

DEPRECIATING HOME PRODUCTS.

The Toronto Telegram directs attention to the fact that there has been a struggle in Orangeville, Ont., as to whether the municipality should purchase a Canadian or an American built wind-mill for use in that town, a minority being in favor of purchasing the products of home industry, these being chiefly Grit councillors. Our contemporary says that the division in the Orangeville Council was in a small way a reproduction of the division in the Toronto City Council, when a motion to give fair play to a Canadian industry was defeated, the reference being to whether the city should purchase a Canadian made steam fire engine, or one made in England.

It will be remembered that as a result of the disastrous fires that occurred in Toronto last winter, when it was demonstrated that much valuable property might then have been saved from destruction had there been adequate apparatus at hand, it was determined by the City Council that a new and up-to-date steam fire engine should be purchased. It was then immediately discovered that in Toronto, as has also been shown in Orangeville, there were those who believed that no good thing could come out of Nazareth, and that if a fire engine was to be obtained it must be purchased abroad. Those most familiar with the facts knew that as good and serviceable fire engines as are to be found on the American continent were manufactured in Canada, but the accursed pessimists who are always ready to depreciate any and every thing produced at home, and to declare that if a really good thing was to be had it could only be from abroad, were so persistent in their declarations that an engine was ordered from England. These patriotic souls would even have been willing to have placed an order for the engine upon the mere assertion of the builders that it would cost a certain price and perform a certain duty; but they were persuaded to agree that a stipulation should be entered into specifying that the weight of the engine should not be greater than that agreed upon, and that specified tests should be complied with regarding the capacity to throw a certain quantity of water in a certain time, and that the water should be thrown to a certain height. It is true that a certain Canadian manufacturer offered to produce an engine that would meet all the requirements, and to place it at the disposal of the city in much less time than it was possible to produce the English engine in Toronto, and at a very much less price; but this offer did not meet the approval of these anti-Canadians. In fact a Canadian engine was at that time in Toronto which it was guaranteed would meet all the requirements, but the English engine was ordered nevertheless.

After long delays and patient waiting, with a great flourish of trumpets, the arrival of the English engine was announced. Much in the nature of a mere formality it was decided to have a test of its capacity, and under circumstances the most favorable possible for the occasion, a spectacular display was arranged for the edification of those who might desire to witness it. But the Canadian engine was there also; and when the squirting was proceeded with it was found that the Canadian engine was quite as good and efficient in all respects as its English rival. Excuses were found for discontinuing the test at the time, and another was arranged; and when that was had it was shown that the Canadian machine was quite as desirable in all essential points, and superior in some.

It should be mentioned that the tests of the engines were made under the supervision of a committee of reliable hydraulic pumping experts. When the matter came up for discussion in the City Council it was shown that these experts had reported that the conditions contained in the builders' guarantee had not been complied with, the result being that the Council declined to accept or pay for the English engine.

As The Telegram says, the minority of the City Council who were in favor in the first place of purchasing a Canadian engine was largely made up of Grit aldermen, the majority in favor of passing over Canadian industry being headed by the Conservative leaders in the Council, and encouraged by the Conservative newspaper organ.

PRISON LABOR vs. FREE LABOR.

At a recent meeting of the Toronto Trades and Labor Council the report of the Municipal Committee contained a letter from Hon. J. M. Gibson, the Provincial Secretary, explaining the reasons which induced the Ontario Government to farm out the Central prison binder twine industry. The Government deemed it out of its province to enter into competition with private industry, and considered that in breaking up the monopoly which formerly existed, the main object for instituting this industry at the Central prison had been attained. The committee were dissatisfied with the explanation.

The episodes of the Ontario Government establishing the binder twine industry in Central prison, Toronto, quickly followed by a precisely similar adventure by the Dominion Government in Kingston penitentiary, are certainly most disgraceful incidents in Canadian history. A few years ago, under the lead of the enemies of protection in Parliament and out, and of the free trade newspapers, a most senseless and unreasoning howl was raised against what was called the binder twine combine, the object being to intensify a feeling against the protective policy of the Dominion Government by showing that the farmers were being fleeced by the manufacturers of binder twine, and made to pay a much larger price for twine than they ought to pay. As a result of the excitement caused by this persistent howling, the Dominion Government, very unwisely we think, reduced the duty upon binder twine from 25 per cent. to 12½ per cent., thus opening the door for the almost free importation of foreign twine, and closing the doors of Canadian factories that had given lucrative employment to Canadian labor. Quick to perceive what they considered a fine opportunity to strengthen the hands of the opposition, their political friends in the Dominion House of Commons, and with the farmers, the Ontario Government imported machinery and material and established a binder twine works in Central prison, and employed convicted felons in operating the same. Whereupon the Dominion Government, forgetful of the principles of the policy upon which they had been elevated to power, and regardless of the teachings of the National Policy, and not satisfied with the stunning blow that had already been given a valuable Canadian manufacturing industry, proceeded to immediately follow the lead of the Ontario Government and engage in the manufacture of binder twine with prison labor in Kingston penitentiary. As is well-known, both these enterprises have proven dismal failures, that in Central prison being attended with taints of boodlism most disreputable to all concerned.