

ing to the risks of handling, and to other well-known business principles. For instance, perishable goods cannot be profitably handled upon as narrow a margin as staple articles of commerce which are usually in good demand at all seasons. For the same reason goods liable to readily go out of fashion, or only in demand for a short time at stated seasons, must be considered as more or less risky, and a profit fixed accordingly. The wise merchant will take cognizance of all these circumstances, and arrange his prices accordingly, in so far as he is permitted to do so by the actions of his competitors. On staple goods, which are always in good demand, and which are not readily liable to deteriorate in value from remaining in stock, the merchant can readily afford to take a smaller advance upon cost for his profit, but on no class of goods can a dealer afford to go without a fair profit or to sell at a loss. In some instances it is often necessary to sell goods which have gone out of fashion, deteriorated in quality or which have otherwise become damaged, at an actual loss, but this is something which almost every merchant will have to make allowance for, and as previously stated, which must be taken into consideration when fixing the percentage of profit to be realized from such commodities. The fact that merchants in almost every line of trade are compelled at times to lose in this way, only proves more clearly the necessity of making a fair profit on all merchantable commodities. In spite of this, however, it has become the unbusiness-like custom in many places to sell certain staple lines of goods at about cost. Nothing can be brought forward in justification of such a course, and as a rule very little advantage can be gained from it. If one dealer reduces the price of a line of staple goods, others in the same business will soon find it out and follow suit, and the only result is to curtail the profits of every merchant doing business in the same branch. In case of damaged, unfashionable or shop-worn goods it is always advisable to sell such, even at a sacrifice, rather than allow a place of business to become shabby with unsaleable articles, and get the name of being out of style, slow-going and away behind the times; but this is quite a different thing from cutting prices on fresh, saleable staples. For instance, it is a very foolish and unbusiness-like custom which deprives the grocer of his profit upon sugar and flour, or the dry goods dealer of his profit on white and grey cottons.

This injurious custom of cutting under legitimate prices in order to gain some temporary advantage has not been confined to the retail trade alone. Wholesale dealers have also suffered from the same style of procedure, generally brought about by the action of some new house which is anxious to work up a connection, regardless of consequences. The Dominion Wholesale Grocers' Guild has lately come to an understanding by which it has been arranged to sell granulated sugar at a stated price. The wholesalers will be able to effectually carry out this understanding through an arrangement with the refiners, wherein the latter bind themselves not to sell to any wholesaler who has been found guilty of selling sugar at less than the prices fixed by the guild. The result of this understanding between the refiners and the wholesalers will be to completely choke any house breaking the agreement, or desiring to act independent of the guild. One or two houses held aloof from the arrangement at first, but they have since been compelled to submit. Profiting by the example of the wholesale grocers, the Toronto retail grocers have taken action in the same direction. At a largely attended meeting of the grocers held lately in that city, it was decided to fix uniform prices for sugar at a reasonable profit. By a large majority vote which was afterwards made unanimous, the price of granulated sugar was fixed at 8c. per pound, with thirteen pounds for one dollar, or 7½c. per pound in 100-pound lots. Wholesalers will be asked to co-operate with the Toronto retailers in assisting to carry out the arrangement thoroughly. The result will be to very materially add to the legitimate profits of the Toronto retail grocers. Grocers in other eastern cities are reported to be moving in the same direction.

There is an opportunity for the Winnipeg grocers to improve their prospects. There is no good reason why some such arrangement should not be arrived at, whereby the grocers would realize a fair profit upon sugar. Grocers, no more than any other class, should be expected to do business for glory alone, and the community would have no just reason to grumble should the grocers come to an understanding whereby they could realize a legitimate profit upon sugar. A grocers' association already exists in the city, and this organization should be able to bring the question to a successful issue in the interests of the retail grocers of Winnipeg.

## HOME INDUSTRIES.

It has been shown clearly in several instances that Winnipeg retail dealers are firm in their belief that a prophet should have no honor in his own country. It always has been the most difficult undertaking to induce retailers here to handle home manufactures. The city wholesale trade have as a general rule taken hold of home manufactures freely, and done everything in their power to encourage the location of industries in our midst, but when it has come to the retail trade, exactly the opposite course has been pursued. This is a most mistaken policy, and one which must work greatly to the disadvantage of the city, especially against the retail trade. One would think that retail dealers especially would be ready to encourage by every means in their power, such industries as have been established here, as such a course would be directly in their own interests. Every additional man employed in these industrial pursuits is worth several hundred dollars during the course of a year to the retail trade. The discouragement of local industries is a very poor way to build up a city and give it a prosperous trade. We have now located in this city several manufacturing establishments, which by no means receive that support which they are justly entitled to from the retail trade of the city. Some of these have been referred to in previous issues of THE COMMERCIAL, and it will be but necessary to mention one at the present time. Reference is made to the soap manufacturing company. The wholesale dealers have taken hold of the goods turned out by this company with excellent success so far as provincial dealers are concerned, and a good trade has been worked up in the country, but in the city many dealers have been very reluctant about showing the goods. It is not the fault of the quality of the article, for those who have used it are well satisfied, and declare the soaps to be equal to any other brands manufactured in the country. Several city laundries are using the goods entirely, and prefer them to other makes. The manufacturers are endeavoring to build up an industry which shall be a benefit to the city, and they have given their attention to turning out the very best qualities of goods. It seems strange that the city trade should be away behind the provincial trade in introducing the soaps. One would suppose that the city dealers would be the very first to do all in their power in support of the industry. There are other local industries which have not received more generous treatment, and if the same course is persisted in, there will be little encouragement to capitalists to embark in manufacturing industries here.