

**Political  
Pleasantries.**

The approach of another presidential election in the United States is being heralded by the usual pleasant allusions by political partisans to the absolute incapacity of the probable nominee of the other party for the duties of his office. The attention bestowed upon the candidates is not, however, always so funny as the following reference to Mr. McKinley by a Democratic journal:—

"We are told that the president the other day sat for two hours humped over in a little flat-bottom boat on Lake Champlain in the broiling sun and didn't catch a fish.

"But, pray, do not disturb his harmless amusement. Better for the country that he should be thus employed."

Such gentle railery promotes good humour during a campaign, and it is to be hoped Republicans and Democrats will find ironical pleasantry a better weapon than the abuse too frequently indulged in at elections on both sides of the line.

**Too Much  
Mechanism.**

The closing of the Ville Marie Bank is likely to prove a costly bit of business, and it is not surprising that creditors of the institution are complaining that the machinery for winding up the affairs of the bank is too heavy. Three liquidators, their legal advisors, and a small band of inspectors will represent quite an outlay when the final balance sheet is struck.

'Tis a pity that the law should make the obsequies of this small and very much broken bank so complicated and expensive. We are afraid there will be very little left for the depositors.

**Government Inspection of Ville Marie, much has been said regarding the introduction of Government inspection of our chartered banks. The expensive and useless mechanism of such a system of examination was thoroughly discussed at the time of the framing of the present Bank Act. In some remarks upon the absurdity of suggesting Government inspection as a means of detecting or checking mismanagement and worse, the New York "Commercial Bulletin" supports our view of this matter and says:—The question has been too well ventilated in Canada to leave much division on the subject among Canadians themselves. The Government itself has acknowledged the futility of an official inspection by failing to push proposals with that end in view through the Dominion Parliament. The impracticability alone of a scheme to conduct official inquiries into the condition of a bank doing business at from ten to fifty widely separated towns is enough to condemn it. Under the branch system a bank must inspect itself, and for this purpose the Canadian bank does not count among its three foremost officers the man whose sole business year in and year**

out is to make the round of the branches to see that the state of each is sound. The inspection of such an enterprise must be in its own behalf; as against the agent of the Government the chances of deception are too numerous, the opportunities for collusion too great. And the Government finally in pronouncing an approving judgment upon a bank must not only father the mistakes of its agents, but also assume a moral responsibility for the truth of their findings. It is possible in a great variety of circumstances that the Government's assurances may be delusive and, whether ignorantly or designedly, the inspectors' findings false.

**Is Bank Amalgamation Desirable?**

The banks of Canada, and the banking system they represent, have won an unrivalled reputation, which it is in the highest degree desirable should be protected from any possible degree of danger to their high credit. One of the features in our banking system which is so highly commended by outside observers is the concentration of so much capital in a few institutions. But it must be manifest to those who study the returns submitted to the Government that some of our monetary institutions have not been in such a position as to share in the eulogiums passed on Canadian banks or to have any part or lot in their high reputation for stability. They, however, profit by being surrounded by more successful institutions, upon whom they have to lean in any emergency. They are competitors with those stronger banks upon whose resources they rely. They have not the slightest claim for such protection, as they cannot give any return for help, which is only given because it is desirable in the general interest of banking to avoid financial difficulties, as, when this happens, the whole of the banks suffer from the disturbance of business. Moreover, the public is not very discriminating when a bank failure occurs. A prolonged continuance of this condition of affairs is very far from being desirable. Banks found wanting in strength and lacking in prudential management are a menace to the public and a source of irritation to their substantial neighbours. The addresses of some of the general managers at the annual meetings of shareholders in past years have been full of allusions to the unhealthy competition prevailing. How far it would be feasible to bring about an amalgamation of the smaller and weaker banks with stronger ones we cannot say, but the project is worth attention in the best interests not of bankers alone, but of the whole business community.

**Rough on the  
Rough Rider.**

Of Governor Roosevelt's rare pluck and great ability no one presumes to entertain the faintest shadow of a doubt. But the publication of his recent book "The Rough Riders" has given his critics a glimpse of an over-weening conceit of his personal attainments. He is a modern Hereward the Wake in the pretentious