



THE CANADIAN GROCER
 & GENERAL STOREKEEPER

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SPECIAL TO OUR READERS.

As the design of THE CANADIAN GROCER is to benefit mutually all interested in the business, we would request all parties ordering goods or making purchases of any description from houses advertising with us to mention in their letter that such advertisement was noticed in THE CANADIAN GROCER.

UTILITY OF BUSINESS MENS' ASSOCIATIONS.

The St. Catharines Business Men's Association is moving to organize a fruit exchange, appoint inspectors and have branded all fruits shipped from the surrounding district to the world's markets, with a view of properly advertising the magnificent fruit belt of the Niagara district. This step affords an illustration of what eminent service such a trade organization can render to its section of the community. To deal with large questions, such as the expansion of an industry, there should be a local commercial parliament, at least in every town. The sphere within which it would legislate is too much neglected by political parliaments, and owing to the minutely detailed nature of the matter within that sphere, it must continue to be neglected by them. Every centre of business should therefore have its assembly of business men, whose meetings should deal with the broader features as well as the pettier minutiae of local trade. If the locality has advantages peculiarly favorable to a special industry, what body of men can better prepare a brief for the municipal or national encouragement of that industry than an association of the resident business men? If more of the economic administration of governments were based upon the initiative of purely business suffrage, there would be fewer mistakes in internal or outside trade

policy. There would be less misplaced assistance and there would be fewer neglected opportunities let slip.

The importance of the establishment of a fruit exchange for the St. Catharines district cannot well be overrated. The Niagara peninsula, of which St. Catharines is the outlet, is a great fruit producing region. It could raise more if it had a larger market. To get that it must obtain a reputation, and this it can best get by making each package of fruit tell the story of its origin. Let each package be branded, and let the exchange have the fruit inspected so that nobody's carelessness will be allowed to disgrace the brand, and soon Niagara grapes, Niagara peaches, Niagara pears, etc., will be known abroad as well as Valencia raisins, Florida oranges, and Smyrna figs are known here.

THE FISH TRADE.

In normal circumstances of weather, stock and supply of fresh meats, the fish trade generally becomes pretty active about the middle of January. Up to that time the bias of consumption runs towards poultry, which is commonly plentiful enough to keep prices easy. When poultry begins to stiffen in price, or to fall as a popular pabulum, the easiest transition, in price at all events, is to fish. This fact is illustrated in the present condition of the market. There is a good demand for fish, and it is expected to unfold into considerably larger proportions before the end of Lent. Lent begins early this year, on the 11th of February. The stimulus it gives to the fish trade is by most people over-estimated. In the time of year within which it can fall there would be an active demand for fish in any case, from both Protestants and Catholics. There do not average above two fast days every week

of the lenten season, and since there is one every secular week—namely, Friday—it will be seen that Lent does not add so very largely to the regular strength of the market.

The catch in most lines of fresh fish was but fair, and the stock of frozen is consequently not over large. Carloads are reaching this market every few days from Manitoba waters, and are going off quite freely, so that no over supply is imminent, unless, indeed the weather should fail. To handle frozen fish hard weather is necessary. The want of it last year made the fish trade dull.

Of dried fish Finnan haddie is the scarcest and firmest in price. Stormy weather along the eastern coast is the cause of this. There is generally a good steady demand here for Finnan haddie, two or three carloads being taken up every week from October till March.

What makes Finnan haddie and steak cod dearer than they otherwise would be, is the fact that much of both is brought here from Portland, Me., and Boston, Mass. Prices are thus the higher by the amount of the duty. We should get all this stock from our own Maritime Provinces, but distributors there do not consider the demand here sufficient to warrant them keeping a steady supply for our sorting up trade, and so dispose of their stock through export channels. We get about half our Finnan haddie from Portland and Boston. This possibly has some limiting effect upon the demand, to the extent that the duty increases prices. The local dried fish trade is improving as the prices of fresh fish grow firmer.

This market is prepared to do a good winter's trade in fish, as it has just received several car loads of stock from both the east and the west. The demand is expected to be much better, if the weather continues good, in about two weeks.