

those cities, but against all the Municipalities which entered into agreements to contribute to the construction of the railroad! As matters stand the question is, what is just and fair between the people at large of the Province of Quebec and the contributing municipalities, and likewise between each of the latter? There was a time, if we are not greatly mistaken, when grievous complaint was made by the citizens of Montreal that the county of Ottawa was going to repudiate its liability, and we are quite sure that if there was not a demand for coercion on the part of the Legislature there would have been little sympathy evinced in Montreal at that time in favor of any defaulting Municipality which had been subjected to coercion.

Repudiation of engagements such as that of the city of Montreal for the Railroad is a serious matter, and there is no telling where it will end. All the legislation that has taken place has been based on the good faith of the Municipalities, and the Legislature which represents the population of the whole Province cannot, and ought not, to permit sections of that population to relieve themselves by their own act of a liability, and to impose that liability upon others. Even if the case of the Finance Committee were ten times stronger than it is, it would not justify the repudiation of a liability voluntarily incurred by the parties interested in relieving themselves at the cost of persons who have a clear right to be consulted. The case seems to us so clear that we cannot imagine that our discontented fellow citizens see the matter in the same light. Practically Montreal demands that at her own will and pleasure she shall be relieved of a liability which must in consequence be thrown on the Eastern Townships and the people on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. Surely if a difficulty has arisen the Legislature is the proper tribunal to which an appeal should be made, and not the parties interested.

That the citizens of Montreal would like to get rid of this railroad liability is beyond a doubt. On that point there would be perfect unanimity of opinion. The difficulty is that they are bound in justice to the Province at large, and in honor to adhere to their pledge, and they ought not to claim to be judges in their own case. We must add a few words on the objections made by the Finance Committee, and which we have stated above. We do not profess to be competent to decide between rival engineers which is the best line for the railroad between Quebec and Montreal, that by *Bout de*

l'Isle, or that by Terrebonne. We know that by the former route it would be necessary to have a draw-bridge, a most objectionable structure, and which would involve in all probability a delay greater than would be caused by the increased distance of the line *via* Terrebonne. The engineering difficulties may have been exaggerated, but the commissioners have at least acted on the advice of competent engineers. With regard to the workshop question, we are of opinion that there are grave objections to the Government undertaking the construction of rolling stock, and, moreover, we hardly see how it would be possible for them to compel the lessees of the road to set up works for the construction of locomotives or cars.

The Government of Quebec has acted, so far as we can judge, in perfect good faith to Montreal. But what shall we say of Quebec which is equally agitated on the subject and equally desirous of repudiation? Quebec is dissatisfied because Montreal has not been cut off by running the line to St. Thérèse, which would be a shorter route to Hull than that by Montreal. Can it be believed that this complaint is urged with sincerity, and not as an excuse for repudiation? Not only was their own North Shore line designed solely for communication with Montreal, which was to be its terminus, but if the line had been originally projected between Quebec and Hull, or any other point further west, it never would have entered the imagination of any railway promoters to avoid such a city as Montreal. Entertaining the views which we have placed before our readers, we cannot but deplore the heat that has been manifested both in Montreal and Quebec on this question, or refrain from expressing our sympathy with the Quebec Government, which finds itself compelled, in justice to the whole population of the Province, to insist on certain municipalities fulfilling pledges on the faith of which the Government, with the concurrence of the Legislature, was induced to undertake a work of a most formidable character.

HEALTH AND BUSINESS.

Few persons outside of the mercantile community have any idea of the effect success in life, or the want of it, has upon the general health of the man of business. He who mechanically toils for his daily or weekly wages, often envies the employer whose capital is at stake in his enterprise. He has no idea of the feverish days, the sleepless nights, anxiously spent by the business man in devising means to tide over some first difficulty;

of the struggles against failure; of the struggles with the tempter who whispers "dishonesty" in his ear; of the terrible sinking step by step after he has once transgressed; of the wounded conscience which stings him daily in the sight of his fellowmen; of the humiliation which must be felt by the man who after years of drudgery had found a respectable position and name in the community only to be cast down again in his declining years, bringing with him a family reared in comfort if not in luxury; of the sensation with which he pronounces daily or weekly the words, "we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and left undone those things which we ought to have done," while the still small voice questions him whether he is trying to do better.

A leading dry goods merchant of Toronto once said that no man need fail in business. This doubtless was expressed as a rule to which there might be some exceptions. The great trouble is that men do not proceed cautiously enough, or do not "put on the brakes" in time, or in a careless moment, a friend is accommodated, and very few know how to refuse a second request. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte*, and it costs in mind and body as well as substance. Ill luck, misfortune, are the terms often applied to these consequences of a first wrong act, just as

"When lovely women go astray,
The stars are more in fault than they."

If Jacob who made him a present of that elegant gold watch had not asked him for that accommodation note he would not be where he is now,—or, if he had not handled pitch, he would not have soiled his hands.

Although there are some persons so constituted that failure in life has little effect upon their spirits, generally speaking, we can easily detect the man who is going down hill by his physiognomy and general tone. And who does not know the beaming, assuring face of the successful man. There is an intoxication in success of which the strongly constituted drinker has not even the faintest idea, of which the flattered have no conception. Success in life generally implies superior qualities, for there is no more absurd idea than that contained in the remark, "any man can make money; any man may become rich." There is no part of human life in which the Darwinian theory applies more readily than in business: as a rule the fittest will survive. Knavery may succeed for a while, but honesty with ability is the surest guide.

Many of our ablest merchants attend so closely to business that the ordinary