

MARKING WOULD KILL.

The marking of goods as prison-made has found many advocates in this Province, but it is not a real remedy. This would kill the sale of the goods outright, and stop the labor entirely, leaving the prisoners without work, a thing that no man would advocate or tolerate to-day. Or it would lessen the price of the goods in the market, thereby increasing their sales in many quarters, and possibly displace a greater quantity of similar goods made by free labor than would have been displaced if the prison-made goods had not been marked at all.

The employment of prisoners on hand-made goods, without the aid of machinery, has been advocated. While this has met with some success where there is the long-term prisoner, it would be bound to fail with the average of seven months' sentence. It would be simply a waste of raw material with nothing for it. It would be non-productive labor, almost in the same sense as was the crank and treadmill of years ago, and would be equally useless to the prisoner on the termination of his sentence.

SHOULD HELP MEN.

Any system adopted should be one which will enable the prisoner to earn an honest livelihood on his discharge, and should turn him out in a fit physical condition to do a day's work. Without a doubt, the difficulty of finding honest work is the cause of nearly all the recommittals. A man cannot be turned out of prison, however well conducted he may be, without a certain stigma on his character. His former employer distrusts him, sometimes his family disowns him, the police suspect him, and unless in condition to go to work at once he is apt to resort again to crime.

The employment of prisoners in the produce of supplies for the maintenance of the State, county and municipal institutions, or in work on roads, it has been found, tends to less direct competition with free labor, and has been generally regarded as unobjectionable, but there is only a limited amount of labor can be employed in this way. To the extent that employment offers, it is generally agreed it should be adopted. With this class of employment given, there would still remain upwards of three-quarters of the prisoners without employment. How can this best be given? That the objections of the labor interests to the competition of prison labor are well founded and should be met, the Government admits

AMERICAN COMMISSION.

In 1900, the United States Congress appointed an industrial commission to investigate a number of economic subjects, one of which was prison labor. They reported very fully. The Commission of Labor of the United States in 1906 investigated and reported at great length. From these reports it will be found that in thirty States of the Union the labor of prisoners is largely employed upon farms, upon roads, and out-of-door work. It is found that the benefits to be derived from the employment of the convicts in agricultural labor are many. It completely removes competition with free labor, the public receive the full benefit of the labor in the maintenance of the institutions, no special skill is required on the part of the prisoner, who can be at once set to work. The work is helpful and important and can be made more useful than any other work as a reformatory measure.