

merce was authorized at the special session in April last to consider this subject, but failed to do so. And the early date of the extra session of Congress has probably resulted in postponing any action of the committee for many days to come.

In the Senate the most active opponent of Canadian interests will probably be Senator Higgins, who comes from Delaware. This Senator is an ardent Republican and an enthusiastic protectionist. One of his ideas is to cut off the carriage of American goods through Canada to other points in the United States, and he bases his reasoning upon the fact that foreign bottoms are not allowed to engage in the domestic coasting trade. The suggestion that cutting off shipment by the Canadian roads would isolate New England, Senator Higgins would meet by authorizing American roads to make through rates to Boston as low as to New York, without regard to the restrictions of the long and short clause of the Inter-State Commerce Act. The traffic which goes from Manchester and Lowell to China and Japan, via the Canadian Pacific, the Senator would be disposed to interrupt. But this is an impossibility, for any law upon the matter would at once be evaded by shipping the goods to Canada, and then having them rebilled for their points of destination. Fortunately, however, the political friends of Senator Higgins are no longer in power, and no serious results are to be apprehended from his opposition to the interests of the Canadian roads.

The opposition in the Lower House may be more effective, because it will probably be less drastic. The representative from Illinois, Mr. Hitt, at the close of the last session introduced a bill to regulate this matter, and will, it is said, bring forward another during this present session. Mr. Hitt proposes that a license be granted Canadian railways to do business in the United States subject to revocation for violation of the terms of the license, and involving the condition that the officers of the foreign roads shall at all times appear before the Inter-State Commerce Commission with their books and papers, in obedience to the orders of the Commission. He also authorizes the President to suspend such portions of the Inter-State Commerce law as in his opinion hamper the American roads in their competition with foreign roads.

It is, of course, impossible to state accurately just what measures will be submitted to Congress, and still more difficult to tell what will pass that body. The aim of legislators, be they American or Canadian, should, however, no longer be to see which can build the highest wall between the two countries, but rather let their efforts be directed to a gradual pulling down of the walls which already exist.

#### THE MERCHANT AS COUNTRY POSTMASTER.

It would appear that United States Postmaster-General Bissel has in his appointments discriminated against country merchants. Why, we know not. But of this much we are assured, Mr. Bissel can have but little knowledge of rural life. For

in our own experience we have found the country store post-office to be a centre of social and business life, a club and board of trade alike. For, here, the latest scandal is discussed, births, marriages, and deaths—as common property, the whole circle of life is passed around; and at the same time scattered over the benches, stools, or packing cases, the members of the country board discuss of exchanges and of sales. While round about upon the walls are tacked or pinned notices, from the announcement of auction to a tempting invitation to the next church tea-meeting or social.

President alike of club and board, the postmaster sits; and who more capable than he? For is he not the moneyed man of his district, an authority upon trade, etiquette, and often times sport. Perhaps it is exactly on account of these varied accomplishments and duties that the country merchant has fallen into disfavor with the American post-office department. But experience would show this unfavorable impression to be ill-founded. At the hands of the Canadian country merchant the mail always receives first attention, and we venture to believe that the United States country mails are almost as well cared for. At least they must receive as close attention as is paid in some city offices, an instance of the almost criminal neglect of the latter having lately come under our notice. A reliable Toronto firm received, the other day, a letter dated December, 1891, enclosed in a yellow and ink-stained envelope with these words written on the back, "This letter was found behind a heater coil in the Chicago office, August 3, 1893." "The inference to be drawn from this," says our correspondent, "is that the post offices at Chicago are apparently not besieged by rats or other undesirable animals, and that they clean up once in every few years even in the U. S. Government offices. . . . Please do not mind the ink stains on the envelope; apparently it was near the typewriter's desk and she throws ink behind."

#### A LESSON IN TRADE.

We are far from favoring the system of retail trade as conducted in our cities by joint stock companies through large general stores. We must, however, acknowledge their success in attracting custom; and this will undoubtedly continue until the dry goods merchant, the grocer, and all tradesmen who deal in special lines, are willing to adopt some of the methods to which this prosperity is due.

There are, however, certain advantages possessed by the large store which cannot be shared by the smaller one. As, for instance, in the matter of advertising; the firm which carry on business in a dozen different lines, must of necessity bring the name of their house more often and more prominently before the public. One line will help to sell another. Thus a man who enters a store with the intention of buying only a pair of shoes, often comes away with a complete suit of clothing. Add to this the novelty of the big store, with its rows of clerks, throngs of people, its general and varied arrangement of goods, and we have enumerated the features which cannot be adopted by the ordinary tradesmen.

Nor do we think that the success of the large general store is, in the main, due to these advantages. We are inclined to ascribe it, among other things, to system in business. And why in this particular should the dealer in hardware, or in dry goods, be at a disadvantage? True, the system, here, cannot be conducted upon such an extensive scale, but it may be equally as thorough, and so just as effective. The large general stores, too, have invariably one price for their goods; this the public recognize and appreciate. Many city merchants have adopted this rule, but some progress has yet to be made before it can be described as a universal practice.

But the main factor in their success lies in the adoption of a cash system. THE MONETARY TIMES has always advocated the transaction of business upon a cash basis. And we believe the advantages of the system are gradually becoming apparent to consumers as well as to the merchants. The following taken from a British Columbia paper strengthens our opinion in this regard:—

"A movement is on foot among the labor organizations of Nanaimo to endeavor to bring the price of produce down. A committee will probably wait on the leading merchants of the city, and ask them to adopt the cash system. The board of trade will be asked to co-operate in this scheme."

It is folly to say that a change is impossible for a tradesman who has long been established in a credit business. Customers are, for the most part, men and women of intelligence, and when they see that by paying cash they can get their goods at lower prices, they will not only be reconciled to the change, but many will be attracted by it. There are some, of course, for whom it is impossible to pay cash for their goods, but it is very questionable whether this class of custom should be encouraged by the best tradesmen.

We have mentioned the peculiar advantages possessed by the city general merchant; we might, on the other hand, enumerate those of the dealer in special lines, but they are apparent to all. And, if in addition to them, the city tradesmen were to do business in a thoroughly systematic way, and upon a cash basis, we believe that they would have but little to fear from the competition of the general stores.

#### EXHIBITIONS FROM A MANUFACTURER'S VIEW.

We are reminded that the season for fall exhibitions is near at hand; may we venture a word of advice to directors. The success of a fair depends upon the number and quality of its exhibits. It may seem strange that it is deemed necessary to mention this fact; but the course of events during the last few years would warrant its repetition over and over again. Exhibiting is simply a matter of business. A manufacturer expends five hundred dollars upon a display, because in his opinion he can obtain from it more than an additional five hundred dollars in profits. If he did not think so, he would not take the trouble to exhibit; and, we believe, the time has now come when not a few manufacturers are considering whether or no an exhibit gives a return proportionate to the expenditure of time and money.

Many there are who will agree with us in saying that the manufacturer's building, the machinery hall and stock sheds do not draw the increasing crowds that they should, while year by year the grand stand is being enlarged to accommodate its frequenters. The feats of