

DRY GOODS BENEFIT ASSOCIATIONS.



THE letter of "H. A. S.," in our last issue has caused a good deal of talk in the trade, and there is a general feeling that he has ably shewn the absolute necessity for the formation of Retail Dry Goods Associations. It has been suggested to us that "H. A. S." should set the ball rolling by calling a meeting of some of the leading retailers in Toronto with the view of thoroughly discussing the matter and giving the movement a start, which is all that is required to bring about this desirable result. Now that the summer is upon us, when there will be a large exodus to pleasure resorts, perhaps those busy retailers will have more time to consider this pressing question. A retailer in London writes us, cordially approving of the scheme. He says: "I read H. A. S.'s letter with a great deal of interest, and sincerely hope that it will not be allowed to sink into barren ground, but that it will bring forth good fruit in abundance. Here, in London, we are just as much in need of an association such as he suggests. We, dry goods men, are at the mercy of every dead-beat in the city, and we are so confoundedly jealous of each other that instead of rendering each other assistance to overcome this one great evil, we seem to take a sinister delight in feeling that we are not alone in suffering from these carrion. Our grocery friends have no such bug-bear to worry them day and night, which shows the benefits to be derived from organization. Another great evil to be overcome is the bankrupt stock dealers. They perambulate from one place to another; open out with a flourish of trumpets and delude the people into believing that they sell their goods for little or nothing. Legitimate traders have to bear the loss of the trade caused by these bankrupt stock dealers which is no small matter at the present time in view of the keen competition amongst retailers and the lack of money among customers. If an association in each city were formed with a central association for each Province in the leading city, composed of delegates from each branch association, we would soon be able by combined effort to get rid of the many abuses in the trade. The central association could meet say twice each year to consider questions of importance passed upon by the branch associations and adopt final action, which would be binding upon all the branches. This may be a crude idea, but it may set some others to thinking and lead to something definite being done. Before I close I would like to say that it is to me a matter of extreme regret that there should be such a strong feeling of jealousy among retailers. Some will scarcely recognize their neighbors and would not associate with them on any consideration. It is a great pity that this feeling should exist. I say it advisedly that there is no body of men having a greater degree of intelligence and good breeding than dry goods men, and I, for one, daily deplore the fact that there is such a lack of esprit de corps amongst them. Go on in the good work, Mr. Editor, and if through the aid of your valuable paper we are successful in forming these retail associations you will deserve the thanks of every retailer in the trade."

The columns of the REVIEW are always open for the discussion of this and other important questions, and we are always glad to have the views of retailers. We know that most of them have not much time at their disposal, but any spare moments could not be better utilized than by giving publicity to their views on questions of vital importance to the trade in which all their interests are centered.

It is a general complaint with many, that they cannot clothe their thoughts in language of sufficient clearness to appear well in print, but that is a mistake. If there should be any ambiguity, we will soon put it right.

Writing for the papers comes easy to most men after a little practice. Very often in discussing trade questions brevity is "the soul of wit," for it does not take many words to clinch an argument.

FALL DRESS GOODS.

We have received from M. Emile Lehmann, Paris, France, a large number of patterns of new woollen dress goods. They consist of checks, stripes, plaids and plains in all sorts of colors and combinations. Green, pale blue, and brown predominate in the checks, stripes and plaids. One striking feature is broad stripes of these colors which are almost invisible and which would give a very nice effect when draped. In Henriettas there are a variety of colors, charming light tints of fawns, browns, greys, and cardinals predominating. Cheviots are seen in the knickerbocker pattern with and without parallelogram figures, and in very bright navy blue and black diagonals of varying widths; while German brocades are in fawns and black with foliage and tracery designs. There does not however seem to be much difference in the patterns from what have been seen here during the past spring season.

In the Toronto wholesale houses there is to be seen a variety of stripes, plaids and plains. There is nothing definite enough to say that it will take precedence of the others. Buyers have had to do the best they could in the foreign markets as they could not say that one thing would be preferable to another, Dame Fashion being at present so capricious. Judging from the past spring season polka dots might be considered a prime favorite, although there was a greater demand for cashmeres owing to their cheapness. It is probable that polka dots will hold a prominent place for the fall trade. One of the leading favorites in the old country is the cote de cheval or Bedford cord, plain and figured. It is likely to become popular in this market. Among the new dress novelties seen for the fall trade are nappy effects, and camel's hair effects. Hand-wide nappy stripes alternate with equally wide stripes in contrasting colors, which are made fancy by smaller colored stripes. Colored nappy effects are seen on dark grounds, while the lighter stripes carry small nappy spots. The fact is they are in every conceivable shape and form.

In view of the wide divergence of opinion and the uncertainty as to what will be the popular demand for the fall trade some of our subscribers have suggested that we should obtain and publish in our next issue the views of retailers throughout the country. It will afford us much pleasure to do this and we have therefore to ask that our readers as early as possible send us a post card with an answer to the following questions:

What color do you think is to lead for fall Dress Goods?

Will plain or tweed effects be most largely in demand?

THE ALLISTON FIRE.

The thriving village of Alliston, Ont., containing about 1800 inhabitants, was wiped out of existence by the fire fiend on the morning of May 8th. The fire originated in the stables of the Queen's hotel and quickly spread in all directions. Among the sufferers were the dry goods houses of C. C. Lee & Co., loss \$10,000, insurance \$3,000; J. C. Hart, loss \$22,000, insurance \$9,000; Wm. Badger, loss \$15,000, insurance \$8,000; Mrs. Hurst, loss \$5,000, insurance \$3,000; W. Hutchinson & Co., loss \$18,000, insurance \$10,500. There were altogether 130 buildings destroyed entailing a loss of about half a million dollars with insurance of only \$125,000. The Mayor has petitioned the Dominion Government for a grant to relieve the suffering caused by the fire. The merchants with characteristic energy are already at work clearing away the ruins with the view of commencing building operations at once.

A moral can be drawn even from this disastrous fire. By the shortened terms of credit in the grocery trade the loss to wholesale dealers has been on an average from \$300 to \$500, whereas under the old terms of credit it would have averaged each from \$1,000 to \$1,200.

CORRESPONDENCE.

We solicit letters from our readers on business topics. A practical merchant's views are always of great value to others in the same business, and we should be pleased to have our paper made the medium of exchanging such opinions and experiences.