

ness aspects. But the manner in which money has been used of late years in furtherance of elections had grown to be such a scandal that regard for simple decency demanded that a stop should be put to it. The sums that were sometimes spent were enormous; the waste of money was frightful and extravagant. For, apart from the immorality of it, it is impossible to imagine a worse use to which money can be put than to spend it as it has been generally spent in an election contest. To hire teams at exorbitant rates from respectable farmers, to open taverns and public houses for unlimited drinking, to bribe by direct offers of money, which were sometimes taken by the same party from both sides, to spend extravagant sums in printing and travelling, much of which was only bribery in an indirect form—this had come to be looked on as the necessary concomitant of an election. And the effect of it has been to create a disgust for politics in the minds of a large number of sober-thinking people—especially among the business community—who look upon honesty and morality as more important matters than the triumph of any political party. And had it continued, it could not but have ended in the degradation of our politics to the lowest level. It is well known that these election contests have involved many men in financial embarrassment. In fact, so much is this the case, that for a commercial man to enter Parliament has impaired to a certain extent his credit. When elections occur, as they sometimes have done, every two or three years, the whole of a professional or commercial income may easily be absorbed in repeated contests. In that case, it is inevitable that the candidate's financial position must be seriously impaired. If in mercantile life, his capital will be reduced; if in professional, he will run into debt. And the instances have not been few in which men have been kept in "hot water" all their life long: earning large incomes or receiving a large amount of mercantile profit, and yet dissipating the whole foolishly in election contests.

It was high time that these practices should be abated, for a country like Canada cannot afford it. The present law is well calculated to effect the desired object. Penalties are imposed both on the briber and on the bribed. The hiring of teams is expressly forbidden. So is the procuring of places, the offering of advantage, the promise of something to be done after the election, and also the inducing a voter to abstain from voting. The penalties are sufficiently severe to be a deterrent. And cases of violation of the law are to be carried before the Judges of the Superior

Courts, who have already shown both their independence and their capacity to deal with such questions. We trust, therefore, that the frightful waste of money that has been so common will now be stopped, and that it will be possible for commercial men whose presence in Parliament is so desirable, to take a seat there without impairing their credit under the supposition that they must have disbursed very large sums in the contest. Professional men are of course interested also. So are bankers. A good deal of the money for these election contests has been obtained from them, under various disguises, and many a bad debt of former days had its origin in this way. We fancy even now that there are debts due to bankers which would be found to represent, if we were at the bottom of them, sums spent in this illegal manner.

NEW BANK CHARTERS.

In a late number of the *Canada Gazette* we observe a notice that application will be made to Parliament to modify the terms provided by the Banking Act, on which new charters will be granted.

We call the attention of our legislators to this, in order that the bill when it comes before the House may not be smuggled through at some period of unwariness, but receive the attention which it deserves. No attempt at tampering with the provisions of the Banking Act respecting the incorporation of new banks should be tolerated for a moment. The act itself was the result of many years of discussion in which the best financial ability of the country, both in Parliament and out of it, was brought to bear upon the question. Every detail of the act was canvassed in all its bearings over and over again, both in Parliamentary Committees and in the House, and there could be no greater harm done to the present banking system than to loosen the obligations imposed on those contemplating the founding of new corporations. The object aimed at was to secure *bona fides* and stability; to prevent on the one hand mere charter-mongers and promoters getting up concerns they had no means of carrying out, and on the other to afford the necessary guarantees that any banks that went into operation should be established and carried on in such a manner as to be of real service to the country.

It will be remembered that the Act was an alternative to a system sought to be introduced into Canada in most respects similar to that prevailing in the United States, which would undoubtedly have made the issues of the banks safe, but would in other respects have had a most

damaging effect on the mercantile and industrial interests of the country. It was claimed that all this damage could be avoided by providing safeguards in the working of existing corporations, and ensuring that the establishment of new ones should be on a *bona fide* and solid basis. Section 7 of the Act was expressly intended to accomplish this object, and now that the country has been working prosperously under it for some years there is the strongest reason why the provisions of the Act should be carefully insisted on and every precaution taken against their being tampered with. Nothing could be worse for the country than for a number of weak and short-lived banks to appear upon the scene, inflating speculative business for a time by a foolish dispensing of credit, and then succumbing to the inevitable crop of bad debts which such concerns invariably make. There are, however, in every community, persons who have a faculty for getting up schemes, and they seek of course to fritter away any provisions of the Act which hinder them from accomplishing their object. No sound and healthy scheme will be hindered from being launched under *bona fide* auspices under the present Act. It is not too stringent for those who intend to establish a stable and permanent institution. Such as these can comply with its provisions without difficulty. No good reason can therefore be alleged for relaxing them.

The settlement of the banking system some years ago was of very great benefit to the country, indeed, it is not too much to say, that much of the prosperity it has since enjoyed has been owing to it. It has economised capital and utilized sound credit to the utmost extent, and rendered possible many enterprises which under a different system could never have been thought of. But this very benefit renders it all the more necessary to guard against the Act being tampered with by speculators, and we trust that Parliament under the guidance of the Finance Minister will insist on every one of its provisions being carried out to the letter.

MERCANTILE FAILURES IN 1874.

This week we publish the first instalment of a list of failures in Ontario in 1874. In future issues we shall endeavour to give those of the other Provinces.

We learn from advance sheets of the Mercantile Annual about to be issued by Messrs. Dun Wiman & Co., that there were 966 insolvencies in the Dominion during the past year exclusive of Manitoba and British Columbia. The number in each of the other