

The Commercial

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HOW TO KEEP BACK THE COUNTRY.

It is a common practice with many people in Manitoba to send East for goods. This is done to a great extent not only in the smaller country towns, but also in Winnipeg, even to a far greater extent than would seem to be warranted by the difference in prices. Competition in ordinary store business in Manitoba is as keen as in any part of Canada, and the margin of profit to dealers as a rule is not excessive. In most lines of goods the difference between Manitoba and Eastern prices is not as great as people seem to imagine. A few years ago the margin of profit allowed by merchants here was much greater than it is now. Business was done very largely on a credit basis in the country towns, and competition was not as keen as it now is. Conditions have changed very much during recent years, however. There has been keen competition and prices have been steadily reduced until now the margin of profit is small as a rule. The effort to reduce business more to a cash basis, during the last two or three years, has materially assisted in the tendency to reduce the margin of profit, and as matters stand now there is very little reason for sending East for goods. Those who have cash to pay for their purchases, as a rule can probably spend their money to just as good advantage at home as by sending it East.

At any rate, the custom of sending away for goods is not the way to build up the country, and even where a trifling gain can be made by sending away for goods, the advantage gained may not be permanent. We have to rely very much one upon another, and where the business of a town is injured by sending away for goods, the entire community must suffer. Thus the bad effect of the custom comes back upon those who encourage and follow it. The country storekeeper is a necessity to the community. It is an accommodation to the public to be able to procure their requirements from stores close at hand. The storekeeper handles the products of the farmers, and is also a consumer of these products. The towns and villages all over the country form important consuming markets for the farmers. The building up of the towns will increase the local demand for products of the farm. The farmers are therefore interested in the prosperity of the towns and villages.

The encouragement of local interests in every way possible is a good way to build up a community. The great advancement made by Japan during recent years has been one of the wonders of the age. The country has made wonderful strides, particularly in industrial development. How has this been accomplished? Mainly by the patriotic course followed by the Japanese in giving the preference for home goods. This people, from

patriotic motives, and with a view to encouraging home manufactures and advancing their country, have steadily and systematically followed the policy of purchasing home goods whenever possible. The result is that the country has made such wonderful advancement as to surprise the civilized world. This policy of her people has enabled Japan to easily gain the victory over her neighbor—China. China is without railways, and with all her vast population, greatly exceeding that of her enemy, she is unable to transport her troops to desired points. Japan has a railway and transportation system which has enabled her to quickly mobilize and concentrate her troops. China has made no industrial progress, and with her population numbering hundreds of millions, she is helpless to resist the invasion of a small Japanese army, because she has no means of equipping her men. A little of the Japanese patriotism exerted in the direction of encouraging home industrial development, would have kept that country from occupying the humiliating position she is found in to-day and which is mainly attributable to the backward state of the country, commercially and industrially.

Canada also requires something of this disposition among her people. Instead of favoring home goods, there is quite a large section of the people who take directly the opposite course. They buy things because they are foreign made, or alleged to be of foreign make. This unpatriotic custom is followed to such an extent that the progress of the country is greatly retarded. In some classes of goods, in which the home makes are quite as good and generally cheaper in price than the imported, there is still a large sale of foreign made articles. If our people had a little of the Japanese spirit in the matter in giving preference to home goods, it would do a great deal more for the country than any national policy or other legislation to encourage home industries. And in so doing the people would be adding to their own prosperity.

Whether in a national or a local sense, we can help ourselves by giving a reasonable preference to home goods. As the false fashion for foreign goods injures the industrial development of the country at large, so also the custom which prevails in Manitoba of sending east for goods retards our progress locally. The Glenboro Gazette, in an article published elsewhere in The Commercial, says that from the little village of Holland, in this province, from two to three thousand dollars have been sent to a Toronto dry goods house alone for goods. Supposing that this is going on all over the country, it would take a large sum in the aggregate out of the province every year. This amount of money spent at home would go a great way toward making the country prosperous, in which prosperity the very persons who send away their cash would share. It may also be presumed that some of those who send away cash for goods, are not always punctual in paying their debts at home. It has often been found that those who have cash to send away, want long terms of credit for what they buy from their local

dealers. And then they will compare the cash price of what they have purchased away with a six to twelve months' credit price of an article bought at home. If these people would spend their cash with their local dealers, they would encourage cash business on smaller margins of profit, and besides would assist in the prosperity of the community, which means their own prosperity.

MARKETING STALE BUTTER.

Last week The Commercial devoted some space to the dairy interest, in which the advisability of marketing butter early, while it is fresh, was particularly urged. Since then we have noticed an article in the Montreal Trade Bulletin, which takes very strong ground against the practice of holding butter until it has lost its fine flavor. It appears that the custom of holding butter too long is very prevalent in the east as well as in the west. It is stated that the Canadian butter trade with British markets has been ruined by this custom of holding butter, and until a different system is adopted, it will be useless to attempt to build up an export butter trade with the United Kingdom. British markets are supplied with prime fresh butter from Denmark and other countries, and the people over there are not obliged to eat stale Canadian butter. With a good supply of fresh butter in the market, they will buy held Canadian goods only at a discount as second quality stuff. Canadian creamery it is claimed is quite as fine as the famous Danish and Irish goods, while it is fresh, but Canadian factories have got into the habit of holding until the fine flavor of the butter is lost, while the foreign makers have learnt that it is more satisfactory in the end to market the butter while it retains that fine, delicate flavor which is only possessed by fresh goods. Instead of a growing export trade in butter, as should be the case, our trade has dwindled away to about one-third of what it formerly was. This unsatisfactory showing is declared to be largely due to the system of holding until the goods are stale. This custom of holding is followed with creamery as well as dairy goods. The loss of trade is beginning to open the eyes of the eastern creamery men, however, and at a recent meeting of dairymen at Brockville, the matter was discussed, and an effort will be made to adopt a system of marketing early while the goods are fresh. The Dominion dairy commissioner has been interested in the movement, and the co-operation of the government will be sought, with the object of assisting in providing better railway and steamship facilities for the export of butter during warm weather.

What is urged in regard to the early marketing of butter in the East, is just as applicable to the West. We do not look at present for a market in Great Britain for our surplus butter. British Columbia is the principal market for Manitoba butter, and in that market there is competition with butter from the states to the south, as well as from Australia. The people at the coast are not