

THE first annual conference of the officers in Canada of the different divisions of The Legal and Commercial Exchange, the headquarters of which is in Toronto, was held in this city a few days ago. The object of the meeting was to compare notes and discuss matters affecting the workings of the Exchange, with a view to improving and enlarging its facilities for obtaining special information speedily and correctly regarding the financial standing of business men, firms and companies throughout Canada. It is necessary in these days of sudden changes not merely to do newspaper work in recording failures, but to be in a position to know beforehand of impending troubles. This is the most important province of a mercantile agency, and this is the work which this Exchange has done in the past and now sets itself to do even more efficiently in the future. The increase of the reporting staff in the cities and for the country, and for the appointment of special correspondents in the chief business centres, was resolved upon the better to carry out this object. The Reference Book will be materially improved and the daily notification sheet will be enlarged. Additional collectors will be appointed to look after city collections. Special arrangements have been made with the telegraph companies for the rapid transmission of information between the different offices regarding financial difficulties. Hitherto the Toronto office has controlled the whole Dominion, except the province of Quebec, but hereafter Toronto will control Ontario west from Kingston, including the Hamilton office and the proposed offices at Winnipeg and Vancouver. Montreal will control that portion of Ontario east of Kingston, also Quebec and the lower provinces, with an office at St. John, N.B., or Halifax, N.S. It affords us much

pleasure in stating that the Legal and Commercial Exchange is distinctly a Canadian institution, operated with Canadian capital, and managed by active and experienced Canadian business men. Without flourish of trumpets it came into existence only a year ago, but the system upon which it is operated, and the exact and painstaking character of the work done and services rendered has placed it most gratifyingly high in the estimation of the mercantile community.

Speaking of the industries at the Central Prison, Mr. Gibson cited, among others, that of woollen manufactures. He might have gone further in this line and been within the truth. For instance, he might have said that a prime reason why the proprietors of the burned woollen mill at Strathroy would not rebuild was because of Central Prison competition. Were it otherwise, the mill would now be in operation, and the exceptional legislation asked for on behalf of the town this session would never have been thought of.—The Empire.

The fact is there was no woollen mill at Strathroy to be burned, and therefore the fact that the Ontario Government were operating a woollen mill at Central Prison could not effect that town, nor has there been any effort to build a woollen mill there. A knitting mill in that place was destroyed by fire some months ago, but the owners of it have since then established another mill at St. Catherines. If the Government is manufacturing woollens at the Central Prison entirely for the use of prisoners it might be well thus to employ prison labor. But it is an unwise policy to manufacture binder twine or any other commodity by prison labor to be sold in the open market in competition with free labor.

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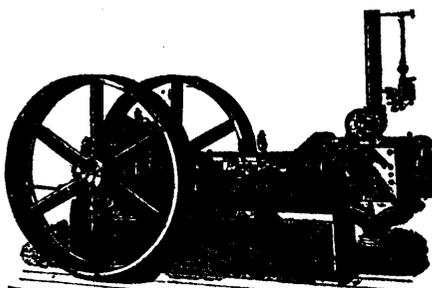
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