THE BOWMAN HARDWARE CO. IN TROUBLE.

THE Bowman Hardware and Sporting Goods Co., Ltd., of Hamilton, Ont., are in financial straits, and a meeting of creditors has been called. The circular calling the meeting bears date of October 10, and reads:

"We have decided to ask the creditors of the company to meet at its offices on Thursday, 18th inst., at 3 p.m., to lay before them the position of its affairs. We look upon the assets of the company as ample to pay all liabilities, but owing to the existence of a chattel mortgage given for money borrowed, we may find it necessary to ask our creditors to give us time for the payment of their claims."

The chattel mortgage referred to bears date of the 3rd inst. It is in favor of T. W. Lester for the sum of $22,000, and covers the entire stock-in-trade of the company.

The mortgage bears interest at the rate of 6 per cent., and, according to the conditions, $5,000 of the principal is payable in twenty-five consecutive weekly payments of $200 each, the last of such payments falling due March 20th, 1895, and the balance seven days afterwards.

The conditions further provide that the stock shall be kept up to double the actual cash value of the money secured, and if stock is sold by public auction, as to which the mortgagee shall be sole judge, then the money shall immediately become payable.

The general creditors express a good deal of indignation at the condition of affairs, and to make matters worse for them, word comes from Hamilton that the mortgagee took possession of the stock on Thursday morning.

They are now talking of combining to set aside the mortgage. It is said that the greater part of the money raised on the mortgage was paid over to the bank.

The liabilities of the firm, it is understood, are not large, and it is credited with having surplus nominally over $30,000.

AN ELECTRIC WEEDER.

Electricity is, indeed, utilitarian. In New York state it is employed in "weeding" out criminals, and now it is being used by the Illinois Central railroad to weed out grasses and other plant life growing on its roadbed.

The apparatus consists of an ordinary flat car, to which is attached a circular brush suspended at right angles to the track, and of sufficient length to extend over the ends of the ties. This brush is thickly studded with fine copper wire, which comes in contact with the weeds and grasses on the track as the car passes over the road, and thus killing them. The electricity is conveyed to the brush from a generator on board the car.

When electricity is applied to weeding out "dead beats," the business world will be happy indeed.

THE SITUATION IN CASTOR OIL.

NOT altogether satisfactory, to Canadian dealers at least, has been the market for castor oil so far this year.

In the early part of the season, when oil, like wheat, was thought by many to have touched rock bottom in regard to price, considerable speculative purchasing was done.

But although values were pretty well down among the rocks, they had to go a strata or two lower; and with them, of course, went the anticipated profits.

To make matters worse, dealers began to slaughter prices until, it is claimed, they were selling at less than cost.

Within the last few weeks prices have had a hardening tendency, an actual advance of ½c. per gallon being asked. But in spite of this, however, there are still some holders who are selling at old figures; and there is still wanting a feeling of confidence.

THE ROBERT HAMILTON CASE.

ROBERT HAMILTON, the Toronto retail grocer found guilty of defrauding Eby, Blain & Co., was Friday last sentenced to the Central prison for three months.

Judge McDougal, in sentencing the prisoner, intimated that his term of imprisonment would have been made greater had it not been for his previous good character.

But the humiliation and degradation of being branded a criminal is greater punishment to Robert Hamilton than can the mere incarceration be, whether the term be three years or three months. The ends of justice have, therefore, been as well served by the shorter as they would have been by the longer term.

The fall of Robert Hamilton one cannot help regretting. It would be inhuman to do otherwise. For more than a score of years he has been in business in the city of Toronto, and during that time, although he has changed his store once or twice, he has never gone out of Queen street or out of the block in which he started. He was, therefore, well known, and by the general public was thought to be prosperous. His store was clean and attractive; his delivery wagon was kept busy; his private house was better than that inhabited by most merchants; and he had a nice private vehicle in which, with wife and children, he was accustomed to take regular drives in and about the city.

For a man who had been in business twenty years or more these things were not surprising.

But if the surface was pleasant the interior was rotten. This, to the surprise of everybody, was learned in August last, when Hamilton assigned. Of all the assets that the estate could scrape up, the nominal value was only $700, against liabilities of $3,000.

The $4,500 house he said he owned was not his. It was his wife's.

And it was because he misrepresented in this particular that he got both $1,100 worth of goods on credit from Eby, Blain & Co. and a three months' sentence in the Central Prison from Judge McDougal.

What he got he deserved; and he has only his previous good record to thank that he did not get more than he did. For him to plead that when he told the firm that he owned the house in question he did not do so with the intention of defrauding it, neither "washed down" with the jury nor with the public. He falsified, and with the undoubted object of getting the goods that he could not otherwise have obtained.

Eby, Blain & Co. are to be congratulated upon the steps they took to prosecute Hamilton. It is better for the wholesale, it is better for the retail trade, that this man should be weeded out of the business world, for there is all too much of misrepresentation of assets, not among retailers only, but among all classes of business men.

THE WAR AND COPPER.

The China-Japan war is inducing an increased demand for a good many things in the metal and hardware trades. One line in which this is noticeable is copper. This feature is more marked in Europe than on this side of the Atlantic, it being from there that the belligerents get the greater part of their war material. But, of course, the copper market the world over is experiencing a better feeling in consequence.

Japan herself, however, is a copper producing country of no mean order. Last year she produced some 18,000 tons, or 6 per cent. of the world's product.

That country's best customer for copper has heretofore been her present antagonist, China. Although Japan has lost this customer for the time being, it is likely that in the satisfying of her own abnormal wants stocks will be prevented from accumulating unduly, and thus, "after the war is over," having a bearish effect on the market.