

INTERNATIONAL MERCANTILE AGENCY.

In January of last year, unexpected prominence was given to a pretentious concern, then new, named the International Mercantile Agency, doing business as a guide to credit in the United States and Canada. It had been organized 14th January, 1902. A writ of replevin was issued in New York seven months ago at the instance of R. G. Dun & Co. under which a U. S. marshal found in the premises of the defendant company and took possession of three reference books issued by the Dun Company and illicitly in the possession of the International. This suit of R. G. Dun & Co. is still in progress, and other legal proceedings have since resulted in the appointment of a receiver for the defendant company. Last week an attachment issued from the N. Y. Supreme Court against the same company for \$54,220, and interest from the 26th December, 1903, at the suit of Thomas N. McCauley, its former president, who alleges that he loaned this sum to the company during his presidency and has not been paid. "I only took this proceeding against the company," alleges Mr. McCauley, "after I was convinced that its condition was hopeless." He resigned the presidency, it seems, on 1st March last, and has since been down among his orange-groves in far-away climes "where the woodbine twineth." A falling off in the business and heavy expenses are said to have been the causes of its trouble. A deputy sheriff took possession on Friday last of its premises, 346 Broadway, and on the next day, John Enright, of Jersey City, was put in charge as receiver.

Now for the other side of the story. Suit for an accounting has been taken by the International Company against McCauley, the allegation being that a transfer to him of \$1,200,000 of the capital stock of \$3,000,000 was fraudulent, on the ground that it was made by a board of "dummy" directors. One of these dummies, as we learn from the New York World of 27th August, is alleged to be Kenneth K. McLaren, of the Corporation Trust Co. of New Jersey, who figured in the organization of the Miller 520 per cent. get-rich-quick concern and also in the United States Shipbuilding Company. A charge made against McCauley in the suit for accounting is that he, having charge of its treasury stock, sold large blocks thereof, but instead of delivering treasury shares made deliveries from his own block of \$1,200,000 and converted the receipts to his own use. This is a plain charge of breach of trust, and McCauley denies it, blaming his opponents for ruining the company. He also blames Charles A. Henderson, "a young Canadian," third vice-president and an active manager, together with several Canadian directors, for the chaotic state of the company's finances.

A number of prominent Canadians in Montreal and Toronto, and a still larger number not so prominent, in the Eastern provinces are shareholders, it is said, to amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000. Some of these are keenly alive to the condition of affairs, but are hardly likely, we should think, after their experience of it thus far, to take kindly to a reorganization of the Canadian end of the concern, such as we are told is contemplated. The complaint lodged by the present management states that McCauley was owner of the Mutual Mercantile Agency and Sprague's Mercantile Agency, of Chicago, New York, Montreal and Toronto, and that these were merged into the International Company. And they say things in their complaint, respecting the repute of the two former concerns and his profitable manipulation of them, that reflect not only upon his unscrupulous cleverness but upon the credulity of people who took stock upon his representations.

Later information, under date 30th August, announces the arrest of McCauley on a charge of larceny. He was locked up, but paroled later in the day, Tuesday, pending the receipt of extradition papers from Hamilton, Ont., where a former stockholder, Mr. C. S. Wilcox, charges him with the larceny of \$4,500.

BOARD OF TRADE FOR PRESCOTT.

On the 22nd ult. a number of citizens interested in the growth and prosperity of Prescott, Ont., assembled at the call of Mayor Stephenson and discussed the organization of a live board of trade for that place. All appeared to favor such a scheme and the names were handed in of several prominent merchants who thus signified their desire to become members. The upshot was the appointment of a committee to obtain full information as to necessary steps and report on the matter. This committee will consist of the following gentlemen: Messrs. C. Macpherson, J. Ross, L. H. Daniels, W. I. Purkis and J. D. Mills. The board of trade, when it enters into being, will pay attention to presenting to the outside world the opportunities presented by Prescott as a manufacturing centre.

INCORPORATED ACCOUNTANTS' ORDINANCE
(TRANSVAAL.)

Two items of interest to our accountancy readers are to be found in the numbers of "The Incorporated Accountant's Journal," recently to hand. The movement among the forward party of British public accountants, aiming to secure statutory recognition by the British Parliaments of their calling, as a close profession, has received an impetus from the South African branch of the Society of Incorporated Accountants. With a spirit of colonial thoroughness in effacing outworn traditions brought from the Old Country, the Transvaal branch has prepared and promulgated a "Draft Ordinance" for the establishment of a statutory Register of Public Accountants, and the Government Gazette of the colony publishes the notice of intention to apply for a private ordinance during the coming session of the Legislative Council. Briefly, the purposes, as set out, are:

"1. To provide for the registration of persons practising as public accountants in the Transvaal, and for the incorporation of a Society of Accountants with perpetual succession and a common seal. 2. To provide that admission to such society shall be by registration, etc. . . 3. To impose a penalty on any person not so registered, who, after the passing of the ordinance, holds himself out as a public accountant. 4. To create a council to manage the affairs of the society, with power to expel from the society or suspend from the practice of their profession, members guilty of any crime or fraud, or other discreditable conduct. 5. Generally, to make proper provision for securing the attainment of the various matters aforesaid, and of matters incidental thereto."

The copy of the Draft Ordinance deposited with the Government contains twenty-four lengthy sections, regulating the profession, and out of these we extract section 1: "User of Title of Public Accountant Restricted.—After the passing of this ordinance, no person shall describe himself as an accountant, or as a public accountant, or use any name, title, addition or description, or letters indicating that he is an accountant by profession, or a public accountant, whether by advertisement, by description in or at his place of business or residence, by any document or otherwise, unless he is registered as a public accountant in pursuance of this ordinance; provided always that this section shall not prevent any person employed at a salary on accounts and not carrying on business on his own account from describing himself as an accountant in respect of or in relation to his occupation.

Section 15: Title Allowed to Members of the Society.—All persons, whose names appear upon the register, shall be entitled to style themselves Registered Public Accountant, and to place the letters R.P.A. after their names.

"Section 24: Short Title.—This ordinance may be cited for all purposes, as the Society of Accountants' Ordinance, 1904."

In effect, all members of either of the chartered institutes in the United Kingdom and the Incorporated Society of Accountants and Auditors, domiciled in the Transvaal, are eligible for registration, and future applicants belonging to the home-societies will presumably pass a local examination.