

jurisdiction is necessarily invoked to prevent an undoubted injustice. I think the learned Judge acted with extreme leniency, and possibly took a milder view of the bankrupt's misconduct than I should have done, judging wholly from the papers before me. *But, with his superior opportunities of forming a correct opinion, passed a much more severe sentence, I should certainly not have interfered with it on the solvent's application.* I think the insolvent's neglect to keep proper books of account a most serious breach of duty, causing great possible injury to his creditors and tending to raise strong distrust of his integrity. The evidence of his being an illiterate man suggests the only plausible excuse, and weighed, I presume with the learned Judge. It might perhaps be said that it was not very prudent for his creditors to trust a man so unfit for the conducting of business or the keeping of his accounts, with such large quantities of goods on credit. I do not differ from the learned Judge's view as to the alleged plea. As to the neglect to keep proper books, I think it would be well always to punish such a breach of duty in a very exemplary manner. We have in this country, in our legislation and practice done everything to favor debtors, and render the escape in bad faith as easy as possible to them. It will be well, at all events, that the very easy requirements of the Insolvent Act of debtors asking for their discharge, should be pretty tortly insisted on, and proper punishment awarded to any breach of the trader's duties in conducting his business. I gladly avail myself of the power given me by Subsection 6 of Section 7 of the Act, and while being bound to dismiss the appeal do so without costs. I think the insolvent's creditors had just ground for feeling indignant at his conduct and opposing his discharge, and endeavouring to have some punishment inflicted upon him."

It will be observed here, Sir, that the County Court Judge considered the insolvent worthy of punishment and the Judge in the Court of Appeals gave a very unfavorable view of the case, showing that there were strong grounds of opposition, and yet we have the discharge confirmed. The Attorney for the insolvent offered to bet a new hat, while the proceedings were going on, that the discharge would be granted. Whether this might argue a foregone conclusion I leave your readers to determine, but it certainly is not pleasant to have such a bet so positively made. Now, if such decisions are to be made, and such constructions placed on the terms of the Act, it is to be feared that our jubilations, as to the keeping of fraudulent insolvents from trading, are likely to be premature, especially when the ability of substantiating such charges against insolvents is taken into consideration. This might be remedied in some measure by the due publication or registration of discharges, as the verification of an insolvent finding a difficulty in getting his discharge confirmed, when coupled with the leniency of Judges, would, in the eyes of mercantile men, for ever condemn the said insolvent, and in this matter perhaps the Act requires a little amendment.

I am, Sir,

Yours respectfully,

ACCOUNTANT

HON MR. M. GEE AND THE U. P. WORKINGMEN'S SOCIETY.

A concert given by the United Protestant Workingmen's Benefit Society of this city on the 15th inst., the Minister of Agriculture spoke as follows, on the subjects of co-operative societies, the labour market, foreign markets for Canadian productions, &c., &c.—

"An unavoidable necessity of the time allowed for the completion of our arrangements for the Paris Exhibition, at which, I trust, the works of Canadian workmen will be fully represented and honorably recognized, has enabled me, Mr. President, to be with you to-night, on the occasion of the first annual festival of your Society. I have now, I think, nearly if not quite completed, for this year at least, the circle of our English-speaking Societies to which I could render any assistance, by being present on this platform, and I beg to assure you that before long I shall have I appeared with a deeper sense of gratification of responsibility than I feel in rising to address you this evening. If I was disposed to be hypercritical I might call in question your exclusive right to the style and title of 'The Workingmen's Society,' for that matter, workingmen, each are owing to his work? (Cheers) is it not as much work to draw a statue as to mould an iron casting? Doubtless I think it may be quite as laborious an operation to make a speech as to make a coat, the only real merit, neither being that it is a good fit, and well and honestly made. (Laughter) But criticism apart, there are two or three topics especially connected with the title and ob-

jects of this Society, to which I will venture to refer shortly in fulfillment of the promise I made you, to speak at your first meeting, if I should happen to be at the time in the country. If I detain you a little longer than is usual on such occasions—if I speak to you more seriously than harmonizes with the programme of a festival—I beg you to bear with me, as it is the first time I have ever been called upon to speak to a Society composed as yours is on those subjects which naturally interest you most intimately—such as the state and prospects of our own labor market, the advantages and disadvantages of the workingman's position in Canada, and the wonderful amelioration in the condition of the working classes in those countries with which we are most familiar" (Cheers). I must be confessed, if we confine our view to workingmen engaged in artificial pursuits—such, I mean, as must live in towns and villages,—that our home market in Canada is not large. We are, say three millions; the other Provinces about to be united with us are nearly one million; in all, not above four millions, and a four million market, if we were confined to that, would not sustain or require a very large percentage either of mechanical or manufacturing labor. If we are to have a larger proportion of men and women engaged in such occupations than the home demand requires, then we must look for extended markets elsewhere, by land and by sea. As to the great market of the United States, we are partially excluded from that by the high duties now prevailing there and by the interruption of our whole trade, by the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty. That measure was, what some of our neighbours called "putting on the screws"—but, I hope they will operate like dock-crews to launch us into other enterprises, and send us into other waters. (Cheers and applause which lasted for some time.) In one respect, important to miners and coopers, as well as farmers, we have opened a new market for breadstuffs in the Maritime Provinces, which promises to be quite equal to that closed against us, by the abrogation of reciprocity (Cheers). Still, Mr. President, it must be admitted that both in that direction, and still farther off in the West India Islands, which import annually of the same commodities to a total amount exceeding \$10,000,000 we are only beginning to find out what we can do and to try to do it. Whoever would wish to see the native population of Canada preserved, and the immigrant population in due proportion retained, must fix his eyes more and more on this primary question which I agree with my esteemed friend, Mr. Isaac Buchanan, of Hamilton, is the great question for us,—how are our people to be profitably employed? (Cheers) I am not capable of discussing Mr. Buchanan's currency theories; nor do I say anything in re of free trade or protection; but this, I think I may say—and yet steer clear of all debatable politics,—that we need and require, in these Provinces, that system of government and taxation, which will least diminish the wages, and most increase the numbers of our working population. (Cheers) Though one of the most lightly taxed countries in the world, Canada is not from the extremes of heat and cold, necessitating additional outlays for fuel and clothing, to what are needed in more equable and uniform climates—so cheap a country to live in as we could wish it to be still it is a country and a climate eminently favourable to the health of the hardy, and that must be put to the credit side of the account. (Cheers) As to internal improvements among working men themselves, I do not know that we have yet reached that stage of industrial development in which it is timely for us to take up the practical application of the co-operative principle; though I believe several new co-operative societies have been lately formed, but, at all events, there can be no harm in my briefly adverting to the past experience of that principle, as it has operated for several years back in Great Britain. The principle itself is, as you know, an adaptation to the circumstances and means of workingmen of the joint-stock principle of the capitalists on which our Banks, and Railways, and Insurance Companies all stand; it may be considered also another form of the municipal principle by which a corporation undertakes to supply water, and gas, and pavements, and police, to the community at the cost of every member of the community. If it is the English form of the Fourierite idea, as some have contended, I confess I greatly prefer the copy to the original. (Cheers) As to the operations of the societies in Great Britain, I shall quote a very high authority, Mr. Hastings, the general Secretary of the Social Science Congress, who says, in his introduction to the *Transactions* of the Congress for 1861:—"These enterprises have, in many instances, proved highly successful, and have been 'in existence for a sufficient time to test the soundness of their management; nor is there any reason to doubt their permanent prosperity, if they continue to be conducted with prudence and integrity.'" Mr. Hastings points out two obvious dangers in the way of such Associations—the imprudence of the directors, and the supineness of the shareholders; and he seems to think these dangers especially to be dreaded, in "the later development of the associated labour principle in co-operative mills for manufacture." The report was made over five years ago, and it is cheering to find, that at the close of 1863, a writer of well-known name and character the present London correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, is able to give the following flourishing account of the Co-operative Manufacturing Association:—

"The first pioneers among these industrial partnerships" writes Mr. Hughes, "have all stood the test of the change in the principles and system on which their trade is conducted with astonishing success. Crossley & Co. have combined their whole business of carpet and woollen manufactories, collieries, &c., into one immense concern, in which every workman may be a shareholder, and there is no more successful firm at this moment in England. Briggs & Co. have gone even further in their collieries, and given a share in profits in proportion to wages earned, even to those workpeople who are not shareholders, and the same

may be said of Greening & Co., of Manchester, and several other old firms. A dozen new partnerships are on the eve of starting, and every day I hear of masters in different trades who are converting their old firms into industrial partnerships. This is an entirely different measure, you must remember, from that which has been going on by the side of it, of the conversion of many bankrupt and a few solvent businesses into limited liability companies. 'The latter is nineteenth-century, as has already in the case of Overend, Gurney & Co. been the cause of widespread misery; the former is, I trust, as yet thoroughly sound, and is for many a year watching the dawn of a brighter day, if at rise as we hope and pray, old England will in half a generation be a better place to live in even than the United States.'" (Cheers.)

As to the original Co-operative Societies, the records given for 1863 were equally striking and satisfactory. There were in England five hundred and ninety-nine organized industrial and provident societies; the annual returns of four hundred and seventeen of which for 1863 show the following striking results:—

These associations, carrying on the trade of grocers and dealers in other provisions, shoemaking and drapery had at the close of 1863, 148,594 members; their share capital amounted to £761,313, and their loan capital to £112,733. They paid £3,038,88 for goods bought in the year 1863 and received for goods sold £3,373,837. They state their profits realized in the year to be £279,225, out of which they paid dividends on the shares, and dividends on purchases made from the societies, and provided for reserve, and depreciation funds. At the close of the year the value of their assets and property was £1,166,635, the money in hand £139,532, the trade liabilities £273,489. Ninety of the associations in the list are in Yorkshire, and above one hundred in Lancashire. At their head stands the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers, an association established more than twenty years ago, and numbering five thousand members. In the year 1863 it sold groceries and provisions for cash to the amount of £193,231, its share capital at the end of the year was £69,307, its loan capital £342 the value of its assets and property £79,778, the year's expenses, £9,722, the year's profits £25,156. It paid £2,850 for interest on shares, £20,284 for dividend on purchases, £637 for educational purposes. Two or three other co-operative societies in the north of England sold goods in 1863 to the amount of more than £100,000." (Cheers.)

CANADA.

ANNUAL CIRCULAR OF THE MERCANTILE AGENCY, 1867.

NOTWITHSTANDING the presence of not a few disturbing elements in January last, the year just closed has been one of a very considerable degree of prosperity. Taken as a whole there is much in its history calling for sincere congratulation. The most serious cause for apprehension in the early part of the spring, was the closing of the United States' markets to our products by the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty, under which the commerce of the two countries has increased in an unprecedented ratio. It was feared that many articles of which the Provinces produced a surplus, would fail to find a market; that, as a consequence, their production would be unprofitable, and that the income of the country would suffer thereby. Embarrassment in finances and restricted trade generally were regarded as almost certain to follow. But whatever may have been the motives which dictated the repeal of the Treaty by the United States Government, it has signally failed in doing serious damage to Canadian interests. Indeed if injury has been the result at all, the people of the United States themselves are the sufferers. Contrary to general expectation the demand throughout the year has been active and the prices remunerative for nearly every product that the Provinces have had to spare. Lumber, which forms so large a part of the exports of the country, has never yielded so great a return. Not only in the quantity exported, but in the prices realized, has this important interest improved; and it is safe to say that a degree of prosperity has been experienced, which no two recent years have produced. The stocks which are being wintered over are not large; the demand is prospectively active; at a price exceedingly satisfactory. In Grain, in which perhaps a still greater number of our people are interested, there has also been a degree of prosperity of the most gratifying character. The crop as a whole was remarkably good. Certain localities failed to produce the average amount of certain descriptions of cereals, but in the aggregate it is exceedingly doubtful whether there was ever before produced in the country a larger quantity, in bushels, of the various descriptions. For barley, which is gradually becoming one of the most important staples, the demand was, in the main, active; and though the prices were not so high as in previous years, owing to the fact that the sample was somewhat stained, yet the amount of money realized for the whole crop must have been in excess of former seasons. So large was the production of this article that the capacities of the farmers to market it, were severely taxed throughout the autumn; and notwithstanding a very satisfactory price for Wheat and other cereals, it was impossible to get them to market before the close of navigation. There is consequently yet in the hands of farmers and in the storehouses of the grain-producing localities a very large amount of the year's product of Wheat; and if prices in England continue satisfactory, as they promise to do, we cannot doubt that the amount to be realized by the country for this crop will be very large. Should prices continue at their present rate and the various railways afford the requisite facilities for the removal of the crop to the front, there is scarcely a doubt that the early spring will witness this consummation. The Wool crop, from which a very considerable sum of money has annually been realized, yielded largely, but the prices