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Wyld & Darling Bros.

13 Front-st. West, Toronto.

Toronto, August 17, 1877.

**THE MONETARY TIMES,
AND TRADE REVIEW.**

TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY AUG. 17, 1877

PRODUCERS AND NON-PRODUCERS.

In a recent speech the Minister of Finance boldly characterized as non-producers whole classes including professional men and traders. Many of the seventy-five thousand engaged in commerce he admits are "more usefully employed," but still he considers that these are following an unproductive pursuit. From the thirty-nine thousand professional men he deducts fourteen thousand teachers, on the ground that the latter are "as usefully employed as any part of our population." He thinks that of the seventy-five thousand non-producers—as he calls those engaged in commerce—there are twenty-five thousand more than are necessary. Of the remaining fifty thousand one-half are employed as carriers, and these, together with the twenty-five thousand traders, he admits could not be spared.

The fundamental error which Mr. Cartwright commits lies in assuming that traders, necessary to carry on the business of the country (we make him a present of the surplus), are non-producers. The truth is, they are just as much producers as the men who handle the spade and the plough. They are the distributors of commodities, a calling just as necessary as the production of commodities. If carriers be non-producers, then the farmer ceases to be a producer when his grain has been harvested, and becomes a non-producer when he sets out to carry his produce to market. The merchant who supplies implements to the farmer, near his own door, instead of obliging him to go great distances to the manufacturer, becomes an auxiliary pro-

ducer by enabling the farmer to economize his time. It is to no purpose that wheat and beef are raised, if they cannot reach the consumer. The farmer could never distribute to every consumer, day by day, the quantities of fresh meat he requires, nor, from time to time, flour in quantities to suit. Were he to attempt this, a large part of his time would be taken up in distributing what he had produced, and there would result a heavy deduction from the time he could spend in producing. If he had to purchase everything he requires without the aid of distributors, called merchants or traders, he would suffer a similar loss of time, with a like result.

Merchants, as auxiliaries to production, are just as effective, in an indirect way, as the direct producers; and to distinguish the two classes into producers and non-producers is equally arbitrary and unfair. If there were no carriers, the produce of the country would never get to market, and imports would never reach the consumer. The object of production and of importation would be defeated. It is not less fallacious to put down professional men as non-producers. In the case of teachers, as well as of merchants, Mr. Cartwright makes a distinction between "useful" and "productive" employment. But in what does the distinction consist? Educated labor is more effective than uneducated; and the men employed in adding to its efficiency are indirect, but not the less efficient, producers. The schoolmaster, then, must be rescued from the reproach of being an unproductive worker. He is perhaps the most productive, through others, of any class. Is the medical man, by whose skill life is economized and lengthened and the valetudinarian is enabled to resume his productive labors, an unproductive drone? By no means. When the lawyer straightens the kinks in a title, and drafts an instrument transferring lands to those who will, as a rule, make the best use of them, he aids production and has as good a title to be called a producer as if he held the plough that breaks up the land of which the title is so passed. When he aids in the administration of justice, he helps men to retain or recover their rights. His efforts add to the security of property, without which there would be no inducement to labor with a view to accumulation. By stimulating productive labor in others, he becomes an auxiliary producer, and has no right to be stigmatized as a drone in the social hive. If he sometimes becomes a fomentor of quarrels, that is an abuse of his position which is to be put on the same level as the abuse of any other gifts. It is the dross which adheres to the true metal,

and it is only fair to distinguish the one from the other.

That there are too many engaged in commerce and that the professions are crowded we do not require to concede to Mr. Cartwright; we have repeatedly asserted the fact and urged a reform. But it is nearly useless to do so. Mr. Cartwright tells the young men of the country that they "make a great mistake for their own prosperity and peace of mind when they readily quit the honorable occupation of farming or of ordinary handicrafts to join the multitudes of useless shopkeepers or half employed professional men." There is here some confusion of facts. That young men do leave farming and handicrafts to go into trade is true; but the spectacle of mechanics turning lawyers is so rare that the assertion of its existence is sure to be misleading. In England, a hundred years ago, there were more lawyers than could support themselves, and the fact probably holds good to-day. In this country the law is everything. All the great prizes of State are usually reserved for lawyers. Lawyers fill our legislative assemblies and make, and, necessarily, administer the law. A knowledge of law is useful, though it be never practiced as a profession. Say what we will, do what we will to discourage the attempt, crowds of young men will qualify themselves to compete for the great prizes which are practically or absolutely open only to lawyers. The difficulty is that so many mistake their calling. It is absurd to say that, in a community like ours where all distinctions are confounded, the son of an artisan should always be content to remain an artisan, and the son of a farmer should always follow the paternal calling. It would be better if more sons of farmers were content to stick to the soil; but it is best for every community that those who are best fitted to fill any particular station should fall into it. How are we to find this out? Competitive examinations will never do it. There must be actual experience; and of the aspirants to high social positions it is inevitable that many should fail. Still, many will continue to try, and the fittest will win the race. We may regret the misdirection of talents, but we cannot altogether prevent it; and in making up our account of the effective forces of the nation we must be content to take things as they are.

When some one, who advises the youth of the country to avoid the law, sets the example by bringing up his own son a blacksmith, men will begin to think there is an increase of candor in the world; and the world will be the better for the example and the candor.