the county courts in this Province, he touches a point upon which all those who have given any serious, intelligent consideration to the subject will agree with him. It is quite clear that, to a large extent, the abuses incident to the old system owed their origin to the sectional views and sympathies, and to the lack of business experience or training of the judges who had to decide whether or not discharges should be granted or confirmed. We are not sure, however, that the suggestions made by the writer would be any improvement on the old law. That law was probably as wisely and well framed as any that has been devised. The difficulty lay in its administration. If, instead of the matter of discharges having to be dealt wi h by the judges of the different counties, there were one properly constituted tribunal to which all applications had to come, that ought to secure, in the first place, uniformity, and in the second an intelligent administration, which would be at once strict and liberal.

In dealing with the propriety of granting discharges the position is assumed that, "traders take, as a matter of fact, a certain partnership interest in the business or speculations of their debtors. A and B are traders. A sells B one thousand dollars worth of merchandise on credit, that is: A speculates on B's ability to pay this sum. To the extent of B's effects A can make good his claim. The present abil ty of such customers to pay for what they buy is the every day gauge of such customer's credit; it is the sole reason why go ds are sold on credit. No one sells goods on the ground that, though the creditor has nothing now, his life's labor is pledged to the discharge of his debt, and is thus a sufficient security; the creditor of course estimates the ability and honor of his customer, but he does not consider that in the event of these attributes failing there still remains any claim against the produce of his debtor's labor. Moreover as the responsibility of the purchaser decreases, the rate of profit placed upon the goods he buys is increased; and so we conclude that the creditor trades more or less upon the present ability of his debtor to pay, and regulates his prices accordingly."

This language puts in a tolerably strong light the arguments of those wh contend that justice demands the compulsory abrogation of contract rights in the case of insolvent traders. Further, as applied to the actual transactions of business nowadays, it must be admitted that it states fairly enough the relative position of creditor and debtor. Whether that be the sort of relation which ought to exist between them, is quite another question. And whether that policy, which encourages excessive trading, is in the long run the wise one in the public interest, is doubtful. There ought to be, if there is not, some other reason than that stated by Mr. Clarkson, why goods are sold on credit. And another state of things, were business conducted as it ought to be, might exist The creditor's facilities for gauging his customer's "present ability to pay," are necessarily limited. The debtor has an infinitely better opportunity of forming a correct judgment of his ability to pay, of his prospects, and of the wisdom of a particular course in business, than any one to whom he may apply for the purchase of goods can have. And if the purchasers of goods were left, as the borrowers of money are, to a large ex ent to seek after what they want, instead of having wares forced upon them, as they are, it might not be any injustice to hold them strictly to the bargains they make. The creditor class puts itself in a false position by being the pursuing party in the first instance.

It must of course be admitted that no law can be enacted that can effect any radical change in the existing relations between debtor and creditor, among the trading, or any other class. The most, perhaps, that legislators can do is, to deal as best they may, with the existing conditions. In that view of the case, the arguments in the pamphlet before us should appeal with some fo ce to our legislators. The outlook of the business community in this matter can scarcely be said to have improved of late. In the Dominion Parliament the government has again shirked the responsibility of dealing with this question. And to all appearances the farce of strangling, by means of special committees and other equally respectable modes of parliamentary practice, the attempt to secure justice in this behalf, is being re-enacted.

In the local legislature of this Province an attempt is apparently to be made by the government to make up, as far as it can, for the delinquencies of the federal powers. The danger is, that on account of the limited power of the local authorities to deal with this question, confusion, instead of redress, will follow. When Mr. Mowat proposes that an assignment for the general benefit of creditors shall be valid notwithstanding that it contains a provision that no creditor shall be allowed to participate in the distribution who declines to grant a dis charge, it become a serious question whether he is not attempting what, by the British North America Act, is relegated to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Dominion authorities.

LOSS OF LIFE AT SEA.

Upon the recommendation of the British Association, a commission was appointed to investigate the subject of the tidal currents of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and their effect in enhancing the danger of navigating the Gulf. That there is need of information as to the force and direction of the currents was very strongly urged before the British Association, and citation has been made of the number of wrecks in certain parts of the lower St. Lawrence. A report has been prepared, to be laid before Parliament, we understand, by Professor Johnson, of Montreal, and his associates on the commission, and we shall soon have the benefit of its contents.

It is just possible that disasters of the sort complained of may not all, however, be properly attributable to currents or to lack of lights. A writer on such subjects stated, last year, that "if casualties are to be reduced in number, there must be a little more supervision exercised and intelligence displayed than now prevail. Something else must be thought of than stating a course to be steered and then trusting to the chapter of events. Officers ought to comprehend that it is no use setting a course unless an occasional glimpse is taken at the binnacle." The Liverpool *Courier* of recent date ventures the following example of the many circumstances to be watched by navigators: "We have an idea that a certain steamship was lost not a hundred days ago from the master not allowing for a slight difference in compass error and the operation of a left handed screw. The blades of a propeller churn the water to starboard or port, according to their pitch and the manner they tu.n. If they drive the water from starboard to port obliquely, and the two forces of resistance and dip are not neutralised, a vessel's stern will be drawn to port and her head to starboard. At night, when the atmosphere is too hazy to see lights, and a steamer's position cannot be verified, she may be gradually closing in with the land, and bad steerage may bring her to grief."

A matter which deserves immediate notice in this connection, and one to which we have before referred, is the necessity, on our sea-coast, of live-saving appliances on board vessels. Such, for example as life buoys with inextinguishable lights attached, to be thrown overboard if a sailor or a passenger should fall into the sea at night; a flare light to be ignited quickly on deck in case of collision, when ships' lights are so often knocked out; rockets, and other devices such as are used in o her waters and made compulsory by many shipowners or ship-owning companies. "Poor Jack" has a slim enough chance for his life in many cases where storm and accident occur. It is needful that all reasonable pains should be taken to prevent drowning accidents to our sea-faring men. Not only this, but the horrors of collision, or shipwreck of passenger steamers may be lessened by the use of inventions such as we understand are now regularly authorized by the Admirality and used by many steamship lines.

The figures are eloquent on this subject. Since 1870 the loss of life at sea in British ships has reached 40,000 souls. But of these say the official statistics, only 3,500 were passengers the remainder being sailors or employees on steamers. Storms are not to blame for all or nearly all this sad loss of life, for out of the 3,475 lives lost in 1881 at sea, no less than 1,123 were those of seamen who were drowned by pure accident under various circumstances, but nearly always traceable to preventable causes. One does not wonder, upon reading these figures, that the New Zealand Government made the use of night light rockets and the like compulsory on all ships.

It is a striking circumstance that, so far as our official returns go, the losses of life shown by sailing vessels are double in number those by steamers in proportion to the number employed. And it tends to prove that those who man yards and reef sails run greater risks than the more numerous class which mans the trans-Atlantic iron floating palace or the less pretentious freight steamer. Canada, whose marine is far more largely sail than steam, ought therefore to make the more effor to save the jeopardised lives of her sailors. We are glad to learn that the Montreal Board of Trade has forwarded to