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DARKEST TORONTO AGAIN.

LAST month the printing trade throughout Canada were somewhat startled by the revelations in PRINTER AND PUBLISHER concerning the state of trade, the actual conditions under which business was being done, and the rotten credit system practised. This month shows another of these "bad spots," and a careful study of Hill & Weir's failure only shows new arguments as to the rottenness of the business principles practised in the past by paper and type vendors.

Hill & Weir have been in business in Toronto for some time; in fact, the firm was one of the oldest in existence. They were estimated to be very wealthy. Bradstreet's, in January, 1892, rated them at from \$20,000 to \$35,000, and in July, 1893, at from \$35,000 to \$50,000, with A1 credit. In January, 1893, the Legal and Commercial Exchange valued them at from \$10,000 to \$15,000. In September, 1893, Dun, Wiman & Co. rated the company at from \$20,000 to \$40,000, with credit very high.

Yet, at this very time, it is reasonably believed that the firm was insolvent. The commercial agencies have no right to do this. If it was a case of favoritism, they should be above such. Their reports must be reliable in every instance, or their whole work falls to the ground. The information they give is paid for, and this information must be true, or the firm that gives it is defrauding its customers. This is not the only instance when the commercial agencies have been at sea about the affairs of printing firms in this city, and it will not require more than one or two more of such instances to discredit these agencies, and their ability to do more than publish a directory of names. It will now be in order for them to explain.

But to return to Hill & Weir. This firm found themselves in hot water last June, and they decided to save themselves by forming a company, which our beneficent law allows—seemingly, for the special benefit of impecunious printers. They created a certain amount of stock. No one knows how they knew what amount to issue, for no inventory ever was taken. They induced their secretary, a young man named McEwen, to put \$1,000 of

good cash in for "his own" benefit, and a gentleman named Crombie, who had been engaged in the hardware business, to put in a few thousand dollars. The creditors found out that a company was formed and a bill of sale effected, but, seemingly, not soon enough to prevent the deal. Then, when they pressed their claims, they were given "stock" in the new company—a company which guaranteed eight per cent. to its stockholders for the first two years.

Then, nearly six months ago they took a fresh start clear of debt, because all the creditors of Hill & Weir had become stockholders in the Hill & Weir Co. The new company paid good salaries, and was thought to be sure of success, but it didn't come. The nice \$1,500 salaries didn't last.

Why did they fail? They failed because they did not secure sufficient profit on the work they did. They failed because the business was badly managed, and because there were leaks. They failed because Mr. Weir speculated in real estate, and because he lost some \$20,000, more or less, in the Barm Yeast Co. They failed because they didn't pay for what they got, and make other men do the same.

The inspectors are Mr. Buntin, of Buntin, Reid & Co.; Mr. Weldon, of the E. B. Eddy Co., and Mr. McEwen, secretary of the company. The stock is now advertised for sale, and will bring, probably, \$6,000. Many of the machines are the best that could be procured, and if properly cared for would have been worth almost full price. There will be some bargains for those who can use the stock.

The liabilities of the firm are as follows:

E. B. Eddy, merchandise	\$355.31
Buntin, Reid & Co., merchandise.....	150.90
Canada Paper Co., "	123.29
R. J. Lovell & Co., "	92.90
Elias Rogers & Co., "	59.34
W. H. Irving, "	56.00
Brown Bros. & Co., "	56.44
National Electro. Co., merchandise....	47.73
Geo. T. Stewart, merchandise.....	43.15
Estate of L. B. Montgomery, m'ch'dise	38.06
Lawson & Wilson, merchandise.....	36.35
Rolph, Smith & Co., "	30.00
W. J. Gage & Co., "	11.00
Miller & Richard, "	7.60
Westman & Baker, "	7.50
G. F. Burton, "	150.00

\$1,265.57

A. T. Crombie, loan.....	\$1,220.25
Consumers' Gas Co.....	40.00
Wm. Barber & Bros., Georgetown.....	445.58
Ault & Wiborg Co., New York.....	30.25
Traders' Bank, note, due Jan. 13, 1894.	4,000.00
Preferred—Taxes	188.16
Preferred—Wages and estimates of bind- ers' work necessary to complete work on hand.....	303.10

Total liabilities.....\$7,492.91

Against this is plant, stock, etc., \$7,866.81, and book accounts of \$2,687.80. There is some real estate also, but it is mortgaged for \$16,000. The estate may pay forty cents on the dollar.

On another page will be found an advertisement telling of the machinery for sale. But if it is not sold the whole plant may go back to the original controllers of it. This happened once last month, and it is to be hoped it will not occur again.