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EDWD. TROUT, MANAGER.

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ADVANCE IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

Municipal management by Commissions and boards has been tried, and now where it is best known it is pronounced a failure. The city of Philadelphia has a bill before the State Legislature to get rid of the system and to substitute heads of departments nominated by the mayor with the advice and consent of the select committee. "Following the analogy of our political institutions," says the Philadelphia *Record*, "the bill makes the mayor the chief executive of the city government, as the governor in the State and the President in the Federal system." Some years ago, an attempt was made in Toronto to set up just such Commissions as are now being suppressed in Philadelphia; and it is possible the city lost nothing by the failure of the movement. The *Record*, speaking from experience, insists on "the vicious character of the system which puts the executive power of the city Government in the councils [they have two chambers in Philadelphia] and the courts. Experience has demonstrated that this executive, consisting of numerous boards and commissions, is alike feeble, untrustworthy, and irresponsible." The boards do not act in harmony with one another or in sympathy with the public. The object of the change is to get a responsible executive; and it is thought that the mayor and his nominees appointed on the advice of the select committee will give what is wanted. "Under the existing system of boards and commissions," the complaint is made, "it is impossible to fix responsibility or to introduce prompt remedies."

Should this bill pass it is believed that executive abuses in the corporation cannot long exist. "Should the mayor prove incapable of exercising the enlarged executive powers under this new Government," says the *Record*, "the people will soon have an opportunity of making the necessary change. But the present executive government of feeble and irresponsible Boards is almost beyond the reach of the people. By restoring to the people of Philadelphia their power of local self-government, this bill will make them responsible for the manner in which they manage their municipal affairs." Boards and commissions in the creation of which the rate-payers have no share, are likely to act as irresponsible bodies might be expected to act. This very independence is an element from which it was believed good might be expected, but experience has destroyed the illusion of the theory, and Philadelphia seeks another remedy, from which, in its turn, it is quite possible that too much is expected.

REPORTS ON MANUFACTURES.

The object of the Minister of Finance in securing a report on the condition of Canadian manufactures was to obtain sufficient data "for any legislation that may be required." Mr. Blakeby, who had previously visited the factories in Canada and Massachusetts, and the Hon. Edward Willis, of St. John, N. B., were appointed to make the enquiry, Being required to report by the 1st of Jan., they had not time to make a full investigation, and many towns having large industrial works were not visited at all. But quite enough was obtained to show the tendency of the industries under the stimuls of the tariff.

The reports on the state of Canadian manufactures—for there are two of them—undoubtedly show that, under the influence of the high tariff, a large amount of capital and labor has been diverted to the protected industries. Mr. A. H. Blakeby puts the increase in the number of hands employed in factories in Ontario and Quebec, since 1878, at about 100 per cent., and in wages at 106. The entire accuracy of the figures cannot be assumed; complete they do not profess to be, but they may be taken to be representative. Mr. Willis reports the capital expended in Londonderry iron works at £300,000 sterling; but he does not tell us how much of it is intact. The cotton factory at St. Stephen is described as "a notable example" of a new industry; but not a word is said about the financial crisis through which it has passed. There is one thing in Mr. Willis' report with which we cordially agree: "Canada requires excellence in the quality of its manufactures and moderation in cost;" but if we are to credit Mr. Blakeby this admonition is not needed, for he says: "The articles produced by the artisans of Canada in the various lines of manufacture are fully equal to the products of the industrial establishments in any part of the world." Some of them undoubtedly are of first quality, but it does no good to assure manufacturers as a body that there is no higher degree of excellence for them to seek to attain.

Mr. Blakeby sets out with the statement that, prior to 1879, the "Canadian market had been largely supplied from foreign sources," and soon after we are told that "saws of Canadian manufacture may now be seen in the woods of Michigan and Wisconsin, and when it is considered that but a few years ago a large portion of the saws used in our own forests were brought from the United States, it must be conidered that men having the skill, energy and enterprise which is displayed by Canadian manufacturers, in thus carrying the industrial war into the enemy's camp, are worthy of encouragement at the hands of the government." This means if it mean anything, that saw making owes its development to the National Policy, and that that policy has enabled Canada to increase her exportation of manufactured goods. But excellent saws were made in Canada, before the high duties which go by the name of National Policy, had been put on. The degree of perfection arrived at has been a slow development; and if the first Canadian saw had been made under the National Policy, the saws now exported would probably have been very different articles from what they are. The exports of Canadian manufactures instead of increasing have decreased under the National Policy. In 1878, they amounted, in value, to $4,127,000, and after five years' experience of the National Policy they had fallen to $3,500,000. Mr. Blakeby finds in the exportation of Canadian saws, proof that without the home trade being first obtained, it is impossible to do a business in exports." The high tariff was set up to give Canadian manufacturers the home trade; and the general result is that the exports are less than before. If he took facts from the foundation of his logic, Mr. Blakeby would have to say the attempt to monopolize the home trade had restricted the power of our manufacturers to compete in the open markets of the world, with the result that exports had diminished. The manufacture of organs, too, had received a good start before the National Policy was born, and if they are exported, the fact is due largely to the energy and skill of the makers having been exercised under conditions which enabled them to meet outside competition. If organ makers can successfully meet the competition of the world, in neutral markets, they can meet that competition at their own doors without artificial help in the form of a high tariff.

Mr. Blakeby has shown some ingenuity in adding to the number of new factories. Here is his confession: "Factories which were in existence prior to 1879, but which were closed down in 1878, are given as new industries." This makes it impossible to learn from Mr. Blakeby's statement what are and what are not new factories. But why did he deviate from the fact? Fiction is not an element likely to be appreciated in an industrial report. There may be more reason for not giving the factories which existed before 1879, but of which the records had been destroyed by fire. Still it may have been possible to give a general idea of the cremated establishments as they were when they were in a state of activity. Mr. Blakeby rejoices to think that the product of foreign foundries have been almost entirely shut out, there being now only "some little foreign competition." The duties collected on this remnant probably do not represent one tenth of what the consumers pay; the prices of the whole domestic products having been raised or their normal fall prevented, perhaps both. This may suit the manufacturers, but it is a serious injury to the whole body of consumers. A stove is as necessary as food, and any thing which abnormally increases its price is little short of a public calamity. In the furniture trade of Ontario and Quebec the number of hands has increased sixty-one per cent., and averages wages $21.09; but this has been done at the general expense of