

Proposed Insolvency Bill.

An Ottawa telegram says: Mr. Martin's insolvency bill, which was introduced in the house this afternoon, provides for a trader or producer being declared insolvent on application of a creditor before a judge, for an equitable distribution of assets, for the abolition of preferential claims, for the selection of liquidation by creditors, for a government discharge of an insolvent, for making others than the insolvent parties to an investigation, for instance, an insolvent's wife, etc. Mr. Martin explained the bill at great length, and a long discussion ensued, in which several members took part. Hon. Mr. Davies opposed the bill flatly. He said wholesale merchants were behind it, and he did not believe the evils complained of were sufficiently widespread to demand such legislation. Prior to 1880 there had been a similar law on the statute book, but it had been repealed, owing to the difficulty of enforcing it.

Winnipeg Board of Trade.

The annual meeting of the Winnipeg board of trade was held on Tuesday afternoon. In the absence of president R. T. Riley, who was obliged to be absent to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Fire Insurance company, F. H. Mathewson, vice-president, presided. The following new members were elected: A. Kirkland, Bank of Montreal; G. F. R. Harris, Canada Permanent Loan and Mortgage Co.; W. M. Fisher, Western Canada Loan Co.; and J. B. Somerset, of the Free Press.

The president's annual report was read by the secretary, and ordered to be printed in the official report. The seventeenth annual report of the council was also laid before the meeting in printed form and adopted. More extended reference will be given to the president's address and the report of the council, in the special number of The Commercial, to be issued in a few days.

Mr. Strang's report as treasurer was presented and adopted as follows:

Receipts.—To balance from last year, \$547.13; to entrance fees and subscriptions, \$154.13; to interest, \$12.90; total \$1715.03.

Disbursements.—By secretary's salary, \$900; by rent, share, \$100; by printing and advertising, \$92.50; by postages, \$23; by telephone, share, \$15; by petty accounts, \$15.66; total, \$1,448.86; balance, \$566.17. No liabilities.

A. Strang, J. Y. Griffin and S. A. McGaw were appointed a committee to nominate members of the council to represent the various business interests. Their report was presented and adopted, and a ballot cast electing the following members: J. H. Ashdown, hardware; R. J. Campbell, groceries; N. Bawlf, grain; S. A. McGaw, milling; R. J. Whitla, dry goods; Thos. Ryan, boots and shoes; R. T. Riley, clothing; A. M. Nanton and John Russell, financial and loan; D. W. Bole, drugs; J. Y. Griffin, packing; T. H. Webb, agricultural implements; T. D. Robinson, fuel and lumber; R. D. Richardson, stationery; Thos. Gilroy, insurance; J. W. Harris.

This was a new mode of selecting the council, but it was thought a slate nominated by a committee would be more representative of the different lines of business than a council nominated and elected as in the past.

The election of officers then took place, the following being unanimously chosen:

President—F. H. Mathewson.

Vice-president—Thomas Anderson.

Treasurer—Andrew Strang, re-elected.

Secretary—C. N. Bell, re-elected.

The board of arbitrators of last year was re-elected, with the exception that S. Nairn was substituted for W. B. Scarth; the members are: K. McKenzio, E. L. Drewry, G. F. Galt, G. J. Maulson, S. A. D. Bertrand, J. H. Brock, R. T. Riley, S. Spink, Jno.

Galt, Wm. Hespeler, J. E. Steen, and S. Nairn.

Mr. Strang gave notice of a motion that new members be required to pay only the annual fee of \$10, the entrance fee of \$15 additional being abolished. On motion of Messrs. Brock and Steen, the secretary was instructed to accept \$10 from the new members proposed to-day as part payment until Mr. Strang's motion should be considered.

Ex-Mayor Gilroy, president of the Canadian Northwestern Immigration convention, wrote, asking the board to appoint three delegates to the approaching convention. He addressed the meeting in support of the request. The matter was referred to the council to appoint the delegates.

Flax in the United States.

Flax growing is now reviving, but it is not by any means a new industry in this country, as some may suppose: It is really one of the oldest crops, and in New England it formed the staple articles of clothing for a quarter of a century or more. The old spinning-wheels, flaxbrakes, and hatchels have all been relegated to the attic, but new machinery promises to bring the old product into general use again. Flax-growing was formerly abandoned in New England when the cotton crop in the south became so large that cotton goods were sold to the farmers much cheaper than they could make them out of flax. The crop was exhausting to the soil, and the growers soon discovered that it was economy to raise corn and other products and buy the Carolina cotton goods or European linen.

For a considerable period after the introduction of cotton goods flax fell into general neglect as a farm product, and the old flax ponds or brooks, where the farmers rotted the straw of the parish, were abandoned. Then came another period when the demand for flaxseed oil and linseed meal (made from flaxseed) made it profitable for farmers to raise flax again on their farms. But the industry never received much notice in New England, where the price of Virgin soil was high, but in the western States large acreages were devoted to the crop. Their rich virgin soil could be had for a small sum, and one crop was considered as good as another as far as exhausting the land was concerned. Flax growing has consequently been carried on ever since in the West upon newly-broken sod. It has been raised for its seed, or for long staple fiber. For the latter object it has to be pulled before the seeds are ripe, and a double profit cannot be realized from it in consequence. But when raised for fibre the flax is allowed to ripen its seed so that the straw and seed both bring in a fair profit to the grower.

In the west the flaxseed is sown broadcast for the fiber at the rate of two bushels to the acre, and all the cultivation given to it is that to keep down the weeds until the leaves shade the ground. The plants are allowed to ripen their seeds and then the straw is pulled up in small bundles for drying. The seeds are threshed out a good deal as an ordinary farmer would thresh his oats or wheat, that is, with a flail or with a machine thresher, the latter being the more desirable, as it does not injure the straw so much. Some still resort to the "rotting" process, so common in early New England days. The bundles are taken to the shallow pond or brook and stood in it with the butts downward. After standing there for five or ten days the core will come out of the fiber when the stocks are broken. When rotted sufficiently the bundles are taken out with a pitchfork and stood up to drain and dry.

The next process is that called "grassing." The stalks are spread out upon the grass and turned over once or twice a day for a week. This improves the color of the fiber. The

"breaking" process which follows is done by a set of fluted rollers, and the "hatchelling" by a machine that separates the fine and coarse fibres. New and improved machinery has been invented for all these purposes, and some factories take the flax direct from the farmers before the rotting and bleaching processes have taken place. A good crop of flax will produce 600 pounds of fibre to the acre. Sold in the open market, this means about \$70 per acre.

But flax seed is exhausting to the soil, and after it has grown two or three years on one field, a period of from five to eight years should elapse before another crop is planted. The soil has to be heavily manured, from 400 to 600 pounds of mineral fertilizers being required each year to the acre, besides barnyard and other manures. Potash and phosphoric acid are the chief ingredients that the soil requires to produce good flax.—New York Tribune.

Australian Wine.

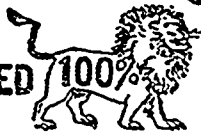
According to an English journal, Australian wine is making considerable headway in England. The matter was taken seriously in hand by the government of South Australia in 1894, and in that year over 10,000,000 vines were planted. In that year also the colonial government established a bonded depot in London to which the wines could be consigned, and where they could be matured before being placed on the market with what is practically a government guarantee. Seventeen hundred hogsheads were imported in 1895, representing a contribution to the customs of over £5,000.

Good Export Demand for Cattle.

The demand for export cattle is remarkably good compared with the inquiry in other directions. For the past few weeks exporters have bought more cattle here than ever before at this time of year and have succeeded in demoralizing the trade in England. When prices decline so that there will no longer be a profit in shipping them, of course business will decrease. Home supplies in England have not been excessive, but the receipts from both this country and Argentina have been more than sufficient to supply the demand at London and Liverpool. Besides, there has been an unusual amount of dressed meat sent across the Atlantic, and supplies from New Zealand have also been heavy. All these things make a good reason for the recent decline.—Chicago Drover's Journal.

Replying to Mr. Davin in parliament, Hon. Mr. Foster said that ample means were being taken to prevent scab being introduced into the Territories from the States. Dr. McEachran was watching the matter closely, and would not allow any chances for improvement of regulations to escape his notice.

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