

gistered within seven days, or, if made more than one year before insolvency, unless registered one year before the insolvency takes place. This would check a practice by which it is well known that dishonest men have enriched their wives out of their creditors' money. Property derived from the wife is exempt from this clause. Creditors holding current securities are enabled to treat them as matured. Married women are to be entirely subject to the insolvency law, and the estates of deceased debtors who die when insolvent are to be sequestered as though they were living. Our acknowledgments are due, and given, to our Melbourne and Sydney contemporary for enabling the above synopsis of a valuable Act to be laid before the Canadian public. We trust with the *Record* that "it will assist in raising the standard of commercial morality." We commend this well-designed Act to the study of the Federal Government, of our legislators, and our bankers and merchants, who, we believe, will have to consider a Canadian Insolvency Act next Session of Parliament.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES AND MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION.

One of the most responsible duties of the Provincial Legislatures of the Dominion is, the regulation of those conditions under which municipal bodies are empowered to contract debts, represented by debentures. To wisely fix the borrowing power of any municipality requires a knowledge of its circumstances, of its prospects, and of municipal finances, which is not universally possessed by members of our legislative bodies. This causes the responsibility for this class of legislation to rest all the more heavily upon the members of the several Provincial Governments, who should study most carefully the position of municipalities before giving any sanction to legislation affecting the financial interests of those bodies. It is one of the rarest of events in Canada for a municipality to become embarrassed by its debt obligations. When, however, such an incident arises, it is quite just to enquire how the Legislature came to give such borrowing powers as have led to the difficulty. There must have been either negligence to acquire information, or lamentable indifference to the public interests, on the part of the Legislature which gave such wide borrowing powers to a municipality as have led to its embarrassment. It is one of the very prime duties of a Legislature to restrain municipal corporations which show a disposition to expend lavishly and borrow excessively. The discredit of a local corporation tends to the discredit of other municipalities; it is also an injury to the general credit of the country. The troubles which have overtaken the Town Council of Toronto Junction reflect blame upon that body, but we are disposed to regard the local Legislature as also reprehensible. Toronto Junction was started in its career by persons anxious to escape Toronto taxation. They boomed the place just as land in the adjoining city

was being boomed. Being anxious to make the Junction a great manufacturing centre, they started to manufacture a town off hand. But towns are like fruit-trees, they can be planted, but they cannot be made fruitful by forcing, as maturity is needed before fruit will grow, so towns need time and favouring trade conditions before they are so prosperous as to admit of large expenditures that involve a heavy debt. Outsiders of experience saw the Junction's efforts to assume a townlike look and responsibilities with fear, and the Legislature should have restrained its impetuous career in the interest of the new district, and of municipal credit generally. The Ontario Legislature has been applied to for assistance to relieve the town of Toronto Junction from its difficulties. It is to be hoped that the Provincial Government will weigh the situation most carefully, and suggest a settlement between the town and the bond holders on a fair and reasonable basis. While we have no desire to have the rate-payers of Toronto Junction dealt with harshly, yet it is to their own interest that they make every possible effort to redeem the credit of the town, and save themselves, and protect our municipalities in general from reproach. The Toronto Junction affair should serve as a beacon light warning against the dangers of excessive debt.

THE MURDER EPIDEMIC AND ITS PROBABLE CAUSES.

At this moment there are nine prisoners either under sentence of death, or awaiting sentence, for murder on this continent, and several at liberty who have on their souls the stain of human blood. Besides these there are a number who have been convicted of, or are awaiting trial for crimes of violence only distinguished from murder by a legal technicality. An epidemic of violence seems to have spread over the continent. Such a condition raises the question as to what influences are at work to generate such an outbreak. In the year 1849 the attention of the British Home Secretary was called to the alarming increase of burglary in some of the large towns of England. An enquiry was instituted which soon ended by the cause being discovered for this wave of house-breaking. A clever actress had undertaken to play the leading character in the melodrama "Jack Sheppard," the famous burglar. She shone in this part by the agility of her exploits representing those of the criminal hero. It was found that her performances drew to the theatre a crowd of minor criminals, toughs and dissipated youths, who viewed her representation of a cunning, daring thief with intense delight. Their admiration of a burglar's craft naturally inspired emulation, hence the house-breaking epidemic which seemed so mysterious. As soon as the performance of "Jack Sheppard" was interdicted the wave of crime subsided, leaving, however, terrible results on a number of youths and young men whom it had swept from a life of loose