

two and a half years over the border a compact between these companies has existed to punish by severe penalties agents who are found guilty of rebating. With efforts in the Dominion for the suppression of the evil, our readers are familiar, and yet, both here and in the United States, the evil still has a vigorous life. Rebating is practiced less openly than formerly, doubtless, but none the less surely, directly or indirectly.

The practical question confronting us to-day is how to get rid of the evil. To drive it into underground channels and to compel the use of shrewd subterfuge on the part of the agent does not kill it, but simply stunts its growth. Like a noxious weed which draws its life from a tenacious root, deep-seated in the soil, and which successfully resists every attempt to kill it by the top-cutting process, the reason why the methods used for the eradication of the rebate evil have been ineffective is that the fundamental cause of its existence has been ignored in practice whatever may have been admitted in theory. Cutting off the top of the rebate weed with legal shears, slashing at it with the anti-rebate compact knife, and sprinkling on it the salt of condemnatory resolutions in agents' or in managers' conventions will never get rid of it. To strike at the root is the only remedy.

The root of the evil is found in high, illegitimately high, commissions, which make it not only possible but profitable for the agents to rebate. The father could not more surely make of his sportive son a confirmed gambler than to forbid him the gaming table under penalty, and their obligingly to show him the door of the faro bank, after first filling the young man's pockets. In order to swim a man must find accessible water, and in order to rebate the agent must have the opportunity which excess commissions give him. Just so long as the inordinate strife for business prevails among companies, and agents are equipped by commissions and extra bonuses to get it at any price—only get it—rebating will continue in spite of all the virtuous resolutions of conventions and all the anti-rebate compacts in the universe. The genesis of the rebate is high commissions and high-pressure methods of business-getting; when these are reformed, rebating will die a natural death.

THE NEW CITY CHARTER.

MATTERS OF MOMENT CONNECTED THEREWITH.

The new draft charter of the City of Montreal might be described as a Constitution conferring enormous legislative powers upon the City Council; powers that we are sure the Legislature will not grant and powers that the tax-payers of Montreal would rather not see entrusted to their civic representatives. Under the old charter, the Aldermen chastised us with whips; under the new one they could chastise us with scorpions. The draft shows that the City's legal advisers have bestowed a great deal of work upon it, and contains some admirable suggestions, but as a whole the

new charter is by no means acceptable. It proposes to confer upon the Council many powers that the Legislature itself does not possess, besides many that should not be conferred. Probably the best thing about it is that it will stir up so many elements of opposition that it will have no chance of becoming law.

Subject to the special provisions of the charter itself, it is proposed to give the City Council general powers to legislate on such subjects as "The constitution of the City Council and elections to the City Council," the Funded Debt of the City," the raising of money by taxation" and "the borrowing of money on the City's credit." As the Aldermen have a personal interest in the constitution of the City Council, and as they have the spending of the City's money, prudent citizens would much prefer that the powers of taxing and borrowing should continue to be clearly defined and restricted by the Legislature.

Some of the powers sought are *ultra vires* of the Provincial Legislature. For instance after providing that the City of Montreal shall have jurisdiction over the whole extent of its territories, and to the centre of the River St. Lawrence, opposite the City, it is proposed that the City Council shall have power to regulate the use and maintain general supervision and control of navigable waters, within, upon and adjacent to the City limits, to regulate the use of public and private docks, landings, wharves and levees in such City, to regulate and control the anchorage, moorage and landing of all water craft and their cargoes within the City, to license and regulate wharf boats, tugs and other boats used about the harbours or within the jurisdiction of the City, and to fix the rates of wharfage and dockage and to collect wharfage and dockage from all boats, rafts and other craft landing at or using any public landing place, wharf, dock or levee within the City. The Dominion Parliament alone has the right to make laws with reference to Navigation and Shipping in Canada, and, while it might be a good thing some day for the City of Montreal to control the Harbour, it can never do so except by the authority of Parliament, and Parliament is not likely to place the great national port of Canada at the mercy of the Montreal Aldermen without good reason and without providing ample guarantees for the protection of the interests of Canadian shipping.

One of the powers asked, that the Legislature might confer if it wished to do so, is the power to license the liquor trade, but the Provincial Government will scarcely be generous enough to make the City a present of this important source of revenue.

The clause authorizing the City Council to compel any proprietor to plant trees in front of his property has a socialistic look.

There are a number of provisions which will meet with strenuous opposition from interested corporations. For instance, one to compel railway companies to lower and bridge over or raise their tracks and to pay all damages caused thereby. We are not sure that