

The Commercial

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COMPROMISING.

The evils arising from the effecting of compromises with creditors has long been recognized in the commercial world, but too often no effort has been made to overcome the difficulty. Last year the jobbers of Winnipeg endeavored individually and collectively to prevent compromises, and for some time they have determinedly adhered to this principle. A recent instance shows this. The failure of Hoover & Co., general merchants, of Franklin, Man., gave rise to an offer for a compromise. This firm offered 75 cents on the dollar, secured, but the creditors decided to refuse it and close out the business. In this case it is probable the jobbers would have been financially ahead by accepting the compromise, but it could have been done only at the sacrifice of principle.

Undoubtedly the cause of the many compromises in the past, has been the well known fact that it would often pay better to compromise with the defaulting firm than to close out the business. When a heavy loss was in view, there was always a great temptation to violate principle to save as much as possible from the wreck. Jobbers, however, do well to look at general results, rather than to immediate and direct losses or gains in this matter of compromise.

Very little can be said in defence of compromises, and much against it. One of the principal points which can be urged against it, is that it is unfair to retailers themselves. The retailer who pays 100 cents in the dollar is not in a position to compete fairly with those who manage to effect a compromise and pay 50 or 75 cents. The former custom of arranging frequent compromises was in this way a great disadvantage to the legitimate, sound and successful retail traders. When compromises were frequently given to competitors, merchants who had always paid 100 cents on the dollar could hardly be blamed for becoming indignant, if they did not themselves demand a composition.

Compromising to some extent places a premium upon unsuccessful business management, at least in principle. We may go further and say that it frequently placed a premium on dishonesty. Compromises have been effected with men who were perfectly honorable in their failure; but they have also been effected with dishonest traders. The arranging of compromises freely, when the offer made would exceed the amount likely to be received by the closing out of the stock, simply offered an encouragement for all kinds of fraud and deception. The dishonest trader could readily take advantage of the custom to enforce a reduction of his liabilities against his creditors. The only way to overcome these evils is to refuse all offers to compromise, and in setting their faces resolutely against this thing the Winnipeg jobbers have done a great deal toward

placing business in the West on a solid and just basis.

THE CATTLE QUARANTINE.

The Commercial has been at a loss to discover the reasons for the opposition raised by some of our western ranchers to the removal or modification of the quarantine regulations. The Macleod Gazette, which is perhaps more closely in touch with stockmen than any other journal in the country, gives in a recent issue, the reasons for this opposition. The Gazette says there is danger of the "complete destruction of the range cattle industry in Alberta through the unrestrained introduction of United States cattle and the consequent exhaustion of feed." This, the Gazette explains would be brought about by the removal of the quarantine, as "the quarantine is practically the only thing which has prevented this in the past, the duty not being considered in any way an obstacle." Those not intimately familiar with the range industry, will be surprised to learn that the duty would not be considered in any way an obstacle to the unrestricted introduction of cattle from the States.

We would suppose that the introduction of cattle to establish new ranges in Alberta would rather be a source of wealth and therefore an advantage to the territory, provided it were not carried to the extent of overstocking the ranges and thereby producing a shortage in the supply of feed. This is what the stockmen evidently fear, according to the Gazette. The stockmen, however, do not appear to be unitedly opposed to the removal of the quarantine. Dr. McEachran, manager of one of the large ranching companies, has declared in favor of the removal of the cattle quarantine, and he intimates that many others among the stockmen are of the same opinion. Certainly The Commercial believes the representations of the western stockgrowers should receive careful consideration from the government, in view both of the importance of their industry and the possible influence the removal of the quarantine may have upon it. The overstocking of the ranges could be provided against by regulations which would in their nature be entirely distinct from the quarantine question. If there is danger of overstocking the ranges through the removal of the quarantine, the same danger must exist with the quarantine in force, though in the latter case it would be a more remote contingency. The fear that the ranges will become overstocked, is the only objection which the Gazette makes to the removal of the quarantine. This the Commercial would consider is a matter which should be dealt with as a question by itself, whether or not the quarantine be removed. Of course the removal of the quarantine will render it necessary to act more speedily in regard to overcrowding the range country.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE United States commission appointed to consider the question of a deep waterway from the interior to the seaboard, has, it is said, reported in favor of the Canadian route, and an appropriation for preliminary

surveys is recommended. The opening of a deep waterway from the head of the great lakes to the seaboard, sufficient to accommodate ocean steamships, would be of inestimable value to the vast territory west of Lake Superior on each side of the boundary. It remains to be seen if international arrangements can be made to carry out this great undertaking.

IF HALF that is stated in the charges now being made in the courts be true, the last general elections in this country seem to have broken the record for bribery, corruption, wholesale and retail intimidation, spiritual and otherwise, and other vicious practices. Manitoba was not behind other parts of the country in presenting an appalling record of corrupt practices, if the charges made can be accepted as approximately correct. It is quite probable that many of the charges will not be proved, but where there is so much smoke there must be considerable fire. Indeed, one member has already admitted as much by resigning. More stringent laws regulating elections are evidently needed, but probably a stricter enforcement of the law as it stands now would be more efficacious than to make new and more rigorous laws. The trouble is, that usually both parties are equally guilty, and thus a compromise is reached to avoid mutual exposures, instead of enforcing the law. The prohibition of personal solicitation in election campaigning would be an immense advantage in restricting corrupt practices, and this should be enforced with a severe penalty. As for the returning officer or other official who prostitutes his position for party purposes, the most severe punishment should be meted out to him without sympathy. Such an offence is one of the foulest crimes on the calendar, quite in keeping with arson, and it should be recognized and punished as such.

THE question arising out of the action of the Catholic hierarchy of Quebec in placing the ban upon a leading newspaper of that province, is in no sense a religious one. From a denominational point of view the question may be regarded as a religious matter, but to the country at large it can have no such meaning. It is not sectarian, denominational or in any other way a question concerning religion. The question simply is: Has the Catholic Church or any other religious organization power in Canada, or in any part of Canada to suppress a book, publication or organ of public opinion. If a decree of the Council of Trent has any legal force in Canada, we should know it at once. If it has no force, it will naturally be assumed that those who undertake to enforce any such decree will be liable for the damage done. In suppressing the Quebec Liberal organ the bishops have assumed a serious obligation. If they cannot show that the Church has legal power in Canada to proclaim such acts, how can they hope to defend themselves successfully against a suit for damages. The matter is happily not one which should lead to any religious strife between Catholics and Protestants in this country, as both are equally interested in