

a candidate, "you cannot get elected in this riding unless you have lots of money;" and that upon being questioned, they make no bones about saying that money is wanted to buy votes. As there is nothing political in this accusation, no pretence that one party is, in this respect, better than another, the statement coming from one who has the means of knowing, may be believed. With every desire to lessen the evil, Mr. Foster fears that it is likely to continue for years to come. We can well understand that candidates do not particularly enjoy the pleasure of being fleeced; but political parties think they must follow the road that promises to lead to success. The difficulty of bringing home bribery to the guilty parties is proved by what has recently taken place in the election courts. The man in the moon descends about election times in so stealthy a manner as not to be noticed; he distributes bribes like dew from heaven, and manages either to escape recognition or not to be found when wanted, having presumably made good his escape to the lunar sphere whence he came. Numberless cases of bribery have been shown where the briber could be neither traced nor connected with the candidate. This is a deplorable state of things. What the remedy is let our public men consider. The danger is that the men who have the money will go on using it in an illegal way. The real trouble lies with the electorate; it is they who accept bribes, who solicit them, who refuse to elect men unless they will comply with their illegal demands. A remedy ought to be found. A candid admission of the existence and extent of the evil is the first step towards its correction.

Since the year 1892 the foreign trade of England has not only made no advance, it has somewhat retrograded, while that of Germany as well as the United States has increased. In considering the causes of these opposite results, the fact that the manufactures and trade of Germany have been developed beyond the paying point must be borne in mind. Better do a smaller trade than one that entails a loss. English manufacturers will probably now set about to seek some means of preventing this accidental state of things from becoming permanent. Two remarkable facts are found in connection with the condition of the foreign trade of three great nations. The scale of living is lower in Germany but higher in the United States than in England. The Americans, while paying nominally higher wages than either England or Germany, probably get more for their money, in the form of labor, than either of the other countries. Some American economists, who do not belong to the orthodox school, claim that their advantage over their rivals consists in the superiority of their machinery. This may be allowed in some lines, but that American machinery is, on the whole, superior to English may well be doubted. Germany is the country of all others in which technical education is most advanced; a fact which has told in the rivalry of nations on manufactures. The new rivals of England in industry are naturally more aggressive than those who are in possession and who fancied they could hold markets which they had long held. The rage for apparent cheapness, among people who are not always capable of judging of the respective qualities of goods, is a factor in the race which gives some advantage to the new rivals. The fact that Germany and the United States are Protectionist nations does not count as an element in their favor; to it they owe none of those advantages which they have gained; the facts send no message to England as to the tariff policy which it is necessary to pursue to uphold her industrial position among the nations. But she has something to learn in other directions connected both with

the manufacture and the mode and conditions of distribution; and once convinced of the necessity she will set about correcting the deficiencies which come home to her in a way to make themselves felt.

Among French statesmen it is difficult to find one who has a liking for the office of Colonial Minister. No ministerial office in France is so little sought after. In the recent shuffle of the political cards a new man, M. Guilain, was put into the office, and the question is asked whether he will not desire to change into another office as soon as he can. The late head had the ambition to *commercialiser* this Department, which if the phrase means to make the colonies self-sustaining, might give the minister more work than he could conveniently do. The general delegate of the French colonies, appointed singularly enough by the late Colonial Minister, will make an effort to make a good show at the Exposition of 1900. And if he goes on as he has begun, he may give the world some interesting information. He has already published a map of Madagascar, drawn up by General Gallieni, in three colors, marking the zone under French subjection, the zone half conquered and the zone where the inhabitants are in revolt, that is, where little or no progress in subduing them has been made. The annexation of Madagascar was surely premature; in two parts of the island out of three it is little more than nominal.

MUNICIPAL INTEGRITY.

Credit is a sensitive thing, and any proceeding on the part of a company or a municipality that resembles a violation of contract is a serious matter. This is particularly the case where the creditors of company or municipality reside abroad; for any demur at the payment of a legitimate debt by one firm or one town affects the credit of other towns, and in a measure smirches the country as a whole in the estimation of persons who have only a remote knowledge of the localities in which they lend.

Last week we made reference to what was done some days ago at a meeting of the ratepayers of the city of Brandon, Manitoba. This meeting, acting, we are told, upon legal advice given by request to some members of the Board of Trade of the place, carried the following resolution: "Resolved, that it is the opinion of this meeting that, if possible, every dollar of principal due to such creditors should be paid, and that only as to time of payment and rate of interest should reorganization be attempted." Another resolution desired that the Government of Manitoba should appoint some person to make "an impartial assessment of the taxable property in the city," for the purpose of satisfying creditors as to the financial position of Brandon, that is to say, in order to get at the tax-paying power of the city. Application was accordingly made to the Government, but the Government replied declining to make the desired appointment.

We are not disposed to believe that the people of Brandon, one of the most thriving and modern places in the Canadian North-West, wish to repudiate their just debt. And we think the legal advice, under which the public meeting acted, unfortunate to say the very least. But we can find no adequate excuse for the language of the resolution first quoted above. The drafter of such a resolution surely does not understand or correctly represent the principles of the mass of the citizens. Brandon owed, at the close of 1897, a debenture debt of \$529,698, and the obligations of the city have been somewhat increased, we understand, during the current year. The taxes of the place for all purposes amount to something like \$70,000

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