



Clothing and Woollen Trade.

TAILORS AND THE CASH SYSTEM.

MERCHANT TAILORS throughout the country are feeling in much better shape, owing to the excellent Spring trade which they had, and also to the good prospects for Fall, now opening up.

It has always been felt that there was room in the country both for the ready-to-wear clothing trade and the custom trade, and there was no reason why one should infringe to any great extent on the other. One difficulty which stood in the way of the merchant tailor doing as large a business as before was the prevalence of the credit system, which made returns slow and forced prices up. Many customers of moderate means were forced to take ready-made clothing when their preference was for a suit made to order, simply because they found the custom work too expensive.

There is no doubt these large apparent profits of the merchant tailor were due to the system of giving credit. Having to wait for his money, he naturally placed a good price on the clothes.

Tailors have often discussed ways and means of retaining their trade. One proposition which has been under consideration, was to have a buyer go to England for a number of tailors, who would pool the expenses of the trip. The objection to this is, that each merchant knows the peculiar taste of his own locality, and can do much better by selecting his own goods than by having even the most intelligent buyer select for him.

Probably the best remedy lies in adopting the cash system. We have heard of more than one tailor who has gone in for cash and was still able to retain his custom. It requires, doubtless, some tact and care to avoid offending good customers, but it can be done, say those who have tried it. In one case a tailor in rather a large town turned his old business into a cash system and did well. The best way to work it is for the tailors in one town to get together, drop trade jealousy and agree upon a cash system.

One city tailor informs THE DRY GOODS REVIEW that his customers know that cash means 30 days, and he quotes them a 30-day price, and, if they do not care to settle in 30 days, a certain sum is added to the original price. He often says in an off-hand manner: "You will be paying this within the month, so I will just quote you the cash price; of course, the ordinary price would be so and so." By putting the cash and credit terms on his billheads he finds that he loses no customers. This is, of course, not the cash system, but, where

it seems impossible to get customers to pay cash promptly, it is a good half-way house on the way towards strict cash and one price.

THE QUALITY OF DOMESTIC WOOLLENS.

There is usually a prejudice against Canadian woollen fabrics by city tailors. The majority love to order from London, but it is certain that few can distinguish native goods from imported. The late mayor of New York, Mr. Strong, once took to his tailor a nice checked lining, which he had had presented to him by one of the mills which he represented. The tailor told Mr. Strong that the goods were imported, as he had bought the identical goods himself from an importer, and showed him the goods on the shelf. It turned out that the parcel of tweeds and linings which the merchant tailor had bought as imported goods were all made at mills within 100 miles of New York.

It seems strange that woollen wholesale houses in Canada still adhere to the old-fashioned notion of keeping separate the imported and Canadian woollen departments. Such a thing as a divided woollen department is not known in England, France, or Germany. There, a customer goes in and selects goods that suit him without knowing where they were made. It would be a great help to Canadian mills if there were no distinction made between imported and domestic goods in Canadian stores, and the profits on domestic goods would certainly be larger than they are at present.

FEATURES OF ENGLISH TAILORING TRADE.

The use of flannel for Summer suits will last at least another season. One feature of present trade is mentioned by Minister's Gazette of Fashion: "Grey flannels, plain or with fine white silk stripes, have been greatly in demand for the latter purpose, so much so that the woollen merchants' stock has practically run out. One of the effects of the rise in woollens shows clearly in these flannels; the trade being loth to pay more than the accustomed 2s. 9d., or 3s. at the utmost. A distinct lowering of quality had to be resorted to in order to enable merchants to maintain it, with the result that most of the flannel suits one sees about now show a very limp appearance—have, in fact, lost that 'hang' which is the criterion of quality.

"The loose weaving which results from a diminished quantity of yarn put into most makes of goods at present, so as to maintain previous prices, causes such goods to be liable to go on shrinking to an extent which is already eliciting a good many complaints, both from tailors and the public. The