

THE CUTTING OF PRICES.



OUR article last month on "Cutting of Prices in Canadian Staples" seems to have struck home. The correspondence to be found elsewhere in this issue is of a most superior quality and written by men who are thoroughly competent and capable of making the criticisms which they have made this month.

Mr. Scott points out that the old system of long credits and supply accounts is doomed. We are not so sanguine as to its speedy extinction, but we would agree with him that in Ontario at least it is out of place, however it may be in Quebec and the other provinces. The Quebec merchants have not as yet declared publicly that they desire the retention of the old system.

Mr. James points out that the present system has many advantages for both wholesaler and retailer, but that it has been abused. He declares himself in favor of a shortening of credits. Like the former writer he appreciates progress, a thing which few men can do.

Retail's letter is an excellent one. He is an old and experienced dry goods man, and his grasp of the situation is manifest. His cogent criticism of the dry goods trade in Canada has never been surpassed. The calm deliberate, even generous, manner in which he conducts his argument, adds force to the arguments themselves. We commend this letter to every reader, and a careful study of it will be found profitable to both wholesaler and retailer.

Such a calm dispassionate discussion of the cutting of prices must lead to much good. The trouble is not past yet and there is time for a general exchange of ideas on this subject. Let us hear from the merchants 'down by the sea' and those 'up in the new lands.' A discussion will be profitable, and we hope that the good beginning made this month will be extended. Let the letters be brief and to the point. As you like to read what other men have to say, so others are anxious to read what you have to say.

Some Montreal wholesaler has, according to a Montreal daily, been congratulating himself that the selling of goods at small advances in large quantities and on short terms is over. He states that the reason is that one house in Toronto has been selling at cost and thus caused those who have adopted the new method to drop it. One wholesaler announces in this issue that he will sell at close prices, and that this is due to some unbusiness-like methods which are being adopted. Putting these two things together there may be a little truth in what the Montreal merchant said. But we repeat what we said last month that the firm who sells at cost in order to stop the cutting will have undertaken a heavy task. We cannot say that some such plan might not be ultimately successful, but it is a costly one—but not too costly if the game is worth the powder. The views of this journal have not changed since our article of last month.

THAT CUSTOMS GRIEVANCE.

AN article under the heading of "A Grievance Among Importers" appeared in the July issue of this journal.

A further inquiry into the matter shows that the order for the enforcement of Clause 10 of the Customs Act requiring all invoices to be made out in the currency of the country whence the goods are imported was made in plenty of time as far as the Customs Department was concerned. The reason

that Toronto importers did not know of it in sufficient time was due to some person in the Collector's office here failing to give sufficient notification. Toronto is the only port where this has not been enforced, and this was the only port where a change was needed.

At the conference between N. Clarke Wallace, Comptroller, and the Toronto importers, Mr. Wallace pointed out the fact that Toronto was the only port where Clause 10 was not enforced, and showed Toronto importers the advantages that an enforcement of it would bring them. The time was extended only on account of the insufficient notice, and the clause will soon come into force and remain in force.

The attention of the Customs Department has been called to the practice which obtains at some ports in the case of goods of small value imported by express, of ignoring for the purposes of duty any parcel of a less value than fifty cents, and of charging duty on a value of one dollar upon all parcels of a value of fifty cents or over. This practice not being sanctioned by law, collectors have been instructed that for the future all parcels coming by mail or express must be entered at the exact cost to the importers for the same, and duty must be collected on such fractional parts of a dollar in each case.

THE NEED OF MODERATION.

AN English journal, the Draper's Record, speaking of trade for the first half of the current year, says, editorially, "Canadian business has been thoroughly satisfactory." British merchants have had a pleasant experience in selling to Canada, and the number of Canadian buyers who visit Great Britain are steadily increased. As pointed out last month, Canada was never in a better position financially and commercially. The exports for the past fiscal year have increased in value nearly six millions of dollars in spite of falling prices for wheat and Britain's unkind treatment of Canadian cattle. The imports have also increased correspondingly. A stronger patriotic feeling has been engendered, and Canada is nearer being a nation to-day than she ever was. Amid the financial thunderstorm in Australia and in the much lauded republic which forms the southern boundary, Canada stands on the rock of national prosperity shielded from all harm by a most thorough and efficient banking system. Nevertheless the watchword of her merchants to-day should be "moderation." Moderate buying, moderate speculation and moderate risks are all they should attempt. There is always need of care. If the depression in the United States continues Canada must feel the result in some way. Many Canadian wholesale houses are doing some slight retrenching, so that they will be in the best of condition for any trouble. They are not fearful, only watchful, the retailers should be the same. It is not a time to spread all possible sail, but rather a time to furl in that which is unnecessary. Only by this constant watchfulness can Canada's great prosperity be maintained.

There is a steady exodus of the laboring class from all points of Australia.

An effort is being made in Oldham, Eng., to start a concern for spinning Egyptian yarns.

Curtains in which India rubber is to be the chief ingredients are being made in Germany.

The Hungarian Secretary of Commerce intends for the promotion of the wool trade of Hungary, to establish wool auction sales at Buda Pesth, to be held twice a year.