

margin of profit on their sales. It is, we think, a disgrace to a country like Canada, that its legislation should be of such a kind as to have the effect of causing people to break the law instead of upholding it, and that by acting as a premium upon dishonesty it puts it in the power of the unscrupulous trader to undersell his more honest and law-abiding rival.

IS IT HUMBUG?

In the month of December we received a letter from an esteemed correspondent in one of our thriving western towns, enclosing the advertisement of a rival jeweler, which set forth that for a couple of days he would give the benighted inhabitants of the district in which he did business a chance of examining \$20,000 worth of stock, which he was prepared to sell them at "a very small advance on cost." Apparently mistrusting that the readers of the paper would credit the statement, he proceeded to tell how he was going to manage the thing, which was in this wise. The wholesale house from whom he bought his goods had, it appears, agreed to be present during the two days in question and allow him to use their stock (presumably to the amount of \$20,000) during that time, and to make sales from it as if it were his own. Our correspondent characterizes the whole transaction as a "humbug," and wants us to publicly express our opinion about it, and in a second letter regarding it, seems to feel sore because we did not notice it in our January number. We would have commented upon this in our January issue had we thought that there was anything wrong about it, but we did not then see anything wrong about it, nor do we yet see any reason to change our first impression regarding it. The fact that the wholesale house who lent their goods for the display happens to be one of our advertisers, who would have nothing whatever to do with our action in the premises. If we thought them wrong we would not hesitate one moment to say so, no matter what the consequences might be. Their action, although uncommon, is perfectly right in itself, and is done occasionally by the best houses both in England and the United States. Of course no wholesale house would care about making such a concession to any other than one of their best customers, and it is its very

rarity, probably more than anything else, that has made our correspondent regard it in the way he has.

We do not doubt that it may have been hard on his trade if the advertiser carried out his promises, but his only plan, if he couldn't get some other wholesale house to do him a similar turn, would be to grin and bear it. The probability is that he was not a customer of the wholesale house in question at all, and if not, then they did him no injustice. If he was, then his only remedy is to buy his goods from some other firm that will treat all customers alike, and not make fish of one and flesh of another.

A NEW INSOLVENT ACT.

We are glad to know that the Boards of Trade in the cities of Toronto, Montreal and Hamilton have at last become fully alive to the importance of concerted action in regard to securing the passage of an insolvent act. The trouble with Boards of Trade has formerly been, that they did not get to work soon enough, and when they did commence there was no unity of action amongst them. Each separate board had ideas of their own which they wished crystallized into law, and as these were usually brought before parliament while it was sitting, it was no wonder that the Government took the position they did, and virtually said, "Gentlemen, if you don't know what you want yourselves, how can you expect us to bring forward a measure that will suit you all?" This was no doubt a fair argument under the circumstances, and certainly afforded the Government a loophole through which to escape the passing of a law, which they themselves had no desire to pass. Now, however, that the principal Boards of Trade in Canada have met in good season and thoroughly discussed the matter, and laid the result of their deliberations before the Government in time to let them get an idea of the feeling of the country regarding it, we think that it is in a fair way of becoming law. Indeed, we can hardly see how the Government can refuse to pass such a just measure of relief to traders as the proposed law seems to be. They cannot plead that the mercantile community is not agreed upon its advisability, for the draft bill sent them by the Boards of Trade is a unanimous opinion, still less can they

plead want of sufficient time to find out the feeling of the country and get such a bill ready, for here is a bill all ready-made to their hand, and in these days of electricity and cheap printing, they can get a consensus of opinion upon it within forty-eight hours, much less the two months that they have had to consider it. Unless the members of the Government are intellectually blind they cannot fail to have noticed how unjust the present chaotic system, or rather want of system, is working. It is prolific of mercantile corruption and knavery, and unless a stop is speedily put to the temptations that beset the hard-pushed merchant, very disastrous results will be apparent in the near future. England has a national bankruptcy act, and the trades of the United States are clamoring for one. Surely Canada, which is not behind either country in intelligence and business sagacity, should be able to have a suitable one also. Such an act is in thorough accord with every instinct and principle of justice, and though its passage has been long delayed, it must come, and that very soon. If it does not it will be bad for credit both at home and abroad.

Since writing the above, we find that no reference has been made in the Governor General's speech to the Bankrupt Act proposed by the Boards of Trade, and a good deal of comment has been made about the omission. It is well-known that the French Canadian members of Parliament are strongly opposed to the passage of such an act, and it is probably for this reason that the Cabinet have not made it a Government measure. Let the Government do as it likes, however, the Bill will be brought forward by some private member and thoroughly discussed, and the members of the Cabinet cannot escape the censure of the mercantile community, if they either refuse to support it or vote against it. In the meantime, we think a special meeting of the Dominion Board of Trade should be held, and their views upon this question, which are certainly entitled to a great deal of weight, should be made known to Parliament before the Bill comes up for discussion.

If, with all this consensus of public opinion, the Government allows the Bill to be defeated, they will, by the estrangement of the mercantile community, certainly have put more than one nail in their political coffin.