

it encourages and rewards persons supplying such information ; and it is sought to make it appear that this system of rewarding informers is new and peculiar to the Canadian Government, and that it should be abolished.

The question of the respectability of those who become informers is a social one, and concerns only those who become such. All governments make use of informers for the detection and punishment of crime and violations of law, and without such it would be impossible to prevent or suppress such violations. If there were no violations of law, informers as such would be without remunerative occupation, but as long as law is violated, and the customs defrauded, just so long will it be necessary for the Government to employ informers, and reward them when they have made their "case." As in all other cases, when a case, brought on such information, is being tried in a court, the judge and jury are at liberty to give just such credence as they may see proper to such testimony, and if the informer's testimony is supported by other evidence, it is entitled to full weight, whether the social standing of the witness is enviable or not. If the witness proves the truth of his charges—if it is proven that violation of law has been committed, the defendant should be convicted, and the question of compensation to the witness, or his "respectability" has nothing whatever to do with the case.

We express no opinion as to the guilt or innocence of Ayer & Co., nor regarding the "respectability" of the witness whose testimony is relied upon to convict, but we are emphatic in defending the Government in their efforts to suppress violations of the laws, and to punish offenders. We have taken occasion frequently to speak of the injustice done both to the Government and to honest importers by the persistent undervaluation of merchandise brought into the country. The whole community are affected by such transactions, in that the public treasury is robbed, and honest men cannot successfully compete in business with those who are enabled to undersell them by having their goods passed through the Custom House at fraudulently low undervaluations. Honest men have no occasion to complain because the officers of the law faithfully and fairly enforce the law, but—

"No rogue o'er felt the halter draw  
With good opinion of the law."

If the law works oppression on any, amend it ; if thieves and dishonest persons can be detected and punished by other methods than those now observed, and which can be made free from objections, adopt them ; but until such methods are discovered, enforce the existing laws.

### BONUSING BUSINESS.

FOR a long time past the local newspapers of a great many Canadian towns have alluded to the fact that the local municipal authorities were being appealed to by parties who proposed establishing industrial enterprises in such towns, asking that bonuses be granted them to enable them to carry out their designs. These requests have varied from the extreme of bashful modesty, where but some slight concession in the way of taxes or something of the sort was asked for, to arrogant demands where it would seem that nothing less than a large section of God's earth would answer the purpose. And, strange as it may appear, these requests for bonuses have almost always

been responded to favorably. Under some circumstances bonusing may be a good thing, but there may be such a thing as too much of a good thing, and it would seem that this bonusing business in a great many instances has reached that point. It is true that an increase of the population of a town by the introduction of large numbers of skilled artisans and workmen, brought there by the establishment of factories and similar industries, means prosperity generally, in which all classes participate ; and if there is a valuable water power unutilized, or any other natural advantage that might be made available, being in its present condition of but little value, there is no reason why it should not be turned over to any manufacturer who would extract the most benefit from it, at the same time benefitting the community also. It is not desirable at any time to practise a dog-in-the-manger policy. But it is very different when the requirement is not only for land, which may be very valuable, and for natural advantages, but also for large and long exemption from taxation, for peculiar privileges not usually accorded to private parties, such as having railroad switches extended into the proposed works at the municipal expense, or in lieu thereof to have large annual allowances of money made to cover the cost of drayage, etc. ; free and unrestricted use of water from the water mains, and probably an amount in cash sufficiently large to ensure the operation of the works even though the bank account of the applicant should run very low. It has come under our observation where the proposition was to remove from one town where buildings, machinery, etc., were all in good condition, and ample facilities existing for carrying on business, but where the applicant was treated just as all other business men were treated—as regards the payment of taxes, etc., to another town where a large and valuable premium could be had as a reward for the removal.

Canadian manufacturers are not a class of paupers, and it is not creditable to Canadian manufacturers, or to the country, that paupers should be thus allowed and encouraged to go into business. It is exceedingly unfair to those who invest their money in manufacturing, asking no favor except the protection afforded by the tariff against foreign competition, that they should be compelled to compete with those who have but scant and insufficient capital, and who are enabled to continue in business only through the charity of the municipalities in which they may elect to locate.

If this indiscriminate bonusing business is to be continued, legitimate manufacturers and tax-ridden communities may feel compelled to seek superior legislative action for their protection.

### THE MANUFACTURERS' "LITTLE INTEREST."

THE following letter, which appeared first in the *Toronto Mail*, needs no editorial comment:—

*To the Editor of the Mail:*

SIR,—Your readers will perhaps remember that I commenced my letter which appeared in your issue of 5th inst. with a quotation from a speech delivered before the Wentworth Farmers' Institute, wherein I was personally subjected to an unwarranted attack and which I attributed to Mr. Shaw. As that gentleman denied responsibility for the statement, I have secured a copy of the *Hamilton Times*, a paper which strongly favors Commercial Union and which devotes several of its columns to an almost *verbatim* account of the meeting, and I