

taste and skill to be of direct service in the trades or pursuits which they shall engage in, instead of a mass of scraps of half-taught theory, useless cramming, indiscriminately laden upon their young brains.

The central idea in the new departure in education is, says Dr. Hodgins, "that every pupil who exhibits a taste for any of the various branches of practical science should have an opportunity of learning something about them. There are but few schools in the country in which a few boys would not be found to possess special gifts in some of these branches, and by guiding these talents into the proper channel at an early age, the country may possibly obtain a genius, while the youth himself would be benefitted to an untold extent."

Speaking upon the subject of technical training, and replying to the objections made to the cost of maintenance of the Kensington museum (£500,000) and other appliances of the system, Prof. Huxley, the eminent English scientist, is reported to have said, "If England, by means of this system, develop a James Watt, a Humphry Davy, or a Michael Faraday, and they should each cost the country a hundred thousand pounds, they would be dirt cheap at the money." His meaning being that the discoveries and inventions of such men would be of so great advantage to the nation, and indeed to humanity, that the cost of their education, or of the system by which they were obtained, would be as nothing to their utility.

LOANS ON BANK STOCKS.

It appears that the brokers of Montreal are exercised about the numbering of bank shares, made compulsory by recent enactment, pronouncing this measure, now that they are wanting to operate largely and sell short, "a hindrance to business" and a "silly nuisance." This is very probably a correct indication of the satisfactory working of the Act in the very way it was intended.

The exceptional position of the City & District Savings Bank will, however, enable stocks to be loaned upon as much as ever they were, if the speculative spirit—which Midas' ghost forbid—become as prevalent there as in some American cities. The preference given to that bank is such that the Bank of Montreal, or any other bank that chases can lend money to the City & District Bank on its deposit receipt, and the latter can lend that money to stock brokers or speculators. November 15th was the last day for new loans to be made.

It appears to us that if the Government desires to put a stop to the practice of lending on bank stocks, they should not

permit such "a soft thing" to the City & District Savings Bank. To learn whether this institution has been doing a speculative business or not, it is only necessary to recall the evidence of M. Barbeau, its manager, in the current case of Bank Montreal vs. City Passenger R. R. It is there shown that the C. & D. Bank loaned about \$1,000,000 in 1873-6 on the security of Western Union Telegraph stock, which the bank held from the time it was quoted 94 till it fell to 52. The bank was repaid, however, in 1877. Some twenty persons were interested in this speculation, among them the President and Vice-President and two other directors of the Bank, Messrs. Starnes and Mulholland.

AN ACCOUNTANTS' INSTITUTE.

The idea of establishing an incorporated Institute of Accountants appears worthy of commendation. An association of gentlemen versed in the science of accounts, comprised of public accountants, bankers, book-keepers and others, who are engaged day by day in office work, would meet a long-felt want. Various suggestions are offered as to the shape the scheme should assume. One is, the adoption of a constitution which would admit without examination all who are acknowledged as obtaining their livelihood in the manner referred to. Classes of various grades could subsequently be formed and a diploma be issued to such gentlemen as earned their title thereto by conforming to such standard as the whole body might propose.

Another considers that the association should take the form of a club, at which bankers or bank clerks might in discussion gather from building-society functionaries something of the scope and methods of the latter class of companies; the employes of these, in turn, learning the secrets of bank management. A letter which we print elsewhere deems it important that the proposed institute should take a judicial character, admitting to its membership, or at least to possession of its diplomas, only such persons as are of known good character and proved competency in accounts.

There is need, we think, of some means to secure uniformity, or at any rate a degree of real efficiency, in the acquirements of persons professing the responsible position of public accountants and auditors. There are not a few so-called auditors whose inspection of a company is that of mere novices, or, worse still, that of persons who are either ignorant of their functions or venally negligent of their duties to any one but the concern which employs and pays them. The certificate of such an

auditor does not carry conviction to any intelligent mind. But it ought to be put beyond their power to mislead, by their flimsy assurances, people who, having no skill in accounts, accept the *ipse dixit* of functionaries whom they suppose, from their position, to be both qualified and trustworthy.

—Mr. Chapleau's scheme for restoring the equilibrium of the finances of Quebec is one which it does not lie in the power of the Government, backed by a majority in the Assembly, to carry out. It is contingent upon the assent of the general Government being obtained to two proposals: one that the Quebec Government shall sell, and the Federal Government buy, the North Shore Railway; the other that the Federal Government shall consent to re-open the arbitration dispute between the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, which has been settled by the highest authority in the empire. This is an advertisement that the Quebec Government desires to sell the North Shore Railway; but we have seen no indication that the general Government is disposed to negotiate for its purchase. And if it did consent to negotiate, the terms might not be agreed upon. All Mr. Chapleau can say is that he will try to sell. We don't know what right the general Government can have to re-open a question in which Ontario is interested, and the settlement of which has been judicially made. Certainly, the general Government would not be entitled to prejudice the interests of Ontario by its action. If any concession were made to Quebec, it could not be at the expense of Ontario, but must be at the expense of the Dominion. We can hardly call that a policy which is purely tentative at best; and which, for reasons beyond the control of Mr. Chapleau, is likely to come to nothing.

—A report reaches us, through the daily papers, that a legal opinion is to be obtained as to the liability of the shareholders of the Mechanics' Bank. There can be no doubt as to the liability of Bank shareholders to make good a deficiency up to twice the amount of their shares. The liability, if such there be, in the case of this bank, ought to be enforced without delay. The public wants to know, by a practical test, what the double liability of Bank shareholders is worth. Not that it will ever again be allowed to be sole reliance of the creditors of banks; but at present the productiveness of this resource is a matter of practical interest to the creditors.

—The city of Toronto Treasurer's return shows that \$789,593 of this year's taxes had