

COMPETING WITH DEPARTMENTAL STORES.

MR. ALEX. SWEET, senior member of the firm of Sweet & Co., general merchants, Winchester, Ont., was in Toronto last week. Mr. Sweet is a man with ideas, and time spent with him in conversation is not lost. He is also a man with a sense of humor, for after we had been conversing a few minutes I asked him how long he had been in business.

"Well, I'll tell you," he said, with a twinkle in his eye. "I yesterday sold a pair of gloves to a young lady whose grandmother bought her wedding gloves from me in the same store."

I looked at Mr. Sweet, perhaps somewhat incredulously, for he is far from being an old man.

"Well, let me explain," he said, "I was clerk in the store of which I am now proprietor when I sold the grandmother her wedding gloves, while the young lady who bought gloves from me yesterday is only six years of age."

His explanation being satisfactory, I began to question him regarding crops and trade conditions generally in his neighborhood.

"We have good crops," he declared, "and harvesting is now pretty well over. But our chief industry is dairying, which has grown a great deal of late years."

Then we fell to discussing departmental stores and methods of competing with them.

"To my mind," said Mr. Sweet, "the best way to compete with them is to fight them with their own thunder. That means you must be able to offer bargains to the people and to advertise. We did not at one time keep ladies' underwear and dress goods in stock. But we realized that those were

the articles for which a great many people chiefly went to the departmental stores in Toronto. And where they bought dress goods and underwear they usually went for other lines. We then decided to carry ladies' underwear and dress goods, and the results have been most gratifying. I do not believe there is now one order goes to the departmental stores in Toronto where there were formerly ten."

"Do you do a cash trade?"

"No, not exactly. Two-thirds of our trade is cash. At one time the proportion was the other way. A few years ago we undertook to do a strictly cash trade, but we found it would not work well. We were gradually losing good customers, and so decided to quietly and gradually go back to a system of cash and credit. On accounts over three months old we charge interest, and we seldom have trouble. Our customers have got to know our terms."

Sweet & Co. are liberal advertisers, varying the space they occupy in the local paper, but always having it of goodly proportions. "In advertising," said Mr. Sweet, "I believe in giving people some information about the goods we want to sell them, and the more interesting we can make the information the better. That is the principle the large departmental stores go upon."

A showcase that is attracting a good deal of attention among drygoodsmen and other merchants is the "Illuminated Silent Salesman," manufactured by John Phillips & Co., Limited, Detroit, Mich. The manufacturers are sending out a descriptive circular of this case which should be interesting to prospective buyers. A handsome colored photograph of the "Silent Salesman" is printed on the circular, with reading matter, describing its workmanship and advantages. The circular is sent to anyone who asks for it.

Repeats of Leading Lines have come forward and stock in all Departments is in A1 shape to meet sorting demands.

ASK TRAVELLERS TO SHOW YOU THE FOLLOWING POPULAR-PRICED SEASONABLE GOODS:

Fleece-lined and all-wool Shirts and Pants.

Our ranges to retail at 50c., 75c. and \$1.00 are unexcelled.

White Woollen Blankets,

"Victor" Brand, all weights. **Best value** in the market to-day.

Ladies' and Children's Underwear.

Nos. P205, P219, H208, H217, H218, H238, H239.

Men's Half-Hose, Nos. 325, 285, 320, 310, 312.

Ladies' Hose, Ranges 531, D92, D93, 201.

Make a note of above numbers for use when buying.

Dress Goods. Stock well assorted. Send for clippings of our Tweeds, Cheviots and Homespun.

New lot of Black Figured Dress Goods just received.

LETTER ORDERS RECEIVE PROMPT AND CAREFUL ATTENTION.

Knox, Morgan & Co.

Wholesale Dry Goods,

HAMILTON, ONT.