

It is the custom with a great many merchants to use their show cases with blue paper, and the result invariably is that any silver plated-ware they may keep in them soon becomes badly discolored. The reason is that blue paper always contains more or less arsenic which chemical acts very quickly on any kind of silver goods. Blue paint is equally as bad as blue paper, and neither of them should ever be used in cases intended for shewing silverware.

Why can't the Allans establish a special express route to England? In New York an ordinary parcel averaging from 20 to 30 lbs. can be sent to England for about two dollars—from Toronto to Liverpool would cost four times that sum. If a cheap rate could be had through a great many goods that now come to Canada by way of New York would come through Montreal. It would be to the interest of both the Allans and the Express Co. to make such an arrangement.

A GREAT complaint is made by Toronto and other Western merchants about the delay in getting freight from Portland or Halifax. The Grand Trunk ought to establish a kind of "Merchants' Despatch" by which goods could be sent through in three or four days at the most. As it now is, they are often a couple of weeks on the way. If this were done, merchants would not object to an extra freight rate, as it would be more than counterbalanced by the saving in time.

THE Weights and Measures Department have given orders that any butcher who gives his order for a scale to replace those spring scales now condemned, and who obtains a certificate from a scale manufacturer that he has so ordered, will be given a reasonable time to get the new scales delivered to him. This is the result of a deputation of butchers visiting the Minister of the Department. The rules governing the scales would seem to be almost as elastic as the springs.

THE Post-office authorities in Toronto have raised the rent of the Boxes, and in future will charge \$4.00 instead of \$2.00 as heretofore. Merchants are grumbling about the price, but it doesn't seem to do any good, even the Board of Trade got a nubbing from the Postmaster General in answer to their appeal for a reduction of the price. The new arrangements for posting and sorting letters is a good one, and has long been wanted, and Postmaster Patteson deserves well of his fellow citizens for his efforts in improving the Post-office regulations generally.

A HARDWARE APPRAISER is badly wanted for the Port of Toronto—one that knows his business. The present incumbent of the office, is honest, but aged and incapable of doing all the work required at such a large Port of Entry as Toronto has grown to be. It was well enough to have a general appraiser for goods when Toronto was Little York, but at the present, with its growing hardware trade; the second largest port in the Dominion wants; and must shortly have, a competent man to appraise the hardware imports. If the Government are bound to appoint a party man, they should see that he is thoroughly posted in the hardware business as well as politics. The fault of our civil service now is, that there are too many politicians and too few practical men in it.

It is deserving of notice, in this era of "big things" and competitive enterprises, that the biggest thing of the kind known, one which made even Bostonians stare and underwriters hesitate, has just been accomplished by a Canadian firm. The

steamship *Hooper*, next to the *Great Eastern*, the largest freight ship in the world, capacity of 4,900 tons, has just been loaded at Boston, by Messrs. W. P. Howland & Co., of this city, with 150,000 bushels of grain, the largest single cargo ever shipped, we believe, by one firm. The insurance upon it reached \$220,000. The enormous capacity of this vessel may be gathered from the fact that besides this great quantity of grain, it was found possible to put on board of the *Hooper* 500 head of cattle, 800 sheep, 5,000 sacks of flour, and several hundred tons of other freight.

THE disadvantage at which the merchants of the west have been placed on account of the detention of the English mails at Montreal over Sundays is to be removed, a special train service having been established by which the mails will be brought on from Montreal to Toronto at once. The Postmaster-General was at first loth to assent to the wishes of the Toronto Board of Trade in this respect, but he seems to have reconsidered the matter, and so we are to have a special train. There was a special train in the old days, before the fall of the Macdonald Administration in 1873, but for some reason or other it was discontinued, and the merchants of the west have since been obliged to adopt Longfellow's advice by learning to labor and to wait—for their English letters; while the merchants in Montreal have had their letters brought on from Rimouski by special train.

THE first and final dividend sheet of James A. Montgomery, formerly Jeweler of Port Hope, but now an inmate of Kingston Penitentiary, has just been declared by J. B. Rousehead the Assignee. His estate realized from all sources the amount of \$4,610.31. The disbursements were as follows:

Expenses incurred in procuring arrest of Insolvent and getting goods back from St Louis, Mo	\$1008 46
Reward for arrest of Insolvent	400 00
Privileged Claims	293 33
Law Costs	133 73
Advertising	34 15
Auction Fees and Advertising Sale	101 00
Express Charges on Goods	28 80
Sundry Disbursements	80 80
Interim Assignees acct.	80 50
Inspectors Fees	200 00
Assignee's Fees	250 00
Discharge of Assignee	25 00
First and final dividend, 24c per \$ on \$602 47...	2064 54
	\$4610 31

From the above it will be seen that it cost \$1408.46 to arrest Montgomery and get the goods back to Canada again, which is quite opposed to his statement to the judge before being sentenced. Some of the charges appear exorbitant considering the amount of the estate. Thus the Inspector's fees amount to \$200.00 or \$100.00 each. Both of these gentlemen were creditors—one of them received \$122.30 as his share of the dividend—the other \$77.23 in all \$199.53, so that for the slight services they rendered the estate, these two creditors received as much as their share of the dividend and 47c over. In other words, while the rest of the creditors got 24 cents on the dollar of their claims, the Inspectors were able by help of their fees to make theirs pan out 48 cents. Surely it is a good thing for a firm interested to have one of its members appointed as an inspector, but it is hard on the rest of the creditors. In most estates the Inspector's duties are only nominal, involving neither loss of time or money, and their fees should be reduced down to the actual expenditure incurred by them. This would not only benefit the estate, but in many cases, bring out better men as Inspectors, men who cared more to see the estate honestly worked than to get a liberal remuneration for their services.

ROBERT CUTHBERT agent for Thos Russell & Sons, an English Jewelry firm doing business in Canada, was lately tried at the London Police Court for disposing by auction of a stock of watches and jewelry, such being contrary to the Transient Traders' Act. Mr. Cuthbert claimed that the goods were consigned to a local firm of auctioneers who sold them on commission. The Magistrate held that the law had been violated by Mr. Cuthbert and imposed a fine of \$50 and costs. The defendant gave notice that he would appeal from the decision. In reference to this case, whatever be the result of the appeal, it is evidently unfair to the local jewelers who pay taxes, that an English firm, said to be manufacturers, who do not contribute a cent to the revenue of the city, should be allowed to send a stock of goods to places like London or Toronto and dispose of them by auction. We think in such a case, no matter how they try to evade the law, the license inspector is perfectly justified in bringing them before the Magistrate and having them fined.

ARTIFICIAL DIAMONDS.—James MacLear, of Rollox Chemical Works, has informed the Philosophical Society that after experiments since 1868 he has succeeded in obtaining crystallized forms of carbons, which Professors Tyndall and Smith do not doubt are diamonds. Some of the artificial gems were submitted to Prof. Maskelyne, of the mineral department of the British Museum, who writes to the *Times* that after a thorough test of the so-called crystallized forms of carbon, obtained by James MacLear, of St. Rollox Chemical Works, who supposed he had discovered a process of making diamonds, he (Maskelyne) has no hesitation in declaring that they are not diamonds at all but consist of compound silica. Although diamonds are only crystallized carbon or charcoal, the crystallizing seems to be a hard thing to accomplish, and, like the search after the philosopher's stone, has generally ended in disappointment. In view of the obstacles to be overcome, we think our friends who have a stock of diamonds on hand, need not get uneasy about any great depreciation in their value for some time to come.

For nearly a quarter of a century the name of "John Horsman," hardware merchant, has been a household word to the people living in Guelph and the district it supplies, and probably no retail hardware merchant in Canada did a larger business. Commencing in 1857 with very small capital and plenty of energy and pluck, Mr. Horsman soon made a name and a business for himself and outstripped all his local competitors in the same line of business. For many years he was looked upon as one of the wealthiest and most prosperous merchants in Guelph, and his recent troubles have called forth a good deal of sympathy. In 1877 a fire in his premises occasioned a heavy loss, then, early last year he had to ask indulgence on account of a heavy lock-up in real estate, and loss by bad debts; although shewing a good surplus; now, again, he finds it needful to make some arrangement with his creditors. He owes, we understand, about \$50,000, of which nearly \$24,000 is direct, largely in Montreal and in Britain. It is to be wished that some means may be found of re-organizing so important a business upon a prompt basis.

THE Postmaster-General does not seem to be inclined to accede to the request of the Toronto Board of Trade—representing the commercial men of Toronto—either in the matter of the English mail service or the post-office boxes. The object-