

"BUSINESS TROUBLES."

A memorial signed by leading merchants of Toronto has been presented to the Board of Trade of that city, calling attention to the undue publicity in the daily papers of "business troubles." The commercial and monetary papers to which the publication of business changes has hitherto been chiefly confined are supposed to exercise some discretion in sending forth such information, so much so that there is scarcely any instance in which disaster and ruin have been precipitated by them, while we have not far to go to find an example of the mischief caused by papers which are only too ready to publish anything that is news, regardless of consequences. The publication of actual business embarrassments in commercial journals finds its *raison d'être* in this,—that the causes of the troubles are generally pointed out with the object of serving as beacons for others, while in scarcely any instance have temporary embarrassments been noted. Although the circulation of general newspapers is chiefly among families—and the fair half of creation do not concern themselves about business affairs, except rarely, in an indifferent way, yet the fact that the firm to which the head of the family belongs is in some business trouble is often noted, and made the subject of discussion even among the domestics, who, like the rodents in the unseaworthy ship, are likely to take unceremonious leave, and add to the vexation, humiliation, and sorrow of the family. Of course, this is secondary in importance as compared with the consequences following the publication of a man's or firm's having been sued, or given a mortgage on his goods or chattels, to enable him, probably, to tide over some temporary embarrassment,—for one may survive the averted glance of the fair-weather acquaintance—glad to learn his or her character—and the impudence of household help, but the loss of business credit is more difficult to withstand and usually leads to bankruptcy and ruin. It is not improbable that at some early date an endeavor may be made to test the legality of the publication of such "news," as the feeling among wholesale men of Toronto is in the direction of some such remedy for the evil.

HON. WM. McDOUGALL ON THE BOUNDARY.

In a lecture delivered at Ottawa, on the 13th inst., the Hon. William McDougall has explained his views as to the respective claims of the Province of

Ontario and the representatives of the Hudson Bay Company to the territory so long in dispute. There is no one now living whose opinion on the subject is more entitled to respect than that of Mr. McDougall. Shortly after Confederation he visited England in company with the late Sir George Cartier, being members of Sir John A. Macdonald's Government, to endeavor to obtain a settlement of the boundary dispute, which was then maintained between the Dominion and the Hudson Bay Company. It is a mistake to suppose that Ontario alone was interested in this controversy. As regards the Northern boundary, Quebec was as much interested as Ontario, as the pretension of the Hudson's Bay Company was that the Northern boundary of Canada was the Height of Land. There is reason to believe that the Province of Quebec has been permitted by the Dominion Government to grant timber limits north of the Height of Land at the very time that it has interposed every obstacle in its power to the exercise by Ontario of jurisdiction in the disputed territory.

Mr. McDougall has not only the advantage of having been Sir George Cartier's colleague after Confederation, but he was Commissioner of Crown Lands in 1862, at a time when the question of the territorial rights of the Hudson's Bay Company was the most prominent question before the department. In 1857 Mr. Cauchon had presented an elaborate report on the claim of the Hudson's Bay Company, now represented by the Dominion, the authorship of which was afterwards claimed by Mr. McD. Dawson, who was at that time an officer of the Department. In 1880 the said Mr. Dawson, in answer to a question by Mr. Mousseau, stated "I wrote a report upon the subject for the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Toronto in 1857," so that, contrary to all precedent, the report, signed by a responsible Minister of the Crown in 1857, was, in 1880, deliberately given to the public as Mr. McD. Dawson's, by a committee presided over by Mr. S. J. Dawson, the brother of the clerk who claims the authorship of his chief's report. It is with some reluctance that we notice the Messrs. Dawson in this connection, but we can hardly avoid doing so, as they claim to be among the few who have paid attention to the question of the boundary. We shall only add that, in all our experience, we have never met with such scandalous tergiversation as that which has been exhibited by the Messrs. Dawson on this question.

Mr. McDougall must have given his attention to the subject of the disputed

boundary on his becoming Minister in 1862, and his opinions have been unchanged. Unfortunately, at the time of our offering these remarks, we have only before us the reports of the lecture contributed to the press, and we have quite sufficient evidence that some of the reporters did not in the least comprehend the subject of their report which, moreover, is the only excuse that can be offered for their manifest blunders. The *Gazette's* reporter makes Mr. McDougall refer to a difficulty arising from "some of the Acts of the Imperial Parliament." How many acts, we wonder, did the reporter dream of? He proceeds to state that Mr. McDougall spoke, regarding the boundary line, "there could be little doubt but that it was due north." Mr. McDougall's argument was precisely the reverse, and he pointed out the absurdity of such a pretension, "because to construe the Act in that way would be to defeat the object Parliament had in view, which was to bring all the posts along the Mississippi within the limits of the British possessions." Mr. McDougall and the arbitrators took precisely the same views, although the *Gazette's* reporter represented them in antagonism. Now as to the Northern boundary: Mr. McDougall declared that he and Sir George Cartier, representing the Canadian Government, had denied the title of the Hudson's Bay Company to any land east of the Winnipeg river or the Lake of the Woods; and he pointed out the absurdity of supposing that, if the Hudson's Bay Company had had a good title, they would have parted with it for £300,000, which was a mere compensation for what were termed squatters' rights.

As to the Albany river boundary, the *Gazette's* reporter is as far astray as in regard to the Westerly boundary. He makes Mr. McDougall say, "they established a straight line as a conventional or convenient boundary," rejecting the Albany river "which was crooked and very difficult to follow." Now the fact is that the Albany river was selected by the arbitrators, and Mr. McDougall approved of their decision. Much of the blundering of the Government organs has proceeded from their total ignorance of the nature of the arbitration. It has been over and over again alleged that the arbitrators were bound to find a true legal boundary, and if unable to do so to abandon their task. Now it is obvious that if a true legal boundary had been defined by Act of Parliament or other authority there would have been no occasion for arbitration. Had, for instance, the Height of Land or the Albany river been defined by