

PROGRESSIVE STOREKEEPING—Continued.

things about them. This is a practice which cannot be too greatly condemned, and one which the dry goods merchant should use every means in his power to utterly root out of his business. It is true that shoppers are very often unreasonable, and very often cause an unreasonable amount of trouble, but what are the clerks employed for if not to go to any trouble necessary to please the patrons of the store?

Another remark which a clerk has been heard to make when the customer, in leaving, stated that she would probably call again, was to this effect: "All right, I'll put it down on the slate." This is a very insulting remark, and is just the same as if a customer were told that she was lying when she said that she intended to come again. Any salesmen or saleswomen who wish to make anything out of themselves, or wish to be thought well of, either by their fellow clerks, their employers, or by people in general, will avoid all discourtesy of every kind, particularly casting such slurs as these upon persons whom they have failed to please. It ought to be rather a source of mortification and disappointment to a clerk that the customer should leave without purchasing, and a regret that they have not succeeded in pleasing, if there is to be any feeling at all in the matter.

The System of Special Rewards.

The system of giving cash rewards to clerks who sell certain lines of goods is one that is very generally practised in the dry goods stores of the United States. A certain line of goods which may not be selling just as rapidly as it ought is marked with a premium. That is, the clerk who makes a sale off of this piece of goods is allowed a cash prize of so much a yard, or so much a piece in making the sale. This is a spur to the clerk to extra endeavor to try to dispose of the goods.

There have been a great many criticisms of late years for and against such a system; some persons urging that it is the only way possible in which old or slow-selling goods could be worked off, while others urge that it is not an honest practice either to the salespeople or to the customers, in that it causes the salespeople to neglect other lines and devote themselves entirely to shoving these undesirable goods, and that it also frequently leads to selling the customers something which they do not want.

This system is possibly one of the best which has yet been devised to accomplish the end for which it is intended, but still it is not as equitable a one, either for the house, the salesman, or the customer, as the one which might be put in practice after the following plan:

There is a certain large department store which every Monday morning has the head of each stock go through the department and pick out all the goods which need pushing. These goods, or samples of them, are laid out on the counters and the manager or someone else in authority passes around and inspects the goods and allots to each salesperson a certain portion of these goods upon which they are to make special endeavors during the week to effect a sale. Each salesperson is then required to make a memorandum of just what goods have been allotted to them as specials.

During the week each sale that is made on these lines must have the sale ticket marked with the word "special," and at the end of the week each salesperson is required to furnish a summary of about how many specials of each class he has sold. The office keeps a record, in a book designed for the purpose, of all the specials which each salesperson has received instructions to sell and on which they have succeeded in effecting a sale. Upon this record, which very accurately shows what endeavors, or rather what successes the clerks have made in disposing of specials, the standing of the clerk in the store is determined. The clerk who desires

promotion or an increase of salary must show a good record selling specials.

This method not only spurs the clerk to sell the goods as rapidly as possible, but at the same time it does not put any unnecessary expense upon the firm and allows them to give the customers the benefit of any reduction which they may make, rather than allowing a premium to the salesperson, as is common in the P. M. system. I do not claim for this special system that it is perfect in every particular, or that in all cases it will take the place of P.M.'s, but in many instances it can be used to much greater advantage, and it certainly is free from all the disadvantages which are attached to the plan of making the clerks interested in a money way in the sales which they may make.

The greatest objection which I can see to the P.M. system is that it must be kept absolutely secret from the customer. No lady is apt to be very well pleased if she finds out at the time, or afterwards, that she had purchased goods, on which the store had offered a premium to the clerk for selling. She is liable to think that the firm are trying to sell her something which is not desirable.

Again, it very frequently happens in a house that refunds money or has a credit system that goods are sold and the P.M. is paid to the clerk, but the goods are afterwards returned to stock. This gives the clerk the benefit of the sale, without the firm deriving any advantage from it. In this special system it cuts no figure whether the goods are afterwards returned and credited or not, as all that is desired is to see that the salespeople have done their duty in selling the goods.

THE TRANSPORTATION QUESTION.

One of THE REVIEW's recent visitors was Mr. A. M. Payne, Canadian representative of Faudel, Phillips & Sons, London, Eng., who has traveled nearly all the way by water from the Old Country to Toronto. He was much impressed by the facilities for navigation afforded by the portions of our canal system which were seen by him for the first time. In the course of conversation, our visitor, who has made the transportation question a sort of hobby, propounded the rather bold idea that the time was ripe for a bounty on Canadian imports and exports between Canada and Europe when carried by exclusively Canadian routes. Most Canadians would regard a ten years' annual subsidy of \$750,000 for a fast Atlantic service as a sufficient step in this direction, but, in the event of further delay with this long talked-of project, such a proposition seems worthy of some consideration. There can be no question as to the humiliation to Canada's interests involved in the fact that, in spite of the vast sums lavished in canals and railways within the Dominion, such a preponderance of the carrying trade of the country should be so manipulated as to give the go-by to our national highways. Whether the pseudo dollar and cent view of this matter should outweigh the Canada first aspect of the case is possibly an open question. As each successive season rolls on it is becoming more evident that the shipping and mercantile interests in our Winter Atlantic ports are beginning to be much embittered at the turn affairs have taken in stifling their progress by diverting across the border the transportation business for which the Canadian taxpayer has bled so freely.

CUSTOMS DECISIONS.

The Board of Customs at Ottawa have given decisions as to rates of duty in the following cases: Cotton sail, duck, white, grey, when to be used for boats' and ships' sails, 22½ per cent.; fur tails (being fur twisted in imitation of natural fur tails), 15 per cent.; for skins, wholly or partially dressed, not provided for in the free list, and sewn only into plates, without being fashioned, lined, or otherwise advanced in manufacture, 15 per cent.