

Husband's Liabilities.

To the Editor of the Commercial.

SIR,—I have had the pleasure of perusing your valuable journal of the 17th inst., and take the liberty of commenting on your article on "A Husband's Liability," as laid down by Judge Galt, and I should think not by a conscientious panel of jurymen, but entirely by his instruction and direction.

In the case of Philipson v. Hayter the judgment of Lord Chief Justice Bovil was lucid and satisfactory, and might be taken as a guide in similar cases. The learned judge held that there must be an express or implied authority. If a wife ordered articles for domestic use, or if she ordered articles for a trade carried on by her husband's consent, she would have the requisite authority to pledge her husband's credit. But where the articles are not for domestic use, nor for a trade carried on by the wife with the husband's sanction, then, unless there is an express authority, the wife cannot pledge the credit of her husband. In the case of Philipson v. Hayter the wife had bought a cigar case, a tobacco pouch, and a guitar without the express authority of her husband, and the Court ruled that for such articles there could not be an implied authority, unless the wife had been trading in such articles with the sanction of her husband. The rule thus laid down seems to me eminently fair. Tradesmen and judges will differ about what are and what are not legitimate articles for the wife to purchase in the name of the husband, but there are very many costly articles which are manifestly not included in the list of domestic requisites. Will the tradesman be more careful would it not be at least unpleasant for him to say, "We cannot book this or that without the express consent of your husband." Judge Galt's decision may have good effect in giving protection against a reckless and fraudulent pledging of a husband's credit, but I agree with you that it is a stigma on wives generally.

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

NEVILLE.

The Political Campaign.

On the evening of the 23rd the political campaign in Manitoba was opened with a stormy meeting in the Opera House, Emerson, at which the *causis belli* of the two great political parties were pretty clearly defined, while the champions of both sides were not a little indefinite about how far they were prepared to go in the policy they outlined. Disallowance of provincial charters is the bone of contention, and while Mr. Greenway, the would-be Premier, protests loudly against the policy of the present Dominion Government, he is careful not to advocate a policy of repudiation of the agreement with the C. P. R. Mr. Norquay, the present Premier, while endorsing in a general way the policy of Sir John Macdonald's government, intimated his determination to support the rights of Manitoba in the construction of the Emerson and North-western Railway. The honorable gentleman was very emphatic upon this point, and stated that should the present charter be disallowed, his government will call the legislature together and re-enact it, and will continue to do so

every time it was disallowed until the right to construct the railway be established.

It was evident from the addresses of speakers on both sides that both political parties were prepared to lay aside party ties when the interests of the Province were assailed. Considerable acrimonious talk was indulged in, and the inconsistency of the different leaders freely ventilated. This can be accepted as the effervescent portion of the meeting's proceedings, as people of a philosophical or even practical turn of mind do not look for a heavy stock of consistency in a politician, no matter what party he may represent. In the question of railway rights, which deeply interests the commercial and industrial circles of the Province, people who have the faculty of viewing matters from a purely business stand-point must feel satisfied in noticing that both political parties are prepared to defend these, while those who stand by the old commercial principle of "Honor all obligations, even if they be burdensome ones," will also be satisfied to note that the party in power cling tenaciously to that creed, and even those who are in the cold shade of opposition, and pressed by all the temptations which a party in opposition have to make, great promises do not avow a policy of repudiation. Through all the smoke of political agitation the philosopher can see that this question of provincial railway rights is falling into line as a question to be discussed upon purely business principles, and that none of our prominent political leaders are prepared to sacrifice the honor of the Dominion to secure a local advantage, no matter how desirable the same might be to many residents of the Prairie Province.

Lumber and Wheat Tariffs

The shrewdness and cunning of American manufacturers and dealers is being shown by the present agitation throughout the United States for a repeal of the duties on Canadian lumber and wheat. Singular to say, the class who now advocate such a course have, until lately, been advocates of a system of trade protection which amounted to practical prohibition in many classes of manufactured goods. Nor is there any reason to assume that these persons have been converted to free trade doctrines, but individual interest in the dominions of Uncle Sam, and indeed in every commercial country are very apt to supplant patriotism, especially when the latter is of a very questionable description.

In the question of tariff on Canadian wheat we find that during the past six months several millers' associations in the United States have passed resolutions in favor of its abolition, and more than one journal devoted to the milling interest has advocated such a policy. This is not on account of any reciprocal feeling, but milling centers now find that their power of production is far beyond what the supply of wheat from home sources will support; and it is being steadily realized that in the near future by far the greater share of fine milling wheat must be produced in the Canadian North-west, the area of country in which the same can be produced being practically limited in the United States.

In respect of lumber tariff the case is very

similar, and manufacturers of goods connected with that line in the States are sufficiently reciprocal to see that they must profit by the free importation of Canadian lumber, especially as the Dominion tariff laws makes provision for the removal of lumber duties as soon as the United States adopt a similar policy.

It is not our intention to advocate either a Free Trade or Protective policy at present; but if the manufacturers of a great commercial nation like the United States can change and twist their political leanings and so-called patriotism where their own interests are concerned, it is not at all wonderful that the people of a new and struggling country like the Canadian North-west should be inclined to profit by a similar course, and it seems that the tariff changes mentioned would be of great advantage to this country. The removal of the American wheat tariff would open up a new market for North-western grain which has hitherto been practically closed. A removal of the lumber duties would give building material cheap now while it is necessary for the building up of new towns and cities, and in time when the timber of the North-west is opened up by railway communication manufacturers here would have a wider field for their lumber.

The schemer's plans often benefit others besides himself, and this little bit of selfish demand on the part of American millers and lumber men of the States, if acceded to, would bring profit to the North-west in many respects.

The Influence of the Press on Markets.

The following letter, signed by twenty-two butter and cheese houses of Montreal appears in the Montreal *Gazette* of the 20th inst. :—

DEAR SIR.—The undersigned, comprising the principal houses in the butter and cheese trade of Montreal, desire to inform you of their feeling in regard to the *Gazette's* reports this season of our butter and cheese market, and beg leave to say that we consider that they are, and have been, erroneous and misleading, as they have constantly quoted higher values than current here, and are injurious alike to producers and dealers in delaying and preventing trade.

We respectfully ask you to publish this opinion in justice to ourselves.

It is not to be presumed that the Montreal *Gazette* has wilfully followed the course indicated in this letter, and indeed the manly and explicit way in which the journal meets the accusation, by showing that several firms of much greater prominence have refused to sign the document, and asserting its determination to represent the transactions of the trade without fear or favor, would call forth from any unbiased reader a verdict of not guilty.

This complaint of the Montreal butter and cheese dealers, however unfounded it may be, gives an index to the power that newspapers possess in influencing the markets of a city or country. There is no reason to believe that this power is very great in connection with the produce market of Montreal, as that market is one where actual transfers of goods are the invariable rule of its transactions, and purchasers and sellers are in almost every case regular dealers. It can scarcely be said, however, that the stock markets of the Dominion of Canada