

offered, before any of it was turned over to the money clerk. The discrepancy was concealed by adding to the item of "Exchanges for the Clearing House," on the note teller's balance book an amount equal to the sum of abstractions. In order to cover up a shortage of, say, \$600,000, Alvord would merely deduct \$600,000 from the total of the morning statement, and would arbitrarily add the same amount to the preceding evening's statement. In this way the total cheques to be sent to the Clearing House would not be changed, and as the slip would be under his control, there was little chance to make an investigation of the particular items. He merely changed the totals and not the items making up the totals.

The moral which the American papers, and we trust bankers, are drawing from this defalcation is the need of making Government bank examinations more efficient. An examiner should never be appointed unless for exceptional skill in this particular kind of work, and, when once appointed, he should be allowed to reap the reward of ever-increasing efficiency resulting from length of service, and no question of politics should be allowed to interfere with his continuance in the public service. Had a modern system of checking and counter-checking been in operation at the bank in question, the robbery would have been impossible, or, at any rate, it could not have been carried on for so long. Better even than that, would have been a system whereby a vigilant and critical investigation into every detail of the bank's business would have given its officers a knowledge of everything which was going on.

Mr. Russell Sage's idea is that bank clerks should be periodically shifted from one desk to another, so that they should not be left long enough in any one position to become so familiarized with their environment as to be able to work out a system of defalcation. We cannot help thinking, however, that the clerk who was not permitted to remain at his post of teller, for instance, for sufficient length of time to become familiarized with his work, would be but a poor substitute for the ideal teller, whose training is naturally a matter of months and years. Under such a system, the work of carrying on a bank would be well-nigh impossible.

One of the New York journals, we notice, contains a letter from a Montreal banker, describing the manner in which employees in Canadian banks are checked. Owing to the large number of branches, banks in this country employ three or four competent inspectors travelling from one town to another. They are supposed to unexpectedly pounce down upon a branch and take possession of the keys and cash of those who are handling the money. If they should happen to arrive in a town after the bank is closed, they have been known to omit registering their names in the hotel, so as not to disclose their presence. In addition to this, the accountant in each bank enters the paying and receiving tellers' boxes each day, and checks up the cash, while the local manager of the bank does the same thing at least once a week. The management of the banks also insist upon all employees taking a vacation of at least two weeks each year. This allows of a shifting round of duties, and prevents an employee from carrying out a long and continued

system of defalcation. The Canadian bank clerk, in order to commit a robbery, is obliged to make a haul all at once, and skip with it between the closing of the bank one day and its opening the next morning.

### THE STRIKE AT VALLEYFIELD.

The situation at Valleyfield appears to have quieted down somewhat. It seems that the trouble has been long in coming to a head. The strike at the mills, some two or three months since, was settled, but ever since then there has been friction. At the same time, so far as we can learn, the present outbreak was not due to mill-hands at all, but rather to laborers working on the new extension, who claimed a 25 per cent. increase in pay. Refusal of this demand gradually led up to an outbreak by the whole rough element in the town, aided, perhaps, a little by what looks like lack of governmental firmness. The coming of the militia and their charging of the mob, while probably necessary, in the excited state of public feeling, for the moment made the confusion worse confounded. Some of the French newspapers claim it to be an unwise thing for English soldiers to be sent to quell a French mob. And, perhaps, if convenient, it would, in fact, be better to arrange so that collections of excited people, whether French or English, should be argued with and dispersed by men of their own race. One extra source of irritation would, by this plan, be obviated.

In the meanwhile, the constant state of friction between the population of Valleyfield and the mill interests, upon which the welfare of the town so largely depends, is bound to work injury to both parties. The threats, and indeed we believe the attempt which was made, to burn the mills, would surely react on the perpetrators of such a dastardly deed. Already, the cotton company are threatening to close down the mills, and, if they did, hundreds of families would feel the pinch. We sincerely trust that an amicable arrangement will be arrived at and adhered to.

### THE OCCUPATION HAZARD.

Crude death rates are such a common source of error in the employment of statistical evidence that it is satisfactory to find medical men recognizing their untrustworthiness. Dr. G. V. Poore, in reading to the Life Assurance Medical Officers' Association a paper on "Locality and Occupation in Relation to Life Assurance," not only remarks on the waning reputation of this generally misleading form of deduction, but also points out the corrections as to age and sex distributions, which should be taken into account. His conclusions, therefore, are free from some of the objections too frequently met with in similar treatment of facts. Some of the contributions to the Institute of Actuaries make it apparent that the combined talents of the doctor and actuary have more than once produced the best possible results from certain classes of data; and the more frequent treatment in this way of some actuarial subjects would probably be attended with considerable advantage to the insurance world. Doctors are sometimes at fault in drawing conclusions from figures, and actuaries at sea in examining into