

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MARCH 9, 1897.

RESOLUTIONS OF BUSINESS MEN'S CONVENTION.

Three resolutions were adopted at the Business Men's convention, held recently in Winnipeg, which deal with questions within the province of the provincial government. As the Manitoba legislature is now in session, it is an opportune time to refer to these resolutions. The first resolution requests the provincial government to make it compulsory upon municipalities to employ skilled auditors, who have received certificates for that purpose, to make the annual audits of the books of the municipalities. The necessity for some check of this nature upon the municipalities is very evident to those who have had any experience in municipal matters. In many of the rural municipalities, the books and affairs of the municipality are managed in a very loose fashion. This is an injury to the credit of the municipalities, and if it were known that a careful audit were made annually by competent persons, it would naturally improve the financial standing of the municipalities as a whole. A bill has recently been introduced in the Ontario legislature, which not only provides for the auditing of municipal and school board accounts and books, but also provides for the mode of keeping such books. This is in line with the principle endorsed by the resolution of the Business Men's convention, and should be a further inducement to the Manitoba Government to take action upon the resolution.

Another resolution passed by the convention, referred to the exemption laws in force in Manitoba and the Territories. That resolution reads as follows:

"Resolved, that any legislation, whether in the form of exemption laws or otherwise, which place the debtor possessed of means beyond the power of the creditor to collect just debts from him, is a deliberate abuse of the powers placed in the hands of legislators, and places a premium upon dishonesty. And furthermore, even the economic advantages alleged to be gained by exemption legislation cannot possibly be attained by any law or laws which enable a man to evade payment for the food, clothing and other necessary household supplies of his home. Therefore, this convention appeals to the legislature of Manitoba and the Territorial assembly to repeal the exemption provisions of such laws as to give powers of seizure within the limits now exempt to creditors who have supplied such household goods."

Few will dispute the enunciation of principle contained in the first paragraph of the resolution; but it is doubtful if, in the present temper of our legislators, we can hope for any modification of these laws.

The third and last resolution which is of special interest at present, in view of the assembling of the provincial legislature, referred to the collection of small debts. It is as follows:

"Resolved, First. That the existing law should be modified, so that the cost of collecting small debts be reduced.

Second. That the amount exempt from garnishee order should be reduced to \$10, and that the assignment of unearned salaries be made illegal.

Third. That so far as the collection of debts is concerned, government employees should be placed on the same footing as other citizens."

This is certainly a matter which should engage the attention of our legislators. The process of collecting small debts is altogether too expensive and tedious. On this account severe losses are entailed upon both debtors and creditors. In the second clause, referring to unearned salaries, it may be said that the assignment of such is frequently resorted to simply as a means of escaping the payment of just claims. Every one will recognize the justice of the third clause, that civil servants should not receive exemption from garnishee. This is a matter which should be brought before the Dominion as well as the provincial and territorial governments. The Manitoba legislature has already passed a law abolishing this exemption of its civil servants.

The Winnipeg Caterer's association has taken up this question of the collection of small debts, as will be seen by a report in another column of this issue of The Commercial.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE last two or three weeks has been extremely fruitful of destructive fires in country towns. Half a dozen or more towns in Manitoba and the Territories have suffered severely within this space of time, and in some cases the merchants were not properly protected by insurance. Those who are not carrying full insurance should lose no time in providing full protection.

It is reported that Hon. Hugh J. Macdonald will enter provincial politics, taking the leadership of the Opposition in the local house. If this proves true the province may be congratulated upon the move. A strong Opposition is as desirable as a sound and progressive government. Many friends of the present government will be pleased to learn of Mr. Macdonald's decision to enter local politics. Mr. Macdonald's presence will add greatly to the weight and ability not only of the Opposition, but also of the entire house.

FARMERS are advised to send samples of seed grain to the Dominion government experimental farm at Ottawa, for testing. Samples will be tested free, and will go free of postage. On account of the poor sample of oats produced last year, it is specially desirable that care should be taken, and any doubtful samples tested before sowing. Some rusty samples of Manitoba oats of last crop, already tested at Ottawa, have shown very fair germinating power, but some contained quite a percentage of weak plants. The germinating test is not alone sufficient to show the value of grain for seed. As some grains which may germinate, may produce very weak growth,

In a private letter to the editor Mr. Bedford, superintendent of the Government Experimental farm at Brandon, says: "Our meetings among the farmers have been very successful this winter. They all appear pleased to hear the results of our experiments; the interest in grasses, oats and forest trees is growing very rapidly this year." It is certainly good news to learn that the farmers are taking an active interest in the cultivation of grasses and trees. The Commercial is not an agricultural journal, but we believe that all our people, whether farmers or not, are deeply interested in the progress of agriculture in this country, as upon agriculture the country mainly depends. Regarding grasses, it has long been the opinion of the writer that this was one of the most valuable class of experiments undertaken at the experimental farm. Our farmers have depended mainly upon the wild prairie grasses in the past, but sooner or later they will have to begin cultivating grasses. In fact it would be cheaper in many cases to cultivate grasses than to depend upon the wild hay crop, besides the encouragement it would give to a better mode of farming. It is pleasing to know that experiments have shown that there are several varieties of grasses which can be grown here to excellent advantage. As regards trees, it is to be hoped that farmers will find time to give some attention to trees. What a wonderful improvement it would make in our prairie landscape if every farmer would give a little attention to the growing of trees? If this were done, we would hardly know the country in a few years.

PRESIDENT CLEVELAND has vetoed the immigration bill. This is the bill which was intended to restrict immigration into the United States and to which was added the Corliss amendment which would exclude Canadians from obtaining employment in the United States. The bill provided that immigrants who could not read and write in some language, should be refused admission. Mr. Cleveland says: "In my opinion it is infinitely more safe to admit a hundred thousand immigrants, who, though unable to read and write, seek among us only a home and opportunity to work, than to admit one of those unruly agitators and enemies of governmental control, who can not only read and write, but delights in arousing by inflammatory speeches, the illiterate and peacefully inclined to discontent and tumult. Violence and disorder do not originate with illiterate laborers." He denounces the Corliss amendment, which excludes Canadians from obtaining employment in the United States, as "liberal, narrow and un-American."

A COMMITTEE of the Manitoba legislature will look into the question of collecting taxes in rural municipalities. Investigation will be made under the following headings: (1) Allowing discounts and imposing penalties on payment of taxes respectively before and after certain dates in each year; (2) The collection of taxes without the appointment of collectors; (3) The effect upon the financial condition of municipalities, of allowing taxes on occupied lands to fall in arrears,