

How to Arrange Hardware Stocks.

In our issue of February 14 we illustrated two tiers of shelving, as shown in Fig 1. Accompanying this was an inquiry from a correspondent whether after the first tier of shelving is filled the remaining sizes of the same class of goods should be from the top of the next tier down or from the bottom of the next tier up. The question was submitted to our readers, from a number of whom we have received replies. We take pleasure in giving these in part, as they suggest the different ideas of arrangement which are followed in different localities. A prominent retail firm from Boston refers to the matter in the following terms:

In regard to the disputed point, we should say that the rule should be to begin at the top with the lighter sizes and work down, continuing through each section in exactly this order. We should not call it a good system any other way. It should be the rule to keep the heavier and larger goods at the bottom.

They refer to the favorable impression that this arrangement of their shelving produces upon travelling salesmen, also the ease, safety and economy with which it enables them to carry on their business.

A firm in Cincinnati who do a large business in shelf and heavy hardware think that the proper way of arranging goods on shelving would be that after the first tier is filled from top down to begin on the top of the next to the left and work down, the same plan being followed as in reading a book or paper.

A well known Missouri hardware house state the case in this way:

The inquiry is perhaps a hard one to answer until a person has tried both ways. I find that from the next tier down is more convenient for the following reasons: In looking at a tier of shelving you know instantly which way to look for what is wanted, as every tier is from top to bottom, while in the other arrangement you must first study which way the tier runs and then follow it. The pages of a book all read from top to bottom, and I think it is more convenient than to have every other tier read up.

A merchant in Wisconsin, who carries an extensive stock, gives his experience in arrangement of shelving as follows:

I think in case of wrought butts, or any other shelf goods, the remaining sizes should be placed from the bottom of the next tier up, as I have them in my store. I find it more convenient to place them that way, as it is easier to handle the large sizes on the bottom shelves than it would be on the upper ones.

From Minnesota a leading and long established hardwareman writes:

While the following does not directly decide the point at issue, it may be of assistance in its determination. Should not the governing consideration be vitality, and the arrangement be made with a view to have the number or sizes most frequently in demand on the most readily accessible shelves? Although uniformity in such matters is exceedingly desirable, I doubt if any cast iron rule can be adopted in the arrangement of stock of so diversified a character and size as is found in the ordinary hardware store without too great a sacrifice of space, economy and convenience to method.

A gentleman from Indiana, who has given the arrangement of hardware stocks a great deal of attention for a number of years, does not see any other way than to begin at the top of the second tier and work down:

If the other arrangements were followed that is, from the bottom of the second tier up, and there were more sizes than could be accommodated in the second tier, how would the remaining stock be placed in the following tier? Or

if, as shown in the cut in your issue of February 14, the wrought butts should only require a part of the second tier at the bottom for their accommodation, should the remaining space in this tier, being given to casters, be arranged in the same order as the lower part or should it conform to the first tier in arrangement? The arrangement from bottom up in the second tier would result in a confused stock and destroy all uniformity of arrangement throughout the entire store. A hardware man should be able to put his hand on anything he wants from stock in the dark, which cannot well be done with mixed arranged shelving.

A member of a large Baltimore firm favors us with a plan of arrangement, as indicated in the accompanying illustration, which we give for a clear understanding of his method. After referring to the question under discussion, he says:—

On this point I would simply say, if compelled to follow one of the two courses laid down in your paper I should trim my shelves from the bottom up, and give as my sole reason that if you seek uniformity you are compelled to take this course, as it is the only one which will be uniform, as the two tiers will then be filled uniformly from top to bottom. I don't rec. however, if I venture the assertion that the whole plan, as shown in your cut of February 14, is wrong. Not to leave my assertion unbacked by facts I will, if you afford me space, give the reasons for my position. In the outset let me say that we will talk of stores fitted out with wooden boxes, of various sizes (in the retail department,) in all of our following arguments. In the case given in yours of February 14, butts are taken as an example, therefore I will also speak of butts, though the same rule applies to any line of goods where there are a great many sizes and styles, such as bolts, bright wire goods, casters, screws, etc.

To trim the shelves, as given in fig. 2, the sizes should have commenced at the bottom at left-hand corner and run across the tiers, then back to the left-hand corner of next higher shelf, and thus on all the way up. We thus keep the most saleable goods as low down as possible on the shelves, thus obviating many trips up the store ladder. Our reason for running our goods from left to right then is that the hand as well as the eye works better from left to right than vice versa. When we arrange a line of goods that are not so continually called for we run straight up a single tier of shelving, smallest articles on bottom row of shelving, largest on top. Now, such a line with us is casters. We carry 87 styles and sizes. This means 87 boxes, some small. We commence at the bottom shelf with plate casters at left-hand corner, work to right-hand corner then back to left-hand corner of next upper shelf, and follow same course as on lower shelf. Plate casters are followed by Philadelphia casters, these by anti-friction, and last comes largest of all, bed casters, thus giving smallest boxes and smallest articles on bottom rows, and largest articles and boxes on top rows of shelving.

The question arises, Why put smallest articles and boxes on bottom rows, and vice versa? My answer is given with two good reasons: 1. As the goods are sampled on boxes to facilitate sales and help customers in finding what they are in search of, the small articles, being on bottom rows, are nearer the eyes and consequently more easily discerned, and it follows naturally, that sales are increased and facilitated. 2. In shelving made 12 inches high and 26 inches wide you can accommodate 48 boxes 3x3 (our small size); same shelf accommodates 12 boxes 6x6 (next to largest size) which means if small boxes are on top rows just 48 trips up the ladder for one purchase from each box, while if large boxes are on top means only 12 trips up the ladder for one purchase from each box, thus saving three fourths the labor by putting these small boxes at bottom. I think, then, my position is well sustained in trimming shelves from left to right, with small sizes at

bottom and large at top. Aside from these theoretical reasons, I have another and more potent one; it is the general effect produced by the above style of working. We follow it in our store, and every one, salesmen from other cities, customers and friends, are always complimenting us on the beauty, regularity and generally fine appearance of our store.—The Metal Worker.

Montreal Hardware Market.

There has been no particular change in pig iron since our last report, and what business there has been is limited to a few small lots of Summerlee ex store on the basis of \$22 for immediate requirements. Values are about the same and not likely to fluctuate any between now and next spring, but the inside price from now forward on Summerlee and equal brands can be quoted at \$22.00, as it certainly means that to move it from store. Eglington and Cranbrook rule steady, with no business to report at \$20 to \$22.50. Advices from primary markets do not indicate any improvement, cables reporting matters as dull as ever, with the trend of prices in buyers' favor. The most recent quotations were:—Coltness, 56s 9d; Langloan, 55s 3d; Summerlee, 55s, and Gartsherrie, 55s f.o. b. Glasgow; Eglington, 50s; Cranbrook, 49s 6d, at Ardrossan.

Bar iron—Manufactured iron is very quiet and there is no movement to note except in a small jobbing way. Domestic bar rules nominally at \$2 to \$2.25, according to grade, and we have no transactions of importance to note. There is nothing at all doing in English bar. Advices from Great Britain quote the demand generally slow and prices steady.

Tin plate—The local movement in this line during the week has been practically nil, and with nothing doing there is no change of any importance to report. We quote cokes at \$3.60 to \$3.75, and charcoal \$1.25 to \$1.50. Cable advices state that demand on primary markets is uneven and prices irregular. As Hardware anticipated last week the proposition to shut down the works in Wales for a month has been vetoed, but some of the makers have suspended operations for want of orders.

Terne Plates—The heavy stocks are weakening holders and there is no doubt that they would submit, as we intimated in last week's issue, to considerable concession to induce business. In fact we quote Orion Crown lower at \$8, and it is questionable whether \$7.50 would be refused for ordinary grade for a good round order.

Canada plates. A small jobbing business is doing in Canada plates at former prices. The prevailing basis is \$2.65 to \$2.75, but if a round lot were in question it is likely these figures would be cut.

Copper, etc.—Lead is featureless and the same easy feeling is to note in copper. Other lines are without change.

Shelf hardware.—Stock taking is the chief occupation with the general hardware houses, and all the travellers are in of the road for the holidays, so that there is little or no business to report. Indications, however, seem to point to a favorable movement shortly, as stocks of most kinds are not large, and dealers confidently predict a movement of an average volume in the immediate future.