

declined to entertain any such proposition as a \$1000 loan previously, he has now become so hard up, that he feels he must take it; and thus he attains the position of a man with only \$500 capital in his business with the other \$1500 locked up in brick and mortar. Said capital used in his business, as he has already shown himself able to use it, would double itself every three years. Now it saves him say, \$200 a year rent, and costs him \$80 a year interest and \$40 a year taxes—or a net earning on his \$1500 capital of \$80 per annum, instead of the 500 per annum which he would make were it employed in his business legitimately. To which falls to be added this advantage that it is too big a store for a \$500 capital to keep running; so the second mortgage is given in order to get goods to fill it with. The end of that man in a business point of view is *not* peace.

Nor is this mania confined to the small trader. Would that it were. We have plenty of \$100,000 stores in which are transacted annually only \$400,000 worth of business, for which a cheap plain brick building worth \$20,000 would amply sufficient. These stores are not producers, grand and imposing as they may appear. They are dead-weights on the trade of the community. Banks even, with a million dollars of capital lock up \$150,000 or \$200,000 in real estate in which to transact a trade in money of a couple of millions. The \$150,000 or \$200,000 so locked up is alike useless and dangerous, because wholly unrealizable when the pinch of hard times comes upon us.

The only apology to be made for intruding this lugubrious view upon the at present justifiably sanguine trading and financial public, is the fact of such dawning prosperity, which in a few brief years will have reached its meridian height. It is because on the manner in which our profits—the profits we will undoubtedly make during the next three or four years—are re-invested, will inevitably depend the continuance of that prosperity for a longer or shorter period. If these profits are re-invested in forms that tend to further usefulness and development of our real resources as a nation, we will continue to prosper and speedily be able to use profitably the vast aggregation of fine buildings we have on hand. If used to produce costly and still more magnificent edifices yet more useless, when the pinch comes again it will come as sharply as before. The useless bricks and mortar, the gorgeous polished stone, will be found powerless to meet engagements, for it is only by trade that buildings prove of value. They are valueless without it.

Trader.

MUNICIPAL REFORM.

Latterly there have been severe remarks in the daily press anent certain city aldermen and their votes upon the City Passenger Railway question. Without venturing to express an opinion one way or the other, we may state that it can hardly be disputed that the more influential citizens are and have not in the past been induced to perform aldermanic duties. That this should be the case is not just nor proper, and it is the duty of every voter to secure the election of efficient men to civic offices. That a change in the *personnel* of our present Municipal Council is perhaps thought desirable by many, and also that it would be advisable to make some changes in our civic methods of government in order to do away with the petty squabbles, peurile charges, investigations, and extremely annoying delays.

There are two ways of effecting this reform, one is by making a bitter personal campaign upon those aldermen who are believed to be incompetent or untrustworthy, and in this way rather strengthening their position than weakening it—as personal invective is justly and properly held to be very materially different from argument. For the presence of any incompetent aldermen, the voters themselves, in the majority of cases, are greatly to blame by not requiring a higher standard of representation. Therefore, before attacking them, it is always well to investigate the voters' share in causing the mischief, and try to amend that as well. Montreal, it may be said without fear of contradiction, is badly governed, and almost solely because the intelligent and wealthy citizens do not as a rule take the trouble to secure good government, nor do they take any great interest in the welfare of the city except to the degree that their own pockets and profits are concerned. If they took an active interest, there is no doubt but that a decided improvement in civic rule and affairs would almost immediately take place.

To mention one instance of civic mismanagement it may be mentioned that previous to the holding of the Dominion Exhibition at the Mile End, some sixty or seventy laborers were employed to break stone for the road leading to the Exhibition grounds; more than one half of this extravagant expense might have been saved by the use of the stone-crusher. In this instance common sense and business knowledge were surely lacking, so that tax-payers have paid or will pay double what is just under the circumstances.

Then there is a class of "interested" persons who manage to get into municipal positions and make of their duty a trade. Their "interest" serves them as well as energy and honour do the estimable citizen, and they manage to get into places where it would be thought impossible for them to come. When things have gone too far, an agitation is started and continued until the political atmosphere is cleared for a time; but this working by fits and starts is

not the proper way—though it is better than none, yet the vigilance should be constant, and not come by fits and starts. In the United States the municipal elections are controlled to a great extent by the political parties and here in Montreal we are fast drifting into the same dangerous channel. The question as now put, is not as to the fitness or capabilities of the candidate for alderman or civic office, but as to whether he is a Liberal or Conservative. Then again, the question is asked—Is he a French Canadian, Irish, English or Scotch? Is he a Roman Catholic or Protestant? So long as voters allow themselves to be influenced by these considerations the difficulties of getting fit representatives will be greatly augmented.

There are certain representatives in the Council at present, who occupy their time in making accusations against officials, in making senseless charges against other representatives and in dealing in personal abuse of a very bitter and ungentlemanly character. With these the reform should begin and we believe that they can reform themselves if they will only endeavor to do so—they, we are sure, must see and know that their conduct is not applauded, that their arguments under the circumstances carry little weight and that there must be an ending to it.

A VIEW OF IRELAND.

To say that there is something wrong in the condition of Ireland is of course, neither more nor less than may safely be said of every country on the face of the earth. The Hibernian trouble, however, differs from that of most other regions, chiefly by reason of the noise it makes; the amazing diversity of aspect which it is made to assume; and in its remarkable tendency to shrink when tested by what is called the hard logic of facts. The honest and earnest enquirer, desirous of hearing and seeing for himself, would probably visit the island and be quickly confronted by difficulties undreamt of in his or any one else's philosophy. In a vain endeavour to comprehend the incomprehensible he would have to abandon the methods by which men and things are commonly judged. For the first time he might begin to question whether in this world of ours there is, after all, anything positive: whether a part may not be greater than the whole; and whether two when added to a like number gives the quantity of four. Not the least of his troubles would consist in keeping out of his enquiries Brian Boru, Malachi of the Golden Collar—personages absolutely mythical or of remote antiquity—Henry the Second, Queen Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell, the Penal Laws, and a variety of matters which he would feel disposed to regard in the light of ancient history, and but slenderly connected with the subject of his investigation. He would experience no lack of witnesses, passionate and voluble, about whose utterances there would be nothing uncertain save their meaning. He would hear that the "great evil" lay with the landlords—again, that it was to be found amongst the tenants—somebody would say that it was the climate, the unchangeable character and possibly the religion of the Celt. But by far the most popular sentiment would be that in some way sufficiently mysterious the British Government was at the bottom of all the evils of Erin. This general concurrence of opinion would, doubtless, lose much of its force when he came to discover the clearness of vision with which Irishmen say they can discern that everyone or everything but themselves—who, all things considered, are probably the greatest offenders—is to blame. Whether the something said to be wrong in the condition of Ireland has its origin in any or all of the alleged causes herein stated, it is not our present purpose to discuss. We prefer to take up a position removed as far as possible beyond the range of dispute and therefore invite the public generally and Irishmen particularly to aid us in an attempt to estimate some portion of the evil of which the latter complain, by measuring what they are pleased to call the land of their fathers. The surface of the Emerald Island is, we believe, 30,000 square miles in extent, equal in English measurement to some 20,000,000 of acres. From this must be deducted no less than 5,000,000 of acres representing the collective areas of bays, arms and inlets of the sea, rivers and lakes, mountain and bog of the irreclaimable kinds, the sites of cities, towns and villages, of farm buildings, and public institutions, of roads, railways, canals, grave yards and land planted for ornament or profit, leaving a residue of 15,000,000 of acres of cultivable land. The population of Ireland so little exceeds 5,000,000 that for facility of calculation that sum may be assumed as correct. Estimating at 1,500,000 the dwellers in cities and large towns, the clergy, the gentry, professional men, merchants, bankers, traders, mechanics, police, sea-faring men, laborers and all not engaged in agricultural pursuits, we have 3,500,000 persons, who as occupiers and laborers, are immediately dependent upon land for their sustenance. Supposing amongst these three and one half millions of people the fifteen millions of acres of cultivable land were equally divided each of them would have for his or her share a trifle less than four and one quarter acres. Selecting wheat as the standard of agricultural produce in the British Islands we proceed to observe that Ireland is not usually considered as a country favourable to its cultivation. In some parts of the island 30, 40 or 50 bushels to the acre may be raised, but in many districts, especially in the western or