

### COMMERCIAL BRIBERY.

The British commercial public has wakened up to the fact that wholesale corruption pervades its business life. Tips, commissions, bonuses, concealed discounts are so nearly universal as to exceed belief. If politics in England are free from the hideous corruption which has made democracy a byword in France and the United States, the business world seems to be actuated by the same principle as the old-time highwayman or buccaneer. It is stated in reputable journals in Great Britain that the revelations of the ways of company promoters made at the Hooley trial are only an indication of what would be discovered if a similar investigation were made in other lines of business.

Persons who tender, or those who take any tip or other secret payment, will have to walk very warily in future if the bill proposed to be introduced by the Lord Chief Justice should become law. Its specified purpose is "To check corruption," and a Memorandum explaining its scope and provisions has already been issued. It creates five offences thus scheduled:—

- (I.) The making of a corrupt payment.
- (II.) The offering of it.
- (III.) The receipt of it.
- (IV.) The solicitation of it.
- (V.) The omission to state any discount, etc., on any account rendered to any agent.

All payments to servants or agents by persons having business relations with the master are pronounced corrupt, and payments made to third parties, or to relatives of any agent or servant, will be deemed corrupt also. Some wives of buyers or other trade intermediaries may have occasion to bewail a considerable shrinkage in the presents and substantial compliments which they now receive, if these provisions pass intact, and further application of the clauses of the bill bring in as corrupt any secret payment made in respect of advice given to, or influence exercised over a third person for the benefit of the donor. The only exception recognized in this proposed repression of these underhand transactions is that bona-fide "vales," or vails, strictly rendered, money given to servants by visitors, will not be considered as coming under the operation of the Act.

### ON THE BONUS HUNTER.

The Ontario Legislature just at the close of the last session put through a good deal of legislation which has been criticized adversely, but among the acts was one on which there can hardly be two opinions, i.e., the clause respecting the granting of bonuses by municipalities in amendment to the Municipal Act, which deprives municipal councils of the power to exempt manufactories from taxation. Hereafter such exemptions can only be obtained on a popular poll, at which not less than two-thirds of all the electors on the lists must cast their votes. The Act was a Government measure, designed, no doubt, to put a stop to competition between towns and villages for the location of manufacturing concerns. The granting a bonus is usually the result of two forces: first, the municipality

whose self-confidence or jealousy of successful rivals, heeds the belief that it is a suitable location for any industry, whether a rolling mill or a lace curtain factory; and second, the manufacturer whose business is handicapped either by old machinery or old debts. When these two meet a bonused industry results. The history of these is not pleasant reading. There are too many failures, though there are many successes. A bonus to an entirely new industry in a location having great advantages is sure to be followed by success, but such conditions usually produce success without any bonus. Too often bonus granting is a sort of legalized highway robbery by which a town deprives another of its means of existence. The day when every small town could hope to have a woolen mill and the cross-roads to support a custom carder are past. Great masses of capital applied to the cheapening of production have rendered the competition of the small mill hopeless except where special circumstances serve to maintain it.

The side of the question as far as Ontario is concerned which perhaps might have received more consideration at the hands of the legislators is, that if Ontario gives no bonuses and Quebec grants them, as she now does, and probably always will, the people of Ontario are placing themselves at an enormous disadvantage commercially, because Quebec has greater water powers for electrical development than has at least Southern Ontario, and has also a population which makes better operatives at a lower wage than Ontario and has also ocean freight rates.

### FLAX SPINNING.

A number of experiments were made some years ago in the Western States looking towards the manufacture of coarse toweling, etc., from native flax. Finally it was found that when run on wool cards a uniform sliver could be produced which was spun and woven to great advantage. It is expected that this process will be introduced into Canada at an early date.

The following account of a new departure in flax spinning appears in a contemporary: "In this invention flax and cotton are combined to form a yarn. This combining may be done in the spinning, and if so, the flax is spun wet and the cotton dry. The combination can also be made with a slightly twisted cotton yarn and an ordinary flax yarn; or, again, it may be made by running a flax sliver and cotton sliver through the roving frame."

### THE LONDON WOOL SALES

At the wool sales which closed March 23rd, to resume May 2nd, the buying has been of the very best kind, and the closing rates were very stiff. For the average strong combing 60s. quality, the German demand was extremely keen and sharp at the best prices of the series, though the Yorkshire buyers competed keenly. This persistence on the part of the German manufacturers and their anxiety to secure the largest share of the offerings of this particular class (though they also bought a big lot of the finer counts—64s. to 80s. and at the end for 40s. to 50s.) was a distinguishing feature of the series. Rarely has there been so continuously firm a market as that which prevailed for merinos and