

before us. But surely the case calls for an explanation. Why not publish the figures that would show what was done with the money to which the late engineer referred? Until this is done, if an unreasonable time do not elapse, the accuracy of the charges cannot fairly be assumed, though in the period of suspense, it cannot be said that they have been fully met or satisfactorily explained.

BET ROOT SUGAR IN CANADA.

For some months past, a gentleman by the name of Dr. Scheidtweiler, said to be from Germany and connected with a large beet root sugar manufactory there, has been residing in the northern part of the county of Waterloo, and has entered into certain arrangements professedly with a view to test whether sugar can be successfully made from Canadian grown beets. It is said that the gentleman believes that there is a wide field for that manufacture in Canada, that he proposes to erect a large refinery in Wellesley village (the local press speak of it as costing \$600,000 or \$700,000), and we know from private sources that a large number of farmers recently held a meeting with Dr. Scheidtweiler, and entered into formal agreements, to raise each a certain number of acres of beets for a given number of years. The refinery is to be sufficiently large to consume the produce of from 14,000 to 15,000 acres of beets annually, and altogether the proposals seem to mean business on a large scale. The scheme of Dr. Scheidtweiler, as we have seen it in print and as we have learned from direct information from persons in the locality, seems almost too good to be true; but if it really be his intention to commence the production of beet root sugar in this country, and if the necessary means are forthcoming to test the matter, we are acquainted with no enterprise deserving of more encouragement.

That beet root sugar can be profitably produced in Canada, if its manufacture is prosecuted on a sufficiently large scale and with the requisite skill, we have very little doubt. A calculation submitted to the readers of this journal just six years ago went far to prove the practicability of accomplishing this. That calculation set forth the estimated results of the manufacture of a thousand tons of sugar beets in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, as made by an American gentleman who had given long consideration to the subject. It was as follows:

EXPENSES.	
1,000 tons beets at \$4 per ton.....	\$4,000
Estimated cost of manufacturing at \$5 per ton	5,000
Total	\$9,000

RESULT.	
200 tons of pulp at \$2 per ton	\$ 400
30 tons of syrup at \$20 per ton	600
60 tons of sugar at \$250 per ton	15,000
Total results	16,000
From which deduct expenses	9,000

Leaves a profit of \$7,000

We fancy the sugar beet can be produced as cheaply and as successfully in Canada as in either of the States above mentioned, and if the above calculation be not far wide of the mark, it is quite evident that with sufficient capital, proper machinery and skill, there must be enough of margin to leave a reasonable profit. We should say the county of Waterloo was well adapted for root growing, and if Dr. Scheidtweiler's refinery goes ahead and becomes *un fait accompli*, we trust it may prove entirely successful. It is said that the doctor and his friends in Germany are largely engaged in beet sugar manufacture there, and have had long experience in the business. The reasons given for beginning business in Canada are, (1), that the soil in Germany has deteriorated for sugar beet culture, and (2), that the Dominion has now a very considerable market for sugar, to supply which native production would have the best opportunity.

We understand that those interested are desirous of knowing whether the Government would agree to exempt beet root sugar from excise duty for a period of ten or fifteen years. It is hard to say how our fiscal authorities would regard that proposition. The subject was discussed in Parliament in 1873, and if we remember rightly, a resolution was passed expressing the opinion of the House of Commons that no excise duty should be imposed on beet root sugar for a term of ten years. No action, however, was afterwards taken by Parliament to give effect to the resolution passed, and it is impossible to say how the Government might view the matter. One thing is certain, that it would greatly promote Canadian interests if we could supply ourselves with sugar made upon our own soil, and that the public would view with favor any reasonable encouragement to any *bona fide* enterprise undertaken to accomplish so desirable an end.

A GREAT COLLAPSE.

The collapse of a stock jobbing firm in Montreal, with liabilities of nearly three millions, is one of those rare events which may well make men pause and consider. Against these liabilities the assets are so considerable that a large dividend is certain to be recovered; unless, indeed, the affair is one of the kind that we sometimes

hear of, where the secured creditors swallow up everything and come off with only a nominal loss, while the unsecured receive absolutely nothing. This collapse, on some accounts, is not to be regretted. A check will undoubtedly be given to that disastrous habit of speculation which was threatening to eat away our old-fashioned habits of steady industry and ordinary trading. A vast amount of gambling will be stopped entirely, to the benefit of all concerned. And perhaps people will be less inclined to gamble again, now that the result has proved so unprofitable, and their golden dreams have been dissipated into thin air. A large amount of stock, too, will now go into the hands of *bona fide* investors, and values will settle down to a solid basis. All these are very desirable results.

CORRECTION.—In the paragraph printed last week about the cost, to retailers, of cotton bought by them in American cities, an error was made in the figures. Instead of cotton invoiced at ten cents (greenbacks) costing 10½ cents to lay down, an addition of the figures, as given in the calculation, will show the cost to be \$11.47, or almost eleven and a half cents, showing clearly that, with gold at its present premium, it is by no means possible to import Massachusetts goods, "gold for greenbacks."

—One of the most frightful disasters of the kind ever known was the burning, last week, of the Brooklyn theatre, during a performance which was witnessed by about one thousand people. A gas jet set fire to some of the hangings above the stage, and in an instant flames leaped along the inflammable surroundings, setting the ceiling in a blaze, and stifling the audience with smoke. A panic arose, the gallery poured its hundreds into the stairways, and these with the inadequate exits to which they led were jammed with a struggling, streaming crowd, of whom three hundred perished in the flames. The New York papers declare that the theatre was unsafely constructed, without proper means of egress, and the master machinist testifies that "if I had had a hose I could have put out the fire," but there was no hose, no water, no fire-appliances whatever. One journal makes the startling admission that there are but two, out the many theatres in New York and Brooklyn, in which another such catastrophe would not be possible any night. This implies not only the criminal neglect of his duty by the superintendent of buildings, but a state of apathy in regard to the safety of places of amusement among the pleasure seekers of that city which it needs some calamity like the present to dispel. We observe that steps have been taken, since the fire, to have the Montreal theatres inspected, and their means of exit made sufficient. Are there not other Canadian public halls, not to say theatres, where loss of life, in case of panic, is sure to be occasioned by faulty construction.