

the public chest of the Local Government ought to be free. The vicious system of Government grants for parish purposes in most of the provinces is still almost as deeply rooted as it was in the time of Lord Sydenham. Speaking of political parties in the provinces, that statesman said it was admitted that "they could not of themselves change the system." What they could not do for themselves, he proposed should be done for them by providing in the Union Act for the establishment of municipal institutions in the provinces. This provision Lord John Russell was forced by opposition in the Imperial Parliament to excise, with the result that the old vicious habit of making legislative appropriations for parish improvements continues. When the Local Governments make appropriations for this purpose, several of them find themselves short of funds for objects which lie in their legitimate sphere, and they have no compunction about calling on the federal authority to make good the deficiency. Ontario, with her excellent municipal system, is an exception to the rule, and she suffers accordingly.

DRY GOODS DELIBERATIONS.

The discussion of trade topics which we mentioned a few weeks ago as likely to take place early this month was held on Monday afternoon last by the Dry Goods Section of the Toronto Board of Trade. It was a very full meeting, nearly every dry goods house in the city was represented, and so far from any acrimonious discussion the general tone was one of agreement that the various matters described as business evils should be rectified.

Expression of opinion was particularly strong against the prevalent custom of dating invoices forward. While it cannot be said that agreement was reached on the vexed question of terms, there seems reason to conclude that the dry goods trade of Canada is becoming more and more convinced, that present terms of credit, whether given "straight out," or as renewals, or secured by subterfuges such as forward dating, are too long.

Our readers are aware that a circular was issued by the section last year to the retail trade last year in regard to the returning of goods to wholesale houses. It appears from the accord of the opinions now expressed that the circular had done a very great deal of good, and we are assured that fewer goods were returned last year than ever before. The members of the section expressed the hope that in time the evil practice of returning goods without adequate reason would be entirely done away with.

A good deal of discussion arose upon the question of the disposal of bankrupt stocks. The present method, of selling them *en bloc*, was generally condemned, as tending to affect injuriously the business and profits of every trader in a town or village with whose wares such bankrupt stocks came into competition. There is much, it appears to us, to be said in favor of dividing such stocks into parcels—the subdivision may be either of the whole stock irrespective of

character of goods or separating dry goods from hardware, groceries, crockery, &c.—and selling each line by itself.

As to the subject of duty on the making up charges of goods, the section was unanimously of opinion, that while merchants should pay duty upon cartoons and things that form a legitimate part of value of goods, all charges for "making up, cutting, and examining textile fabrics" being charged or examined, which are intended for the proper carrying on of business, should not be subject to duty, and they propose memorializing the Minister of Customs in accordance with this view.

A committee was appointed consisting of Messrs. Caldecott, Anderson, and G. B. Smith to give it careful consideration and report to a future meeting. The executive met before the regular meeting and selected Mr. S. Caldecott chairman, Mr. T. O. Anderson deputy chairman, and also elected Mr. Alexander Boyd on the executive, in place of the late Hon. John Macdonald.

COMBINATION AT COMMON LAW.

A decision of importance in these days of association for commercial purposes has just been rendered in England at common law. The case was that of the Mogul Steamship Company *versus* McGregor. It was therein determined that X., Y., and Z., independent ship-owners, may lawfully form a combination, called a conference, to gain for themselves a monopoly of the tea trade at Hankow, and to drive away all competition from that port. It is further decided that, for the purpose of obtaining this monopoly, the members of the conference may agree, among other things, to grant a rebate to persons employing exclusively the ships of the conference whilst refusing it to any one who employs a non-conference ship, and in case any non-conference steamer should attempt to land cargoes at Hankow, then to send as many conference ships as may be needed to underbid the independent steamer, without any regard to profit. The decision rests on the broad principle that "competition, however severe and egotistical, if unattended by circumstances of dishonesty, intimidation, molestation, or other distinct illegalities, gives rise to no cause of action at Common Law."

The action in question was brought to recover damages on the grounds that the McGregor Steamship Company, who were ship-owners, engaged in the China trade, had combined together with a view to keeping up the monopoly of the trade from a certain Chinese port, and that it had offered to merchants and shippers in China, who shipped their goods exclusively in vessels belonging to the McGregor Company, a rebate of five per cent. on all freights paid by them, and the McGregor Company offered to furnish steamers, when necessary, to underbid any competing vessels which should come into the port in question. The Mogul Company, who were rival ship-owners, were excluded from association, and in consequence of said exclusion claimed to have suffered damage. The English Court of Appeal acquiesced in

the judgment of Lord Coleridge, dismissing the action on the ground that the association, having been formed for keeping the trade in their own hands, and not from any personal malice or ill will, was not unlawful.

THE GRAND TRUNK IN THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

At a meeting on the 5th instant of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, which is soon to be amalgamated with the Board of Trade of that city, the extension of the Grand Trunk Railway into Halifax was discussed, and counsel for the railway explained the project to be to connect the Temiscouata Railway with the Intercolonial so as to bring the Grand Trunk into Halifax. The president, Mr. Silver, stated that while Halifax was at present 850 miles from Montreal, it would by the new route be 100 miles nearer. The following resolution, moved by J. E. Dewolfe, seconded by J. A. Chipman, was unanimously carried:

Whereas, We learn that the Grand Trunk Railway is desirous to reach Halifax as an eastern terminus, using a proposed new route from Edmunston to Moncton and thus over the I. C. R. to Halifax. Therefore resolved, That this chamber approve of the proposed connection, and that we urge the Government to assist in every way the Grand Trunk Railway to attain their desired object.

To reach St. John, the Grand Trunk proposes to make connection with the New Brunswick Central at or near the head of Grand Lake, using the Central and the Intercolonial Railways to reach St. John. The Council of the St. John Board of Trade discussed the proposal on this day week and approved a resolution, which was confirmed on the same day by a meeting of the full board, and on motion of George Robertson, seconded by W. M. Jarvis, was carried:

Resolved, That this board is favorable to the proposed connection, on condition that satisfactory arrangements are made to secure the building of the connection with the Central Railway, or some equally direct route, at the same time or as early as the connection with Moncton, and that arrangements are also made to secure the running of regular through trains to St. John, and this board would approve of the Dominion Government assisting the said Grand Trunk Railway Company to obtain their desired objects, subject to the conditions aforesaid.

The New Brunswick Legislature has incorporated the St. Lawrence and Maritime Provinces Railway Co., and the Grand Trunk is understood to be behind it. They have at all events had a survey made from Edmunston, N.B., at the junction with the Temiscouata Railway, to Berry's Mills on the I. C. R. near Moncton.

THE "CANADIAN DIRECT MEAT COMPANY."

A subscriber asks our opinion as to the *bona fides* and prospects of success of the Canadian (Direct) Meat Company, limited, with temporary offices at 144 Leadenhall street, London, Eng., and encloses a copy of the prospectus. From this precious document we gather that the authorized capital is £350,000 sterling, present issue £300,000. Among the directors are an admiral and a right honorable; on the Cana-