly, Mr West referred to the falling off of the drink duties; and with regard to that his opinion is, that it results from a steady progress of temperance, and a steady diminution of drinking. This is an opinion which all who are interested in the social progress of the nation will be glad to see verified by future experience, but it still remains to be seen, we think, whether the more temperate habits that have lately prevailed will stand the test of a trade revival.

These are the main points of interest in the published evidence, and, while we fully admit the desirability of having attention directed to them, we fail to see why it should have been thought necessary to appoint a Royal Commission for that purpose; and taking the report as a whole, it cannot be said to add anything of material value to our knowledge either as to the extent of the trade depression or its causes.

BUSINESS NOTES.

THE CONVERSION OF PRIVATE INTO JOINT-STOCK UNDERTAKINGS.—Referring last week to the new capital subscriptions of the year, we pointed out that investors had much reason to be satisfied with the solid character of most of the securities which had been offered to them. At the same time, the new issues placed upon the market were shown to be small, and hence it was held that a considerable expansion was likely to take place as soon as the outlook became brighter. Already, however, more activity in forming new undertakings is apparent, but the direction that this is taking is not altogether satisfactory. There seems to be a tendency to convert small trading concerns into joint-stock companies, and in the majority of these cases it must be doubtful whether the gain to be derived from the possession of a larger amount of capital than a private undertaking can command is not much more than neutralised by the loss of personal interest and control which is frequently the mainspring of the success of the business. In connection with this subject, the conversion of private into joint-stock undertakings, Mr R. P. Harding, the Chief Official Receiver in Bankruptcy, gave last month the following evidence before the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade. "Question.—Speaking generally, you would regard the conduct of a well-known trader or speculator in operating his business to be conducted by a joint-stock company with some suspicion? Answer.—Yes. Although my opportunities of knowing what is going on have been great, I have personally avoided putting any money into joint-stock companies where they have been formed at the instance of the owner of the business. I have made some mistakes, because I could speak of one company which has paid 30 per cent. upon its capital, and which has been well conducted ever

since it was formed, and another that has paid 15 per cent. and will probably pay more; but those are exceptional cases. I know a case of a very large Manchester warehouse which was turned into a company, and which for the first few years paid 10 per cent. It has come down now from the alteration in trade to something like 5 per cent. Question.—You stated that you looked with suspicion upon private concerns being turned into limited companies. I rather gathered from your remarks that, in your opinion, private concerns being turned into limited companies were not so desirable as an investment as concerns which were started as limited companies independent of private concerns? Answer.—No; if you will forgive me, I think I must have been misunderstood. I intended to convey this view, that I should look with suspicion upon any concern that had been in existence for some time being turned into a limited liability company, and before I invested money in it I should endeavour to ascertain the reasons for turning it into a limited liability company, because I have seen but very few instances of a desire on the part of traders to give to the community at large 30s for a sovereign."

SILVER IN THE UNITED STATES.—The Philadelphia correspondent of the *Times* telegraphs that "President Cleveland will, in his message to the Congress, recommend the suspension of the current silver dollar, and suggest that a law should be passed, authorising the coinage of a new silver dollar, which will be the metallic equivalent of the present gold dollar." If it be really intended to make such a suggestion, the proposal is one which Congress is not in the least likely to entertain. The value of silver measured in gold is a constantly fluctuating value. Consequently, a silver dollar coined to-day, to be the exact metallic equivalent of the gold dollar, would in a few weeks or months hence become, owing to the change in the relative value of silver, either over or under weight; and if the mints were to keep coining week by week dollars of varying weights, according as the price of silver move upwards or downwards, the silver coinage of the States would become a mass of confusion. The present condition of the silver coinage of the States is bad enough, in all conscience, but President Cleveland's plan, instead of improving it, would only make it worse than ever.

A PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE HOURS OF BUSINESS ON THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE.—The doors of the Stock Exchange are closed at four o'clock, but in all times of business activity a considerable amount of business is afterwards transacted by the members in Throgmorton street. At present this is especially marked, since dealing is very active in American railway securities, and the opening prices from New York only reach here at three in the afternoon, that is, business is beginning to reach its height on the other side after the "House" has closed. Business is frequently carried on in the "Street" up till five o'clock, but recently it has sometimes been as late as six before dealing has ceased. It is now asked that a room in the Stock Exchange shall be set apart for the transaction of after-hours' business. The advisability of this has more reference to the internal economy of the Stock Exchange than to the interests of the public, since the business transacted late is mostly of a gambling character. If, however, the Committee are to give a kind of sanction to this business, it would perhaps be better to meet the present request by extending the hour for closing the "House," and then to make some alteration in the system of marking business. It seems absurd to have a mass of business transacted from three to five or six o'clock, while the official close, which terminates the marking of transactions, takes place at three o'clock. If this is not done the official record of "business done" will become so imperfect as to be of extremely little use.

POPULATION AND REPRESENTATION.—A Parliamentary paper has been issued this week, showing the changes made in the county and borough constituencies by the Redistribution of Seats Act. The old and the new constituencies, their population, and the number of members returned by them are arranged in parallel columns, so that

	Par.	Nov. 19.	Nov. 12.	
	f	f c	f c	f c
Three per Cents.....	100	79 85	80 5	- 0 20
Redeemable Threes ...	100	81 60	81 80	- 0 20
Four & a-Half per Cnts.	100	108 2½	108 17½	- 0 15
Italian	100	96 15	96 5	+ 0 10
Austrian Gold 4 %	100	87 25	88 10	- 0 85
Turkish Fours.....	100	14 5	14 12	- 0 7
Egyptian Unified	500	320 0	320 0	...
Bank of France Shares 1,000	...	4,780 0	4,770 0	+ 10 0
Banque de Paris	500	602 50	597 50	+ 5 0
Crédit Foncier.....	500	1,312 50	1,305 0	- 7 50
Paris Gas Shares.....	250	1,455 0	1,450 0	+ 5 0
Suez Canal	500	2,098 75	2,045 0	+ 53 75
Panama	500	412 50	411 25	+ 1 25
Northern Railway	400	1,510 0	1,492 50	+ 17 50
Western Railway	500	841 25	840 0	+ 1 25
Orleans Railway	500	1,310 0	1,302 50	+ 7 50
Eastern Railway.....	500	776 25	780 0	- 3 75
Lyons Railway	500	1,228 75	1,222 50	+ 6 25
Southern Railway	500	1,165 0	1,160 0	+ 5 0
South of Austrian Rail.	500	285 0	272 50	+ 12 50

The French Treasury notifies that it refuses to accept any coupons or banknotes marked on the face or back with any stamp, number, name, or indication whatever, printed or manuscript, and that coupons will only be paid on the bearer signing a special engagement guaranteeing the Treasury from claims or objections arising out of such marks.

Very divergent estimates have been made of the value of the real property, land and buildings, in Paris. The Municipal Council having before it a proposal to abolish the octroi duties, which produce about 120 millions of francs annually, and substitute for them a tax on real property, the president of the committee to which the measure was referred applied to the Minister of Finance for information as to the value of the property on which the new tax might be based. With regard to houses and buildings, the Minister gives the rental at 750 millions of francs, or 30 millions sterling, including the ground on which they stand. The value of the ground not built on he estimates approximately at 2,000 millions of francs.

As the ravages of the phylloxera have reduced the production of wine in France below the quantity required for export and the home consumption, a large use has been made of artificial wine for blending, extracted from dried raisins, and no secret of the process is made in the trade, as the mixture was not considered to be an adulteration. The Court of Cassation has, however, now declared to the contrary in an appeal from a conviction under the penal law. The Court gave judgment that the effect was the same, as the addition of a compound to natural wine was an adulteration, since it deceived the purchaser as to the quality of the article, and the tribunals were not obliged to take into consideration the nature of the substances employed to falsify the liquids offered for sale. As the judgment appealed against decided that a fraud had been committed, the conviction must be upheld.

The Chargeurs Réunis Steamship Company of Havre, which was unable to pay any dividend for the year 1883-4, has held its annual meeting, at which one of 6 per cent. for 1884-5 was proposed by the board and voted.

The Bank of Algeria announces a dividend of 47f, or 9f 40c per cent. for the second half of 1885, ending the 31st October.

Among the failures gazetted this week are the Panorama of Lourdes Company, with a capital of 200,000f; the Trocadero Land and House Building Company, and the Comptoir Général Français de Banque et de Crédit.

The following was the value of the foreign trade of France in the first ten months of the last two years:—

	IMPORTS.	
	1885.	1884.
	Francs.	Francs.
Food	1,100,689,000	1,119,311,000
Raw material	1,728,956,000	1,771,682,000
Manufactures	486,172,000	518,142,000
Divers.....	146,484,000	146,419,000
	<u>3,462,301,000</u>	<u>3,555,554,000</u>
	£138,492,040	£142,222,160

	EXPORTS.	
	1885.	1884.
	Francs.	Francs.
Food	568,782,000	599,530,000
Raw material	526,809,000	533,538,000
Manufactures	1,366,381,000	1,301,551,000
Divers.....	142,753,000	122,460,000
	<u>2,604,725,000</u>	<u>2,557,079,000</u>
	£104,189,000	£102,283,160

The trade in the month of October taken alone shows 298 millions of imports and 300 millions of exports. For the first time for many years the exports exceeded the imports, a result that will be received with satisfaction by believers in the theory of the balance of trade.

Compared with October, 1884, the imports of food fell from 120 to 106 millions; manufactures from 49 to 45 millions, and raw materials from 178 to 139 millions. In the ten months the imports of manufactures lost 32 millions, while the exports of the same increased 65 millions, proving what little foundation there is for the cry for more protection on the ground that the French markets are flooded with foreign manufactures. France, in fact, exported 1,366 millions of manufactures, and received in exchange 486 millions only, or, in other words, manufactures formed less than 7 per cent. of the imports, and over 50 per cent. of the exports.

THE UNITED STATES.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

NEW YORK, November 7.

Contrary to expectations, the deliberations of the presidents and representatives of the trunk line railways were brought to a close late last evening, and the new pooling arrangement was signed. The Vanderbilt, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore and Ohio systems, and the Grand Trunk, Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western, and the Lehigh Valley companies have been made parties thereto. A good deal of comment has been caused by the fact that while young Mr. Garrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio, has been in the city most of the week, he has not been present at, nor taken part personally in arranging the new trunk line pool. The vice-president of the road, Mr. Spencer, represented him, and has taken pains to state publicly that no unfavourable inference is to be drawn from Mr. Garrett's absence from the meetings. The details of the new agreement have not been officially made public, although the public is of the opinion that it understands the leading points involved. Mr. Fink, chairman of the Executive Committee of the late trunk line pool and Arbitrating Commissioner, will occupy a like position under the new arrangement. He states that the present plan differs from the old one mainly in the assumption of responsibility on the part of the trunk lines for the acts of their Western connections. The subject of rates has not been discussed yet, and the passenger business of the Baltimore and Ohio will not be settled at present. It should be added that the Arbitrator Commissioner's position is reported to be somewhat more independent than formerly. A cash deposit will be made by each road party to the agreement, from which fines will be taken by the Commissioner for infractions of rules. The two more important provisions have not (this Saturday morning) been made public, viz., the division of percentages of traffic and the amount of the cash (forfeit) deposit required of each road.

Mr. Garrett, in Philadelphia yesterday, stated that the Baltimore and Ohio did not expect to endeavour to "get into New York" before next spring, and that there was plenty of time to consider ways and means before that date. His conference there, during the day, with various managers of the Reading Railway, was believed by some to indicate an effort to secure a right of way eastward by that line. The Philadelphia *Inquirer* has furnished the following outline of the proposed reorganisation of the Reading Company's affairs:—"The general mortgage bonds are to get for each 1,000 dols bond a new 5 per cent. bond for 750 dols and 250 dols in first preferred stock. Unpaid coupons are to be funded in new preferred stock. The 7 per cent. bonds are treated

in the same way. Income bonds and convertible adjustment scrip are converted into first preferred stock, and the 5 per cent. assessment will be repaid by first preferred stock. First series 5 per cent. consols are converted into preferred stock and 10 per cent. assessment is paid, for which first preferred stock is given. Unpaid interest will be paid in second preferred stock. Second series 5s, debentures, scrip and debenture convertibles are made second preferred stock, and a 20 per cent. assessment is represented by first preferred stock. The stock will be assessed 10 dols per share, and first preferred stock given for the assessment. Those who do not pay will be asked to surrender one-half of their stock. This plan reduces the annual interest charges from 5,382,835 dols to 3,075,986 dols. The new first preferred stock will amount to 23,000,000 dols, and the second preferred to 10,000,000 dols." A reduction in rentals will be made, of course, but the heavy draft will continue to be met with in the effort to sustain the Coal and Iron Company, as heretofore. The assessment noted above will yield 5,500,000 dols, if two-thirds of the stock pays up, and this money, it is explained, will be applied to paying off the more pressing portions of the floating debt. The balance thereof will be funded in that unique manner known as a "collateral trust."

There have not been many features in the Wall Street stock market during the week. The drop of Pennsylvania's dividend to 2 per cent. (semi-annual) produced no impression on trunk line share quotations. The Vanderbilts have been relatively quiet, Lake Shore being the only one which might be classed as an exception. The buying of this stock was purely on "points" that another lift of 5 or 6 figures was on order. The coal roads aside from Lackawanna show no material change. The latter has been handled as for two years past, by the few who practically control the small portion of its shares available in the Street, which enables them to put it up or down at will. St Paul, as for some time past, has been used as a lever to pry up the whole list. When it sold at 70, and was declared by its friends to be good for 85 during 1885, the statement was laughed at. Now it has reached 94, and closed yesterday at 94½. This does not make the late prediction that it will cross the par line before January 1st appear so absurd as it would have sounded a month or two ago. There is no doubt that the traffic earnings of the St Paul, of the North-Western, in fact, of all the leading Granger lines in the North-Western States, have materially increased of late. And there is likewise little doubt in the minds of the disinterested onlookers that reports of such increases have been systematically exaggerated.

In short, on all hands, aside from the special and particular cliques interested in advancing certain specialities, the impression prevails that the late advance in quotations of railway shares has been far ahead of any possible gain thus far in general trade. Some of the more pronounced bulls are participants in this belief, and hang on to the view that the market is going higher, not because they think it ought to, but because they recognise the fact that a good number of outsiders, "lamb" and others, are buying, and because they know this "outside buying" is holding up prices irrespective of what Wall Street is doing. The president of one of the more important of the North-Western railways was in New York on Thursday. In conversation he asked: "What do you suppose this 'boom' in Wall Street is based on?" He didn't ask the question expecting an answer, for he added: "There is no new business on which to base it; the Western railways earnings do not form a foundation for it, and I cannot find a 15 or 17 per cent. advance in the East." In reply to a question he said: "Yes, I am of the opinion that the late advance in stocks must be followed by a reaction of some consequence. I am willing to take the profit on what shares I hold, and wait until I can buy them back again at a lower price."

The money market at Eastern centres shows signs of improvement. The New York banks have lost about 2,000,000 dols more of their surplus reserve, and time loan rates are 4½ to 5 per cent., with few caring to utilise their funds in that way. The improvement in call loan rates is more conspicuous. On Thursday it jumped up to 6 to 7 per cent., but has reacted to 2½ to 3 per cent., at which figure it remains. There is no doubt but that the

higher rate was manipulated, but the better employment of funds has already raised the call rate an average of 1½ to 2 per cent. within a fortnight. This will tend to check excessive and unwarranted speculation, for the cost of carrying shares will be greatly enhanced. Foreign exchange is dull and featureless.

The movement of produce abroad continues light for grain flour and provisions, but fair in other lines. The check to petroleum exports has not shown itself in the movement for the past ten months as compared with last year, and the so-called balance of trade remains "in our favour." There is nothing to be added concerning the stiffening of the iron and steel market. Transactions are not as active, owing to the unwillingness of pig iron and steel rail makers to sign contracts for 1886 delivery at current quotations. A number of furnaces have been made ready to go into blast at once, in case of an advance in quotations for pig iron which will in all probability operate as a conservative anchor on the market. The general trade situation has not developed any new features of moment. At none of the larger cities East or West is the business now doing equal to that of two weeks ago, and at several it is smaller, although the claim is made in all directions that the total volume is considerably in excess of that done in the like period in 1884. It is significant, of course, that with an increasing quantity of cotton goods machinery at work there is no complaint from mill owners. One year ago, the output of cotton goods was declining, and still there was a call for a greater restriction of production.

With the approach of the next session of Congress, interest in silver legislation increases, and daily journals are filled with interviews with publicists and others on bi-metallism, the standard silver dollar, its continued enforced coinage, the relative value of gold and silver, &c. If Congress does not find material to inform itself, it will not be for want of opportunity. Respecting the statement made in this correspondence some weeks ago, of the effect of payment of United States bonds with silver dollars, and the likelihood of its being done, I may add, first, that there is "a party" in the United States which very distinctly advocates the payment of the Government bonds with silver dollars. (Said bonds all payable in "coin of the present standard value.") When the Act of issue was passed, gold was the only legal tender coin, but when the bonds were issued, silver was likewise full legal tender. Right here is found, of course, a nice question to decide. The *Herald* of Friday said, editorially:

"It is only by the most desperate shifts that the Treasury has managed to maintain gold payments. Unless Congress repeals the Bland Act, or deprives the silver dollar of its legal tender quality very soon after it assembles, the Government will be compelled by the force of existing laws to pay the interest and some part of the principal of the debt in silver. This will be, in fact, scaling the debt-paying obligations at the rate of from 79c to 83c on the dollar. The moment this is done gold will disappear from our circulation, and the value of our national bonds will be heavily depreciated."

This view may or may not prove to be an extreme one, and gold may or may not "disappear" as described; but bonds sold on a gold basis and paid in silver dollars worth but four-fifths of a gold dollar, are certainly not a desirable investment.

GERMANY AND AUSTRIA.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

VIENNA, November 16.

Rarely, if ever, has a declaration of war whose consequences it is so difficult to foretell been received with as little alarm at the bourses as the news of the outbreak of the Servo-Bulgarian war. Prices certainly fell somewhat, but it is only when compared with the previous rise that a considerable fall can be noticed. This indifference, which, on the part of the Bourse of Vienna, is a rare occurrence, must be attributed to the fact that the bourses have for weeks been looking forward to the event of a Servo-Bulgarian conflict. Besides this, the hope generally prevails that the war will be localised, and that the young friendship between Austria and Russia will be stronger

than the different tendencies of their politics respecting the Balkan Peninsula. Although Russia has shown itself averse to the Prince of Bulgaria, still, if the country were in danger, it would no doubt hasten to its aid. On the other hand, Austria, notwithstanding its assurances to the contrary, seems to have entered into serious engagements with regard to Servia. It is strange to observe how little the Austrian Rente suffered from the fall, whilst in former years this security was always the first to vacillate. We may suppose that Rente has changed proprietors, and that from being in the hands of a limited number of speculators, it has become the property of the public at large—that is to say, that Rente has changed from a speculative into a steady investment stock.

The Prussian Board of Agriculture has prepared a memorandum on the establishment of what is to be called "Rentengüter." This is to be a kind of landed property, which can be acquired without payment by the purchaser at the time of the sale. Only a yearly rent is to be paid for a number of years, at the end of which the leaseholder becomes proprietor. This system of purchase would enable persons with moderate means to become landowners in time, because they might make use of any capital they possessed to work the land. In Eastern Prussia there is a great extent of barren land, which may be cultivated in this manner. The system would not be out of place in Austria and Hungary, where lack of capital prevents much land from being made as useful as the fertility of the soil would warrant. The Prussian Agricultural College has approved the Government's proposal, adding, however, that the system should be first tried upon the States' property, which should be changed into "Rentengüter" first of all, and that all sales of this kind should be submitted to the Government's approval.

The directors of the Nordhausen-Erfurt Railway petitioned the Prussian Government to be allowed to reduce its $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. debentures, issued in 1879, by one-half per cent., but the Government refused to grant the request. This decision has created all the more surprise, because great numbers of communes and companies are on the point of reducing the interest of their loans, and also because the State itself has first set the example of reducing the rate of interest of its railway loans. Appearances lead one to suppose that the Government intend thereby to force the companies to give up their lines of railway when it shall please the State to take them into its own hands.

The syndicate Rothschild Credit Anstalt has undertaken to sell, at its own risk, about 12,600,000 florins of Hungarian Paper Rente at 5 per cent. This amount is to provide for the State debt due in 1886. It is not yet known under what conditions the syndicate undertook the sale, but it is supposed that the Rente was taken at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. less than the quotation of the day.

The official papers of Austria are discussing the establishment of a State bank, of which a prominent feature would be the Post-office savings banks. The project has not much chance of being realised, and perhaps it is not even intended to be so. The Austro-Hungarian Bank's privilege has to be renewed shortly, and the Government, by threatening the possibility of a State bank, possibly hopes to make the directors more subservient to any wishes that it may entertain.

The newly-elected president of the Vienna Bourse, Chevalier von Dutschka, in a conference with the Austrian Finance Minister, pleaded for the institution of a bi-monthly settling-day on 'change to replace the daily settlements. He also begged that the Minister might give up the plan of establishing a bourse tax, which would make all efforts to promote traffic on 'change unavailing. But the Minister refused to give a promise upon this latter subject, and it may be inferred that, notwithstanding the evil consequences of the bourse tax in Germany, the Austrian Government will not refrain from making a trial of it in Vienna also.

Nov. 17.

The Imperial Budget for 1886-7 has been presented to the German Federal Council. The total expenditure is estimated at 709,268,860 marks, of which 626,929,302 marks belong to the ordinary, and 82,339,558 marks to

the extraordinary expenses. Compared with the estimates for 1885-6, the ordinary expenditure shows an increase of 72,733,629 marks, the extraordinary expenses an increase of 24,209,639 marks, and the total expenditure an increase of 96,943,268 marks. The expenditure of the Post-office, the telegraphs, the Imperial printing-office, and the railways of Alsace-Lorraine are not included in the Budget, as they are covered by their income. If these items were included, the total expenditure would amount to 893,467,504 marks, or 165,808,576 marks more than in 1885-6. Ordinarily the income and the expenditure are made to balance each other, as any deficit is covered by contributions from the various German States. This year, however, there is left a deficit of 39,428,457 marks to be covered by a loan, of which in round numbers 20 million marks are for the Army, 9 millions for the Navy, $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions for railways, and 7 millions for the including of Hamburg and Bremen in the Customs frontier.

Correspondence.

WHY BANK DIVIDENDS SHOULD BE REDUCED.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ECONOMIST.

SIR,—In view of the approaching close of the year, I trust that you will permit me to say a word on the subject of the coming bank balance sheets.

To all who have followed the state of trade, and the course of the money market of late, it must be apparent that this year has been a very unprofitable one to bankers. Throughout the whole country, and in almost every industry, there has been great depression. Prices of agricultural and other commodities have been extremely low, and money, which has at no time during the year commanded more than a moderate price, has for months past been a drug; in fact, many banks for lengthened periods have been unable to lend considerable sums upon any terms at all. Added to all this, there is a growing tendency amongst the banks themselves to compete with an over-keenness for business, with the natural result of smaller profits on the business done. It appears to me that this is not a mere transitory state of things, but is only a stage in the gradual decrease in the earning power of money which has been going on of late years. In a word—times are changed, and I believe I express the opinions of many competent authorities when I say that banks cannot be expected in the future to yield profits on the same scale as they have in the past. If this be so, is it not imperative upon bank directors to face the position created by the altered state of things, and reduce the coming dividend to a point in keeping with the prudent earnings of the institutions under their control, not forgetting the necessity of steadily augmenting the reserves? In adopting such a course, they will only be carrying out a wise and sound policy. Of one thing they may rest assured, that should they, in an endeavour to keep up dividends, be led into unsound business, the shareholders will be the first to cry out.

I trust, Sir, that you will lend your powerful aid to the object I have in view in writing this letter, and I feel sure that you will thereby merit the sincere thanks of all those to whom, in these anxious times, is entrusted the responsibility of sharing in the administration of our banking institutions.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
17th November, 1885. A. B. C.

PRIVATE v. JOINT-STOCK BANKING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ECONOMIST.

SIR,—Referring to your editorial comment of last week upon the letter of "A Dorset Banker," who took exception to your opinion that the days of private banks are numbered by reason of their not publishing their accounts, I wish to express my agreement with my Dorsetshire *confrère*, and my strong belief that at any rate the large private banks of the country have nothing to fear from such a cause as you mention. When I look at the details of the balance-sheets of many of the country joint-stock banks, published half-yearly in your columns, and see how many of them lend out to their customers on

current accounts the whole of their deposited funds, and more, and have no invested funds whatever, and only the contents of their bill-box and their uncalled capital to fall back upon, I say to myself frequently, "of how little use is it to publish accounts when such as these are, I conclude, considered satisfactory?"

The private banker, being generally a man of position and character in the district in which he lives, feels that he is so personally identified with the institution with which he is connected, that he is bound to conduct his business with prudence and perfect safety; whereas in a joint stock bank, there is no individual identified with it, its directors being men of whom the customers of the bank know very little, and they have thus not that personal responsibility with regard to their institutions which forms the great feature of security in the management of a private bank. Moreover, if you refer to the records you have on hand, I have no doubt whatever you will find these two facts:—

(1) That in the last 40 to 50 years there have been fewer failures of private than of joint-stock banks; and, particularly, (2) that the effects of the failures of the former have been infinitely less disastrous to the community at large than those of the latter. You may make between the two much of the same comparison as the familiar one made between the effects of a disaster from the upsetting of a stage coach and that of a railway train. In the former, "There you are"—the private banker has ruined himself, but beyond that very little harm has been done; while in the latter it is "Where are you?" *i.e.*, where is the end of the distress to the army of shareholders as well as depositors engulfed in their ruin?

Would that directors and managers of joint-stock banks would appreciate more keenly than they appear from their balance-sheets to do—(1) the advisability of keeping a much larger proportion of liquid assets in comparison to their liabilities, and of not trusting to such an extent as many of them do to their list of shareholders and their uncalled capital; (2) that they would abstain from offering high rates for deposits, which compels them to employ their deposits in risky business; and (3) that they would, in preference to paying very high dividends, steadily accumulate much larger reserve funds, and when so accumulated, invest them in Government securities, and not use them in their ordinary business.

Having made, as I think, an uncalled-for thrust at private banks, I trust you will admit this parry on their behalf by yours obediently,

A PRIVATE COUNTRY BANKER.

9th November, 1885.

DIFFERENTIAL DUTY ON SPANISH WINE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ECONOMIST.

SIR,—I have to thank you for your insertion of my letter defending the suggestion of a differential duty on Spanish wine, and for the notice you have taken of it, although in disagreement.

The only excuse I have for troubling you again on the subject is to guard myself against misapprehension of my meaning, which, I fear, has to some extent arisen from anxiety lest I should occupy too much of your space. You impute to me the opinion "that we should hold ourselves at liberty in fixing our duties to consider the amount of disfavour with which other countries treat us," and you reply, that as "there are scarcely two nations who treat our products with the same amount of favour, or, rather, of disfavour, if we were to attempt to frame a tariff which would differentiate against each nation in exact proportion to the amount of duties it levied on our goods, the result would be utter confusion."

I do not hold that opinion. I consider that so long as any foreign nation treats all other nations in the same way as she treats us by her tariff on imported goods, however injurious to us in its practical working that tariff may be in comparison with its effect on other nations, we have no sufficient ground of complaint to make it expedient for us to apply differential commercial treatment to her. It is because Spain, so far as I am aware, stands alone among the nations in treating us differently from all others, that I defend retaliation against her to the extent of our commercial ability.

In reply to your criticism that differential duties can be evaded by sending differentially-taxed produce through countries not so taxed, the objection must be admitted to the extent that the evasion diminishes the injury inflicted so far as may be possible, though it cannot remove it. The cost of bringing produce to its best market must always be enhanced by obstruction applied to its cheapest transport.

There is only one other point in the reply to my letter on which I should wish to remark. It was from fear of making my letter too long that I did not point out that though we could only get Spanish wine from Spain, we could get almonds, oranges, lemons, raisins, and olive oil from many other countries, and that therefore, while we should sustain so slight an increase of price in obtaining any additional supply we might require from them as would be inappreciable by us, the injury to Spain would be distinctly appreciable by her.—Your obedient servant,
17th November, 1885. REVENUE OFFICER.

CHEATING THE PUBLIC CREDITOR IN THE UNITED STATES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ECONOMIST.

SIR,—In Mr Herbert C. Blyth's letter on the above subject, in your issue of the 7th inst., he says:—

"If he [referring to me] means anything, it is that the Government would be quite justified in paying, and the public creditor would be quite as well satisfied to receive, the interest and principal of his bond in silver coin, worth only 83 per cent. of its nominal value, because silver is legal tender at the ratio of 16 to 1 of gold. He forgets that if such coin were shipped to England to pay interest on bonds held in this country, that it is not exchangeable for gold at the ratio of 16 to 1, but more nearly 20 to 1, and that if interest was to be payable in silver, United States bonds would be in exactly the same position as rupee paper, which is about 25 per cent. cheaper than India 4 per cent. stock, although the interest is payable in silver coins, which are legal tender in India, but worth only 75 per cent. of their nominal value in this country."

I challenge proof of the assertion that the silver dollar is "worth only 83 per cent. of its nominal value." Its real worth is 100 cents, and it cannot be procured for less, so that it has no nominal value as contrasted with its real value. The United States Government pays the principal and interest of its bonds in legal tender money, and uses even greenbacks, which are not legal tender, in its payments.

I have remarked in a former letter that France has 120,000,000*l* of silver five-franc pieces in circulation, yet we do not find that any of these are shipped to London to make payments. So with the silver dollars, they are legal tender money, the nature of which causes them to remain in the home circulation. But Mr. Blyth is surely mistaken in saying that if silver dollars were shipped to London they would be exchangeable at the ratio of about 20 to 1, and not at 16 to 1, as they are in the United States. Is it possible that the owners of silver dollars in London would throw them away at the ratio of 20 to 1 of gold, when by the trifling expense of shipping them to New York they could be disposed of at 16 to 1?

The reference to the India 4 per cent. stock I pass over, as introducing the question of the credit of the Indian Government, and particularly so, as the real point of Mr Blyth's argument is contained in the statement that rupees "are legal tender in India, but worth only 75 per cent. of their nominal value in this country."

His argument is that American silver dollars by being brought to London can be disposed of only on the ratio of 20 to 1 of gold, whereas in America they are disposable at 16 to 1; in the same way, that rupees transferred to London can only be disposed of at 75 per cent. of their value in India. Now, I maintain that both of these supposed states of fact are imaginary. The silver dollar by being sent to London loses practically none of its value, as it is still worth 100 cents in New York; and the rupee has the precise same value in London as in Calcutta, allowance being made for the trifling charges of transportation between these two places. Leaving out of account the Indian Mint charge of 2 per cent., the bullion

ence stockholders, is composed of 11,738*l*, which is subject to settlement of freight accounts with the Mexican Government, and 1,737*l* in cash. Adding the amounts brought forward, there is a total at the credit of the holders of this stock of 27,607*l*, of which 1,904*l* is in cash and 25,703*l* is subject to settlement of accounts with the Mexican Government, the amount of which when finally ascertained and received in sterling will be available for distribution among the holders of the Second Preference stock. The company's receipts from subvention during the first half of 1885 were 17,542*l*. With the balance carried over from the previous half-year (3,275*l*) this sufficed, after deducting loss on exchange, to provide for the service of the Second Mortgage debentures, and left a balance of 7,165*l* to be carried forward. Nothing has, so far, been paid on subvention account during the half-year now current, and the 4,000*l* recently paid on the Government freight account represented but a small part of the total, which was nearly 16,000*l*. From the beginning of the present half-year, the Government has allowed the company to retain as an offset on its current freight account the passenger tax which it collects. The amount is small, being only about 800*l* a month, but the freight carried for the Government appears to be now considerably diminished. Arrangements having been made with the authorities for a reduction of the landing dues and charges at Vera Cruz, and for an extended use of its pier being permitted to the company, the tariffs of the company on imported goods were considerably reduced from the 1st of September last. The general effect of a long list of reductions, varying with various articles, may be summed up by saying that the company has reduced its tariffs on imported goods by 20 per cent. The directors, it is stated, are advised that, in some instances, the company is already regaining ground that it appeared to be losing through competition. The store account has been reduced in the half-year from 343,564*l*, at which it stood at the end of 1884, to 293,612*l*.

New Brunswick.—The earnings for September, 1885, were 66,695*l*, against 60,133*l* for the same month last year.

Scinde, Punjab, and Delhi.—The chairman has received a communication from the Secretary of State for India in Council, to the effect that so soon as the proprietors of the company may be in a position to convert their annuities into Three-and-a-Half per Cent. stock they may do so on the following terms—viz., 126*l* 10*s* of India Three-and-a-Half per Cent. stock (not redeemable until 1931) for the annuity payable in respect of every 100*l* Railway Ordinary stock, on condition that the Secretary of State is informed on or before February 27th next of the amount so to be exchanged.

BANKING COMPANIES.

Anglo-Egyptian.—The report for the half-year ended August 31 shows a profit balance of 61,204*l*, and recommends a dividend of 10*s* per share, tax free, 21,204*l* being carried forward.

English of Rio de Janeiro.—The directors have declared an interim dividend of 4 per cent. (8*s* per share), free of income tax, payable on December 1.

ASSURANCE COMPANIES.

Gresham Life.—At the annual general meeting, held on Tuesday, the directors stated that during the year ended June 30 last 6,138 policies were issued, assuring an amount of 2,136,899*l*. The immediate annuities granted during the year were for the yearly payment of 8,607*l*. The income from premiums, after deducting the amount paid for reinsurance, was 567,414*l*, including 78,098*l* in premiums for the first year of assurance. The balance of the interest account amounted to 149,628*l*, which, together with the premiums, raised the income of the society to 717,042*l* for the year. The claims made and admitted under life assurance policies were for an amount of 265,581*l*, while the claims under policies for endowments which had matured amounted to 116,769*l*. The sum of 46,317*l* was paid for the surrender of policies. The report of Mr Thomas G. Ackland (the actuary) on the triennial valuation stated that the society had on its registers on June 30 last, the date of the valuation, 41,927 policies, assuring, together with the bonus additions, the total sum of 15,831,253*l*, and giving rise to an annual premium income, reduced by application of bonus, of 574,962*l*, exclusive of 4,014*l* extra premium for temporary risks, and for lives accepted at an increase on the tabular rates. The debit of the society, or present value of the sums assured and bonuses reduced by the present value of the sums reassured, was, at the date above mentioned, 8,494,716*l*, while the credit of the society, or the present value of the premium income reduced by the reinsurance premiums payable, was 7,051,739*l*. The available assets of the society, after making allowances for the share capital and outstanding liabilities, amounted on June 30 last to 3,549,588*l*. The total liability under the assurance and annuity contracts of the society at the same date was 3,452,034*l*. The difference between these amounts, 97,553*l*, represented the surplus fund, which was available for distribution among the policyholders and shareholders of the society. Acting upon this report the directors declared as divisible surplus the sum of 96,000*l*, which they recommended for division among the policyholders and shareholders. Eighty per cent. of the amount declared as surplus divisible would, on the 30th of June next, be apportioned, as usual, to holders of participating policies in force at the date of the balance-sheet, and would be applied in augmentation of the sums assured. The usual options would be allowed to the policyholders in selecting the mode in which their bonus might be applied. The report was adopted.

Northern.—The directors have decided to declare an interim dividend of 1*l* per share, being at the rate of 10 per cent., on account of the year 1885.

Union.—The report for the half year ended June 30 states that the total income was 264,453*l*, showing an increase on the previous year of nearly 10,000*l*, the total funds having been increased by 38,412*l* to 1,893,272*l*. In the fire department the premiums received were 67,358*l*, an increase of 3,850*l*, the amounts paid for claims, and expenses being 67,279*l*, thus leaving 79*l* only to be carried to the

profit account. The funds in this department on the above date were 765,769*l*. The number of life policies issued during the year was 815 for 349,867*l*, against 645 and 283,375*l* in the preceding year. The new annual premiums amounted to 12,182*l*, against 9,514*l*. The amount paid either to the representatives of the assured or to the assured themselves by way of claim was 83,596*l*, in addition to 12,308*l* paid as bonus to the amount originally assured. The income of the life branch was 163,148*l*, and the payments 121,333*l*, the surplus of 41,815*l* being added to the life assurance fund.

MISCELLANEOUS COMPANIES.

Aberdeen, Newcastle, and Hull Steam Shipping.—The annual report shows a net available balance of 4,711*l*. An interim dividend of 1*s* per share was paid in May last, and the directors recommend a further payment of 1*s* per share, making 2*s* per share, or a dividend at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum. The directors propose to reduce the book value of the company's steamers by 1,200*l*, and a sum of 1,000*l* is to be added to the reserve and boiler fund, the balance carried forward being 128*l*.

Amazon Steam Navigation.—The directors regret that, in consequence of the continuance of the commercial crisis in the countries bordering the River Amazon, to which reference was made in their last report, and the competition which is still maintained for the diminished traffic, the company's accounts for the half-year to 30th June last, so far as they have reached London, do not show a sufficient balance of profit to justify the directors in paying the usual interim dividend to the shareholders this month, more especially as there is now only a minority of the board in Europe; for, in accordance with the suggestion of some of the leading shareholders with whom the board took counsel, as promised at the last general meeting, the chairman of the company, His Excellency the Baron de Ibirá-Mirim, has gone out to Brazil, and is now at Rio de Janeiro, actively engaged in important negotiations with the Imperial Government. So soon as his business at Rio is completed His Excellency intends to proceed to Para, to make a thorough investigation into the state of the company's affairs there; and the directors are hopeful that his labours will tend to the establishment of improvements in the management and contribute to the future prosperity of the company.

Bahia Gas.—The half-yearly report shows an available sum of 8,097*l*, out of which it is proposed to pay a dividend at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, tax free, on the ordinary shares, leaving 805*l* to be carried forward.

Birmingham Central Tramways.—The report shows an available balance of 5,060*l*, after placing 3,420*l* to renewals account, and a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. is recommended, leaving 1,747*l* to be carried forward.

Iowa Land.—The directors have declared an interim dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, or 5*s* per share, for the half-year ended August 21.

Mon'evideo Gas.—The directors have declared an interim dividend of 12*s* per share, free of income tax, for the half-year ending June 30, 1885, being at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum.

Oriental Gas.—The report for the year ended June 30 states that the profit balance is 27,019*l*, out of which it is proposed to make a distribution of 6 per cent., tax free, making, with the interim dividend, a total of 10 per cent. for the year.

Patent Invert Sugar.—It has been decided to reduce the capital, and alter the denomination of the shares from 10*l* to 1*l* each, fully paid.

Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation.—The directors recommend a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, with a bonus of 2 per cent.; also 1 per cent. from underwriting account, making with the interim dividend paid in June, a total payment of 8 per cent. for the year.

Trust and Loan of Canada.—The net profits for the half-year ended September 30 amount to 10,839*l*, and after carrying 544*l* to the reserve fund for moiety of profits over 6 per cent. dividend, the balance at credit of revenue, including 4,617*l* brought forward from March last, is 14,912*l*. The directors recommend that out of this balance a dividend at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, less income tax, and a bonus of ½ per cent., be declared, carrying forward 3,537*l* to the credit of the next account. The amount of the reserve fund is 157,830*l*.

NEW COMPANIES AND CAPITAL.

The new issues of the current year are as under, vendors' shares being deducted, as usual:—

	Capital Applications. £	First Payment thereon. £	Further Liability. £
Amount previously subscribed	66,854,000		
Issues of the week:—			
Candelaria Waterworks and Milling (L.) Debentures	50,000	50,000	...
City of Madrid Railway £10 7 per Cent. Preference Shares	100,000	5,000	95,000
Dovaro Tea (L.) £10 Shares	70,670	42,402	28,268
Forest Hill Brewery £5 Shares	60,000	24,000	36,000
Iowa Land (L.) £20 Shares	200,000
Liverpool and Isle of Man Steamship (L.) £10 Shares	250,000	75,000	175,000
Mont Dore (Bournemouth) £5 Shares	54,955
Rowe and Co. (L.) £1 Shares	30,000	22,500	7,500
South Staffordshire and Birmingham Tramways 6 per Cent. £10 Preference Shares	64,260	25,744	38,516
Wratten, Fallowfield, &c., (L.)	70,000	70,000	...
	849,985		
Total to date	67,704,000		
Total in 1884	92,126,000		
Total in 1885	68,333,000		

Melbourne Harbour Trust 4½ per Cent. Loan for £250,000.—The tenders amounted to 2,148,800*l*, at prices ranging from the minimum

THE COTTON TRADE.

LIVERPOOL—NOVEMBER 19.

Cotton has been in fair demand throughout the week, and prices generally have had a hardening tendency. Sea Island has been neglected; quotations are resumed. In American a good business has been done at fully 1/8d per lb advance on the quotations of last Thursday. In Brazilian the sales have been good, and Ceara and Rio quotations are advanced 1/8d per lb. Egyptian has been in active demand, and a considerable business has been done. Quotations for the current qualities of brown are raised 1/8d per lb. Rough Peruvian is neglected, and the better grades are reduced 1/8d to 3/8d per lb. Smooth is steady at the quotations. African is in moderate request at previous prices. East India has been in poor request, and prices tend downwards. The quotations of fair and good fair Oomrawuttee are reduced 1/8d per lb.

"Futures."—The market in the beginning of the week opened steadier, and gradually advanced 1/8d to 3/8d per lb. On Tuesday and Wednesday it became easier, and to-day, after improving somewhat, is again dull at the close, the final rates being 3/8d to 5/8d per lb above last Thursday's circular rates. The closing values are—Delivery: American, any port, L.M.C., November, 5 1/8d; November-December, 5 3/8d; December-January, 5 1/8d; January-February, 5 3/8d; February-March, 5 1/8d; March-April, 5 1/8d; April-May, 5 3/8d; May-June, 5 1/8d; June-July, 5 3/8d per lb.

The sales of the week amount to 63,160 bales, of which 2,530 are on speculation, and 2,410 declared for export; the forwarded is 15,860 bales, of which 14,600 are American, 1,080 Egyptian, and 180 bales East Indian, which make the takings of the trade 74,080 bales.

The cotton market will be closed on the day of the Parliamentary Election for Liverpool Wednesday next, 25th inst.

PRICES CURRENT.

Table with columns: Descriptions, Ord., Mid., Fair, Good, Fine, Same Period 1884, Same Period 1883. Lists various cotton types like American, Sea Island, Florida, Upland, Mobile, Texas, Orleans, Brazilian, Pernambuco, Ceara, Paraiba, Rio Grande, Bahia, Aracaju, Macao, Maranham, Egyptian-Gallini, Ditto Brown, Ditto White, Smyrna, Greek, West Indian, Fiji, Tahiti, Haytian, Peruvian, Surat, Ginned, Dhollerah, Oomrawuttee, Veraval, Comptah, Scinde, Bengal, Madras, Western.

IMPORTS, EXPORTS, CONSUMPTION, &c.

Table with columns: 1885, 1884. Rows: Imports from Jan. 1 to Nov. 19, Exports from Jan. 1 to Nov. 19, Stock, Nov. 19, Consumption from Jan. 1 to Nov. 19.

These figures show:— A decrease of imports compared with the same date last year of ... bales 743,510 A decrease of quantity taken for consumption of ... 670,470 A decrease of actual exports of ... 59,480 A decrease in stock of ... 33,730

* The Consumption this year compares with one week more last year.

In speculation there is a decrease of 75,300 bales. The imports this week have amounted to 74,127 bales, and the quantity of American cotton reported at sea for Great Britain (including cable advices to date) is 220,000 bales, against 257,000 bales at the corresponding period last year.

MANCHESTER, NOVEMBER 19.

There has been a fair amount of business transacted during the week, especially in cloth, but from present indications buyers appear to have satisfied their wants, and in face of higher prices the turnover has decidedly lessened the past few days. The market for export yarns has been very firm, and for China and Japan sales have reached quite an average amount. Most well-known spinnings are consequently advanced, but only in few cases have the higher rates been obtainable. In yarns for home use, owing to the

increased looms started, manufacturers have latterly bought with greater freedom. Quotations of medium counts of twist and weft have been raised to the extent of 1/8d per lb, though at the enhanced rates orders have not been numerous or important. Fine yarns firm, but the demand was not large. Cloth has again sold well, principally in the leading India and China staples, and makers being now well supported by existing engagements are not disposed to accept further orders except at an advance in price. In printers fine reeds remain quiet, but there has been rather more done in medium and commoner makes. In T'cloths and Mexicans the demand was rather better. Longcloths and domestics continue in poor request, and quotations show no improvement on the lowest rates previously accepted.

(I.) COMPARATIVE STATEMENT of the COTTON TRADE.

Table with columns: Price, Nov. 19, 1885, Previous Weeks in 1885 (Nov. 12, Nov. 5, Oct. 29, Oct. 22, Oct. 15). Rows: Raw Cotton—Upland middling, Ditto good middling, Pernambuco fair, Ditto good fair, Yarns—No. 40 Mule-twist fair, No. 38 Water-twist, 26-in, 66 reed, Printer, 29 yds 4 lbs 2 ozs, 27-in, 72 reed, ditto, 5 lbs 2 ozs, 39-in, 60 reed, Gold End Shirtings, 37 1/2 yards, 8 lbs 4 ozs, 40-in, 66 reed, ditto, ditto, 8 lbs 12 ozs, 40-in, 72 reed, ditto, ditto, 9 lbs 5 ozs, 39-in, 44 reed, Red End Long Cloth, 36 yards 9 lbs.

(II.) COMPARISON with PREVIOUS YEARS.

Table with columns: Price, Nov. 19, 1885, Corresponding Week in (1884, 1883, 1882, 1881, 1880). Rows: Same as Table (I).

THE WOOL TRADE.

There has been a moderate inquiry for home produce, but buyers are not willing to give higher prices, and holders are firm.

The fifth and last series of colonial wool sales of the current year opened on Tuesday with two catalogues, comprising the following assortment:—

Table with columns: Bales. Rows: New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Cape and Natal.

Total ... 10,093

of which about 955 bales consisted of produce of the new clip from Queensland, South Australia and the Riverine districts of New South Wales.

Messrs Charles Balme and Co. report:—The attendance from all branches of the trade was very numerous, and the competition generally showed far more confidence and tone than have been experienced in the market for some time past, prices in all instances ruling well up to the best rates of the preceding series, with an occasional turn in sellers' favour as regards cross-bred produce. The specimens of new wool offered presented considerable divergence in character and condition, the Queensland and some of the Riverine wools being noticeably poor, while the Adelaide brands exhibited a slight improvement in growth, and appeared somewhat lighter in condition as compared with the previous season's clips. A meeting of the Brokers' Association will be held on the 18th inst., to discuss the question of adjournment for the principal Yorkshire borough elections.

Messrs Sanderson, Murray, and Co. have received the following telegram from their Melbourne firm:—"Melbourne, 19th November: Market shows no material change. Crossbred market stronger. American buyers principal buyers, and buying freely."

They also advise us prices of the following brands, to which we have added comparative prices:—

AVERAGE for FLEECE ONLY.

Table with columns: Price Just Cabled, Last Season in Melbourne, Last Year's in London. Rows: Cochrane Widgiewa, Woodhouse.

COMMERCIAL TIMES WEEKLY PRICE CURRENT.

*. The prices in the following list are revised on Friday, assisted by an eminent firm in each department.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

Table listing various commodities such as Arrow Root, Cocoa, Coffee, Cotton, Chemicals, Hides, Indigo, Metals, and Drugs with their respective prices.

Table listing various commodities such as Dyewoods, Elephants Teeth, Fruit, Flax, Gutta Percha, Hemp, Hops, Hides, Indigo, Metals, and Iron with their respective prices.

Table listing various commodities such as Oils, Provisions, Rice, Shellac, Silk, Spices, and Spirits with their respective prices.

Table listing various commodities such as Sugar, Tobacco, Turpentine, and Wool with their respective prices.

Stock Markets Price Current.

BRITISH FUNDS, &c.

Table with columns: Dividends Due, Name, Closing Prices. Lists various British funds and government securities with their respective values and prices.

COLONIAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SECURITIES.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Dividends Due, Name, Closing Prices. Lists colonial and provincial government securities from various regions like B. Columbia, Canada, and New Zealand.

CORPORATION STOCKS.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Name, Bond, Paid, Closing Prices. Lists corporation stocks from the United Kingdom, including various trusts and industrial companies.

CORPORATION STOCKS.

(Colonial and Foreign.)

Table with columns: Ann. Divd., Name, Bond, Read'n able, Closing Prices. Lists colonial and foreign corporation stocks from various international locations.

FOREIGN STOCKS, BONDS, &c.

(Coupons payable in London.)

Table with columns: Dividends Due, Sinking Fund, Next Draw-ing, Name, Closing Prices. Lists foreign stocks, bonds, and securities with their respective details and prices.

* The drawings are yearly in the case of stocks to which asterisks are prefixed. In almost all other cases where there are drawings half-yearly.

FOREIGN STOCKS, BONDS, &c. (Coupons payable abroad.)

Table with columns: Dividends Due, Sinking Fund, Next Drawing, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries for Argentine Hd. Dis., Austrian Sil. Ren., Do Paper 1870, etc.

AMERICAN STOCKS.

Table with columns: Authorized Issue, Name, Redeemable, Closing Prices. Includes entries for Currency Bonds, Alabama, Ct. South. 1 Mt., Albany & Susqueh. 1 Mt., etc.

AMERICAN STOCKS.—Con.

Table with columns: Authorized Issue, Name, Redeemable, Closing Prices. Includes entries for Currency Bonds, Union Pacific \$100 Shrs., Do 1st Mortgage, etc.

BANKS.

Table with columns: Authorized Shares, Last Annual Dividend, Name, Share, Paid, Closing Prices. Includes entries for Agria, Limited, Alliance, Limited, Anglo-Austrian, etc.

BANKS.—Con.

Table with columns: Authorized Issue, Last Annual Dividend, Name, Share, Paid, Closing Prices. Includes entries for Lon. & Westminster, Limited, Lon. Chr. of Austral., etc.

INSURANCE COMPANIES.

Table with columns: Authorized Issue, Last Annual Dividend, Name, Share, Paid, Closing Prices. Includes entries for Alliance Brit. & For., Do Marine, Atlas Fire & Life, etc.

* Periodical cash bonus in addition.

RAILWAYS.

ORDINARY SHARES AND STOCKS.

Table with columns: Authorized Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries for Bedford & Northampton Prof, Caledonian, Consolidated, etc.

RAILWAYS.

ORDINARY SHARES AND STOCKS.—Con.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Lists various railway companies like Furness, Con. Ord. Stock, Glasgow & S. West Ord. Con., etc.

RAILWAYS.

RAILWAYS.

DEBENTURE STOCKS.—Con.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Lists railway debenture stocks like London and S. West. A, Do, do B, etc.

RAILWAYS.

PREFERENCE SHARES AND STOCKS.—Con.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Lists preference shares and stocks like Metropolitan 4% Stock, Do 4% 1882, etc.

INDIAN RAILWAYS.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Lists Indian railway stocks like Bengal & North Western, Ld., Bengal Central, Lim., Shares, etc.

BRITISH POSSESSIONS.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Lists British possession stocks like Atlantic & St. Law, Buffalo and Lake Huron, Do 1st Mt. 5 1/2% Perp. Bds, etc.

RAILWAYS.

Table with columns: Paid, Name, Leasing Companies, Closing Prices. Lists leased railway lines like Birkenhead, Do 4 1/2% Pref., Colchester, Stour Valley, etc.

GUARANTEED SHARES AND STOCKS.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Lists guaranteed shares and stocks like Caledonian 4% Guar. Annuity, Do 4% Consolidated Guar., etc.

PREFERENCE SHARES AND STOCKS, WITH DIVIDENDS

CONTINGENT ON THE PROFITS OF EACH

SEPARATE YEAR.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Lists preference shares with dividends like Caledonian 4% Pref. No. 1, Do No. 2, Do 5%, 1878, etc.

DEBENTURE STOCKS.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Lists various debenture stocks like Brecon & Merthyr A, Do B, Caledonian, Cornwall, Guaranteed, etc.

RAILWAYS.

Table of Foreign Railway Obligations with columns for Bond, Name, and Closing Prices. Includes entries like Alagoas Limited, Antwerp and Rotterdam, Arica and Tacna, Bahia & S. Francisco, L. Guar. 7%, etc.

FOREIGN RAILWAY OBLIGATIONS.

Table of Foreign Railway Obligations with columns for Bond, Name, and Closing Prices. Includes entries like Alagoas 6% Debentures, Beira Alta (Portuguese) Nos. 1 to 121, 117 8, Bergslagermans, Brazilian Imperial Cen. Bahia, Lim. 6%, etc.

RAILWAYS.

Table of Foreign Railway Obligations - Con. with columns for Bond, Name, and Closing Prices. Includes entries like Paris, Lyons, & M. (Fusion Nouvelle), Do (Fusion Nouvelle), Prov. Orei Vitebsk, guar. by Russia, etc.

TRAMWAYS AND OMNIBUS.

Table of Tramways and Omnibus with columns for Share, Paid, Name, and Closing Prices. Includes entries like Anglo-Argentine, Limited, Do 6% Debenture Stock, Barcelona, Limited, Belfast Street Tramways, etc.

TELEGRAPHS AND TELEPHONES.

Table of Telegraphs and Telephones with columns for Share, Name, and Closing Prices. Includes entries like Anglo-American, Limited, Do Preferred, Do Deferred, Brazilian Submarine, Limited, etc.

COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, &c.

Table of Commercial, Industrial, &c. with columns for Share, Paid, Name, and Closing Prices. Includes entries like Aerated Bread, Limited, Anglo-American Brush Electric, Do fully paid, Artizans' Lab., and Gen. Dwell, L., etc.

COAL, IRON, AND STEEL.

Table of Coal, Iron, and Steel with columns for Share, Name, and Closing Prices. Includes entries like Barrow Hematite Steel, Limited, Do 6% Pref., Bolckow, Vaughan, & Co., Limited, etc.

COAL, IRON, AND STEEL.—(Con.)

Table with columns: Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Shenango Rly & Mercer Coal Pref., Sydney and Louisburg Coal and Railway, L., Ordinary Shares, etc.

CANALS AND DOCKS.—(Con.)

Table with columns: Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Lndn & St. Kath, Dk. 4 1/2 % Pref., Do 4 1/2 % New Preference, etc.

TEA AND COFFEE.

Table with columns: Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Assam Tea, British Indian Tea, Limited, Darjeeling Tea, Limited, etc.

FINANCIAL, LAND, & INVESTMENT

Large table with columns: Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Agricultural of Mauritius, Limited, American Freehold Ld. Mt. of Lon. L., American Investment Trust, L. Pref., etc.

GAS.

Table with columns: Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Alliance & Dub. Consums. max. 10%, Do 7%, Bahia, Limited, etc.

WATERWORKS.

Table with columns: Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Antwerp, Limited, Chelsea, Ordinary, City of St. Petersburg, Limited, etc.

SHIPPING.

Table with columns: Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like African Steam Ship, Amazon Steam Navigation, Castle Mail Packets, Limited, etc.

CANALS AND DOCKS.

Table with columns: Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Alexandra (Nwppt. & S. Wis.) Dks & Rls., Do 4 % Per. Deb. Stock, Birmingham Canal, etc.

BRITISH MINES.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Devon Great Consols, L., East Caradon, East Lovell, etc.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN MINES.

Table with columns: Authorised Issue, Share, Paid, Name, Closing Prices. Includes entries like Akankoo Gold, Limited, Alamillos, Limited, Almada & Tiritto Consol., etc.

Banks, &c.

THE ANGLO-CALIFORNIAN BANK (Limited).

Capital authorised, £1,200,000. Subscribed, £600,000. Paid-up, £300,000.
Head Office, 3 Angel court, London, E.C.
Branch at San Francisco.
Agents at New York, J. and W. Seligman and Co.
The Bank transacts general banking business, sells drafts on California, Oregon, Nevada, &c.; also on the Hawaiian Islands, sends bills for collection, makes telegraphic transfers, and grants letters of credit.
J. SIMON, Manager.

THE AGRA BANK (LIMITED).

ESTABLISHED IN 1832.
CAPITAL, £1,000,000. RESERVE FUND, £220,000.
HEAD OFFICE—Nicholas lane, Lombard street, London.
BRANCHES in Edinburgh, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Kurrachee, Agra, Lahore, Shanghai.
CURRENT ACCOUNTS are kept at the Head Office on the terms customary with London Bankers, and interest allowed when the credit balance does not fall below £100.
Deposits received for fixed periods on terms to be ascertained on application.
Bills issued at the current exchange of the day on any of the Branches of the Bank free of extra charge, and approved bills purchased or sent for collection.
SALES AND PURCHASES effected in British and Foreign securities, in East India stock and loans, and the safe custody of the same undertaken.
Interest drawn, and Army, Navy, and Civil pay and pensions realised.
Every other description of Banking Business and money agency, British and Indian, transacted.
J. THOMSON, Chairman.

BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

Established in 1817.
LONDON OFFICE—64 Old Broad street.
Capital Paid-up£1,000,000
Reserve Fund £580,000
Letters of Credit and Bills on demand, or at thirty days' sight, are granted upon the Head Office and Branches throughout the Australian and New Zealand Colonies. Bills purchased or forwarded for collection. Telegraphic remittances made.
DEPOSITS received for fixed periods, on terms which may be known on application.
DAVID GEORGE, Secretary.

MERCANTILE BANK OF SYDNEY.

Established 1869.
Incorporated by Act of Parliament.
LONDON BRANCH—158 LEADENHALL STREET, E.C.
Paid-up Capital..... £300,000
Reserve Fund..... £150,000
Number of Shareholders 596
DRAFTS issued on Sydney, and Bills negotiated and collected.
DEPOSITS received for ONE, TWO, and THREE YEARS at 4 1/2 PER CENT. GEO. H. ALEXANDER, Manager.

UNION BANK OF AUSTRALIA (Limited).

Established 1837. Incorporated 1880.
Paid-up capital.....£1,500,000
Reserve fund..... 970,000
Reserve liability of proprietors 3,000,000
LETTERS OF CREDIT and BILLS on DEMAND, or at Thirty Days' Sight, are granted on the Bank's Branches throughout the Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.
TELEGRAPHIC REMITTANCES are made to the Colonies.
BILLS on the Colonies are negotiated and sent for collection.
DEPOSITS are received for fixed periods, on terms which may be ascertained on application.
W. R. MEWBURN, Manager.
1 Bank buildings, Lothbury, London, E.C.

UNION BANK OF AUSTRALIA, (Limited).

Established 1837. Incorporated 1880.
Paid-up Capital £1,500,000
Reserve Funds 970,000
Reserve Liability of Proprietors ... 3,000,000

The Directors of the Union Bank of Australia, Limited, are prepared to receive in London Inscribed Stock Deposits, bearing interest payable half-yearly at the rate of Four per Cent. per Annum, to be inscribed at this office, and transferable by ordinary transfer deed. Stock Certificates will be issued.

These Inscribed Stock Deposits will be repayable at the option of the Bank only, and on its giving twelve months' previous notice to the holders.

In the event of repayment being made on or after 1st January, 1905, it will be at par; but if, prior to the 1st January, 1905, it will be at a premium of one per cent.

THE BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, Limited.

HEAD OFFICE—31 Lombard street, London, E.C.
Paid-up Capital, £800,000; Reserve Fund, £200,000.
DRAFTS AND LETTERS OF CREDIT ISSUED.
BILLS BOUGHT AND COLLECTED.
TELEGRAPHIC TRANSFERS MADE.
DEPOSITS RECEIVED FOR FIXED PERIODS AT RATES WHICH MAY BE ASCERTAINED ON APPLICATION.
W. G. CUTHBERTSON, General Manager.

THE NATIONAL BANK OF SCOTLAND, LIMITED.

Incorporated by Royal Charter and Act of Parliament.
ESTABLISHED 1825.
HEAD OFFICE—EDINBURGH.
Capital, £5,000,000. Paid up, £1,000,000. Reserve Fund, £660,000.
LONDON OFFICE—37 Nicholas lane, Lombard street, E.C.

CURRENT ACCOUNTS are kept agreeably to usual custom.
DEPOSITS at Interest are received.
CIRCULAR NOTES and LETTERS of CREDIT, available in all parts of the World, are issued free of charge.
INVESTMENTS and SALES of all descriptions of Securities effected. DIVIDENDS, ANNUITIES, &c., received for customers.
At the London Office of the Bank every description of Banking Business connected with Scotland is transacted.
JAMES ROBERTSON, Manager in London.

NEW ORIENTAL BANK CORPORATION, LIMITED.

Capital—Authorised, £2,000,000; Paid-up, £500,000.
London—40 Threadneedle street.
BRANCHES AND AGENCIES—Edinburgh, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Ceylon, Mauritius, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Yokohama, Kobe, Nagasaki, Melbourne, and Sydney.
The Bank buys and sells Bills of Exchange, makes Telegraphic Transfers, issues Letters of Credit and Circular Notes, forwards Bills for Collection, and transacts Banking and Agency Business generally.
The Directors are receiving applications for Four per Cent. Debentures, in sums of £10 and upwards, secured upon the Freehold Bank Premises in the City of London and elsewhere. Creditors of the old Bank can obtain 3 per cent. debentures for the balance of their claims.

LONDON, PARIS, & AMERICAN BANK, LIMITED.

CAPITAL, £1,000,000 SUBSCRIBED, £500,000. PAID-UP, £400,000.
HEAD OFFICE—9 and 10 Tokenhouse yard Lothbury, London.
BRANCH AT SAN FRANCISCO, California.
AGENTS AT NEW YORK, Messrs Lazard Frères.
AGENTS AT PARIS, Messrs Lazard Frères and Cie.
Banking and Exchange business with AMERICA and the CONTINENT OF EUROPE transacted on favourable terms. Credits issued available in the UNITED STATES EUROPE, INDIA, CHINA, AUSTRALIA, and elsewhere.
P. W. ROBERTSON, Secretary.

HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION.

Paid up Capital, \$7,500,000.
Reserve Fund, \$4,500,000.
Reserve for Equalisation of Dividends, \$500,000.
Reserve Liability of Proprietors, \$7,500,000.
COURT OF DIRECTORS AND HEAD OFFICE IN HONG KONG.
COMMITTEE IN LONDON.
A. H. Phillpotts, Esq., Carshalton, Surrey.
E. F. Duncanson, Esq. (of Messrs T. A. Gibb and Co.).
Albert Deacon, Esq. (of Messrs E. and A. Deacon).
MANAGER—David McLean.
BANKERS—London and County Banking Company, Limited.

BRANCHES AND AGENCIES.

Amoy	London	San Francisco
Batavia	Lyons	Shanghai
Bombay	Manila	Singapore
Calcutta	New York	Tientsin
Foochow	Penang	Yokohama
Hankow	Saigon	
Hioogo		

The Corporation grant Drafts upon and negotiate or collect Bills at any of the Branches or Agencies; they also receive Deposits for fixed periods at rates varying with the period of deposit.
The Corporation issue Letters of Credit and Circular Notes, negotiable in the principal cities of Europe, Asia, and America, for the use of travellers.
They open Current Accounts for the convenience of constituents returning from China, Japan, and India.

They also undertake the Agency of constituents connected with the East, and receive for safe custody Indian and other Government Securities, drawing interest and Dividends on the same as they fall due.
Dividends on the Shares of the Corporation are payable in London on receipt of the advice of meeting in Hong Kong, held in February and August.
The Corporation receives Deposits in London for Twelve Months fixed, in sums of £100 and upwards, upon which the present rate of interest allowed is 5 per cent per annum, payable half-yearly at 30th June and 31st December.
Transfer deeds, powers of attorney, and other forms may be had at their Office on application.
Office hours, 10 to 3—Saturdays 10 to 1.
81 Lombard street, London.

LONDON CHARTERED BANK OF AUSTRALIA.

(Incorporated by Royal Charter.)
Paid-up Capital, One Million Sterling.
OFFICE—2 Old Broad street, E.C.
Letters of Credit and Drafts issued on the Bank's Branches and Agencies in Australia. Bills purchased or collected.
Telegraphic Remittances made. Deposits received or fixed periods on terms which may be known on application.
JOHN SUTHERLAND, Secretary.

IMPERIAL BANK OF CANADA

HEAD OFFICE—Toronto.
Branches in Ontario and Manitoba.
Capital Paid-up, \$1,500,000. Reserve Fund, \$650,000.
MONEY RECEIVED for Credit of the Head Office and Branches in Ontario and Manitoba, and Letters of Advice thereof issued by the Agents of the Bank in London, England—Lloyd's Barnett's and Bosanquet's Bank, Limited, 62 Lombard street, E.C.
SPECIAL ATTENTION given to Canadian collections, forwarded either direct to the Head Office of the Bank in Toronto, or through its London Agents.
Wellington street, and Leader lane, Toronto.
D. R. WILKIE, Cashier.

THE STANDARD BANK OF SOUTH AFRICA (Limited).

(Bankers to the Government of the Cape of Good Hope.)
HEAD OFFICE.
10 Clement's lane, Lombard street, London, E.C.
Subscribed Capital..... 4,000,000
Paid-up Capital..... 1,000,000
Reserve Fund 400,000
This Bank grants Drafts on the principal towns in the Cape Colony, Griqualand West (Diamond Fields) Natal, and Transvaal, and transacts every description of Banking Business connected with the South African Colonies and States.
Interest allowed on deposits for one year and longer periods, at rates which may be ascertained on application.

THE QUEENSLAND NATIONAL BANK, LIMITED.

(Incorporated under the Companies Act of 1863, of the Legislature of Queensland.)
BANKERS TO THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT.
Subscribed Capital, £1,304,600; Paid-up Capital, £652,300; Reserve Fund, £305,000.
HEAD OFFICE—BRISBANE.
This Bank grants Drafts on all its Branches and Agencies, and transacts every description of Banking Business in connection with Queensland and other Australian Colonies on the most favourable terms.
The London Office receives Deposits for fixed periods, at rates which may be ascertained on application.
R. D. BUCHANAN, Manager.
No. 29 Lombard street, E.C.

THE AUSTRALIAN JOINT STOCK BANK.

LONDON BRANCH—2 King William street, E.C.
Paid-up Capital £500,000
Reserve Fund £250,000
Letters of Credit and Drafts issued. Bills negotiated or sent for collection. Remittances made by cable.
Deposits received for fixed periods on terms which may be ascertained on application.
JOHN CHRISTIE, Manager.

THE COMMERCIAL BANK OF AUSTRALIA (Limited).

Established 1866.
Subscribed Capital, £1,500,000; Paid-up, £600,000.
Reserve Fund, £215,000.
HEAD OFFICE: Melbourne.
LETTERS OF CREDIT and DRAFTS granted on the Bank's Branches and Agencies in the Australian Colonies. BILLS negotiated and sent for collection.
TELEGRAPHIC REMITTANCES made to the Colonies.
DEPOSITS received for fixed periods on terms which may be ascertained on application.
GEORGE NIVEN, Manager.
1 Bishopsgate street Within, London, E.C.

THE COMMERCIAL BANKING COMPANY OF SYDNEY.

Established 1834. Incorporated 1848.
Paid-up Capital, £600,000. Reserve Funds, £685,000.
The London Board of Directors grant Letters of Credit and Bills of Exchange on the Head Office of the Bank in Sydney and on the Branches in New South Wales and Queensland. Bills purchased or forwarded for collection. Deposits received for fixed periods on terms which may be ascertained on application.
London Office, 39 Lombard street.
NATHANIEL CORN, Manager.