

accordance with this rule, is opening the door to the perpetration of frauds.

A case involving a question of registration has lately occurred in the Province of Quebec, where a Montreal creditor induced his debtor, residing in another district, to execute a mortgage on real property to secure his debt, but subsequently the debtor, at the request of another creditor, executed a mortgage on the same property to secure this debt. The second creditor, residing in the same district with the debtor, succeeded in getting his mortgage registered just before the mortgage already given to the Montreal creditor. The Montreal creditor, finding himself with a secondary and doubtful security instead of a first mortgage, brought an action in Montreal to have his mortgage take priority by registration before the other mortgage, basing his demand on the allegation that the country creditor had agreed with the debtor to allow him to take a first mortgage. The country creditor pleaded by declinatory exception that the action should have been brought in the rural district where the property was situated, and where the parties reside and were served. This exception was maintained in the Superior Court, and the action dismissed but is still pending on appeal.

It is becoming more and more urgent for the mercantile community to have uniform insolvent legislation throughout the Dominion, especially as the repeal of the Dominion Insolvent Act has in effect revived many of the old Provincial laws relating to insolvent debtors which were in conflict with, and had been superseded by, the paramount legislation of the Dominion Act.

#### CABINET CHANGES.

We hope most sincerely that the rumor that the First Minister is about to assume the office of President of the Council is well founded. The duties of the First Minister must necessarily be sufficiently arduous in Canada, without adding to them the charge of an important department. In the Imperial Cabinet it has long been the usage to relieve the First Minister from the charge of a department, and yet the departmental system is carried out in England to an extent that is scarcely possible in Canada owing to our Federal organization. In England the business coming before the entire Cabinet is comparatively trifling, while in Canada the most minute details are disposed of by the Council. In order to exercise that supervision over the

departments generally that is so desirable, the First Minister should be relieved of departmental work, and should be enabled to devote his entire time to the general business of the country. Hitherto the office of President of the Council has been conferred on the junior member of the Administration, who has not been in a position to superintend the departmental work. In Canada the office of President of the Council should be made in practice what its title indicates, viz., the principal office in the Government. The duties, if properly fulfilled, would be sufficiently arduous to occupy the attention of a Minister, and as they must necessarily be performed by the First Minister, the charge of a department in addition throws upon him an amount of work which even the most vigorous men would find beyond their strength. It will appear evident, even to those who have reflected little on the subject, that although the duties of President of the Council may have been light to the junior member of the Administration, they would be the very reverse to the First Minister, who is necessarily compelled to supervise the work of the other departments; even while his attention is largely given to the department specially entrusted to him. Whether the rumor of a contemplated change be true or false, the policy is sound, and we feel assured that it will be adopted at no distant day by general consent.

It has been recently announced that Mr. Gladstone is about to resign the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, which he has held in conjunction with that of First Lord of the Treasury. It is by no means surprising that Mr. Gladstone should seek a relief which for many years back his predecessors have enjoyed. This change is, we imagine, the only foundation for the rumors of Mr. Gladstone's retirement from public life.

#### IRON MANUFACTURE. (2)

If we take a brief glance at the leading epochs in the history of the iron trade it is for the purpose of showing the caution with which the several new improvements were adopted from time to time and as introductory to the principal latter-day improvements.

Capitalists who have spent large sums of money in erecting works are not generally pleased to find that some new and economical process threatens to supersede what they had supposed to be the highest attainment of practical science, and new inventions are consequently looked upon with indifference, if not with marked disfavor and distrust. Simon Sturtevant,

who obtained a patent in 1611 for the substitution of pit coal for charcoal, did not succeed, however, in introducing his invention; neither did his successor in the privilege, John Rovenso. It was not till the experiments of Du' Dudley, in the beginning of the 17th century, that any degree of success was achieved in this direction. For generations prior to his time the history of the iron trade is little more than a record to improve the blast. It was considered a great improvement when the double bellows, which every village blacksmith uses now, were introduced, so connected that, by their alternate action, a continuous blast was maintained. Previous to Dudley's discovery there was no machinery powerful enough to make a blast to produce in coal the requisite intensity of heat; besides that no means had been devised to expel from coal the sulphur which is prejudicial to the manufacture of iron. Dudley discovered how coal, charred by a process analogous to that applied and since called coking, may easily be raised to the necessary degree of heat, and that, if the process is properly conducted, the coal loses to a great extent the noxious ingredient of sulphur. The number of coking ovens required to supply the demands of the Londonderry Iron Works, Nova Scotia, is about 124, of which some 67 are in Londonderry and owned by the company itself; the others are in Stellarton.

But everything appears to have conspired against Dudley and his inventions: floods carried away his works, at another time they were pulled down by mobs in the interest of the charcoal burners; the utility and originality of his discovery were denied; he was involved in expensive law-suits, imprisoned for debt, he was plundered in the Rebellion, and was refused justice in the Restoration. His perseverance and energy were unrivalled: he petitioned, he published, he argued, he implored, but all in vain. He founded the fortune of thousands and ruined his own; he lived unrewarded, and died brokenhearted. But his secret died with him, and it was not till many years after that the idea was revived.

The next experiment was made with raw coal by a German called Blewstone, who built his furnaces at Wednesbury, so ingeniously contrived that only the flame of the coal should come to the ore, but this invention, the origin probably of the reverberatory furnace, had no success. It was not till the early part of the 18th century that the first permanent works for the smelting of iron with coal were established, when Abraham Darby began his operations at Coalbrookdale, who em-