



REAL OR FICTITIOUS.

Editor CANADIAN GROCER :

Sir,—Would you kindly let me know through THE GROCER if there is a company doing business in Toronto by the name of the United States Club Company. There is an agent around here selling tickets and getting all the farmers to join. He says that the company is going to start a store in the "Soo," and he is offering every thing at less than cost. A reply will oblige. P. M.

[There is no such name to be found in the city directory. We should judge from the style quoted that it is a limited company if it exists. If it is, we have seen no notice in either the Canada or the Ontario Gazette of its having applied for or having obtained incorporation. Nor have we heard of any advertisement of such a concern. It is, therefore, the safe course to assume that there is no such company. If there is, it should be able to show credentials of some description. Farmers ought to be warned by stationary traders that a good deal of swindling has been done under pretensions similar to the representations of this agent.—EDITOR.]

THE NEED FOR WIDER UNION.

WIARTON, ONT., SEPT. 26TH 1891.

To the Editor of THE CANADIAN GROCER.

SIR,—The need of organization among the retail merchants of the country was never so apparent as at the present time. They have been finding fault with the Wholesale Grocers' Guild when an association of the kind among themselves is the one thing needful. In many places they are sapping their life-blood fighting the Patron stores, when by united, well-directed effort on their part the latter might never have obtained a foothold. Meantime prices are demoralized. The non-patron merchant who buys his goods cheaper is underselling the Patron store, and eventually will succeed in crowding the latter out, but at what a sacrifice? Now all this might have been prevented if the retail merchants had an association in every place, and had they taken firm ground. Had they said to the wholesaler, "We do not want you to supply Patron stores," the wholesaler as in duty bound would have acceded to their wishes, because if this war of prices continues the wholesaler as well as the retailer will suffer. There have been some pretty bad failures already. Perhaps it is not too late yet for merchants to organize and take action on this line.

Yours truly,

TRAVELLER.

THE WINDSOR ASSOCIATION.

Reports of a hitch in the relations that originally existed among the members of the Windsor Grocers' and Provision Dealers' Association having got abroad, THE GROCER deemed the matter worth looking into, and upon inquiry obtained the following official version of the facts: The association was just formed when the changes in the duties took place on sugars and tobaccos. A special meeting was immediately called and a list of prices made out at which the articles affected were to be sold. Granulated sugar was to be 17 lbs. for a dollar, if the market continued at the then quoted prices, but a committee was appointed to watch the market closely, and if any change occurred it was empowered to make a change in the prices and notify the secretary, he to at once notify all members of their decision. The object was that there should be no sugar sold at or below cost. The thing worked smoothly enough for a few weeks. Then D. W. Mason, of the Queen's Grocery, Sandwich street, treasurer of the association, bought from T. B. Escott & Co., of London, a carload of sugar at the usual slight reduction on car lots, and notwithstanding the fact that he found he had more than he could conveniently handle, and that some other members of the association took part of it spot cash to relieve him, he at once announced a great sugar sale, flooding the town with dodgers proclaiming, for two days only, 20 lbs. granulated sugar and 1 lb. 25c. tea for \$1.25, 20 lbs. granulated sugar and 3 bars soap for \$1.25, etc., etc. This action on his part was resented by the secretary, who called the executive committee together and placed the dodger in their hands. A special meeting was called, and at that meeting the treasurer was treated to considerable plain talk by his fellow-members. He went off angry. Moral suasion was then tried. Arguments were brought to bear, but without effect. Charges were preferred against him, but he resigned before they were reported on. His resignation was accepted. The resolution fixing prices was rescinded unknown to him, so that he was beaten at his own game.

With respect to the trouble between the association and the millers, the statement that gives the association's account of the matter is the following letter:

WINDSOR, Ont., Sept. 29, 1891.

To the Editor CANADIAN GROCER.

SIR,—As a statement to the effect that the grocers of Windsor have declared a boycott on Mr. Thomas Vallans, of the Champion Mills, has been going the rounds of the press, I consider it my duty as secretary of the Windsor Grocers' and Provision Dealers' Association to give you the facts in the case for publication.

Mr. Vallans built and commenced running the Champion Mills in Windsor thirteen years ago, and from the first has paid as much, if not more, attention to the retail part of his business than to supplying store-

keepers with the products of his mill. You can to-day, and always could, purchase at the mill two lbs. of flour or meal or any other article he had in stock. This has been known to the retailers here, and Mr. Vallans has often been told that he could not expect to command the trade of the merchants here as long as he persisted in this method of doing business. This has been the case many times before the association was formed or even thought of.

On the 16th of September, a regular meeting of this association was held. When a member who has recently come to Windsor and started business in the immediate neighborhood of Mr. Vallans' mill made the statement that a customer had come in to his store and asked the price of the $\frac{1}{2}$ -b.l. sacks of flour, upon being told the price, she replied she was afraid he would sell no flour, as that was four cents more than it could be bought at the mill for. The flour the merchant had in stock was the Champion Mills flour, so he immediately went to the mill and asked: "Is it true that you retail flour here?" Upon being answered in the affirmative, he asked: "What are you selling the sacks for?" The answer was 4 cents less than every storekeeper was selling for, showing that the miller had made a drop in price a few weeks previously of 25 cents a barrel to the retailer and 32 cents to the consumer, without so much as notifying the storekeepers who were selling his flour of his intention of doing so.

This statement having been made at the meeting above referred to, the matter was fully discussed, and resulted in the appointment of a committee with instructions to wait on Mr. Vallans and lay the matter before him, and request him to at once quit the business of retailing and sell only to storekeepers. Should he refuse to do so the members of the association seriously contemplate passing a resolution binding themselves not to buy from him.

Now, sir, I want everybody to know that the Windsor Grocers' and Provision Dealers' Association passed the following resolution at their regular meeting held on the 16th of June last:

"Moved by Jas. Anderson, seconded by H. Albert, that this association be known as an auxiliary of the Windsor Board of Trade.—Carried.

Moreover, sir, I believe every member of the association regrets that our local miller will insist on pursuing this course, and thereby driving money out of the town that rightfully should stay in it. It is and has been for years the only flouring mill here, and we are all convinced that his flour is just as good as it can be made, and in fact superior to some that is sold here. Notwithstanding the fact that this association pledges itself to buy only Vallans flour if he will only use us decently as merchants, he still refuses to give up the business of retailing. We very much regret the fact that Chatham, Highgate, Guelph, St. Thomas and half a dozen other mills are selling flour here, in fact I don't believe that our local mill supplies one half of the flour consumed here, in Windsor, Walkerville and Sandwich. This should not be. Mr. Vallans should do at least nine-tenths of the local business, and we individually and collectively as an association regret that he does not. The reason he does not must not be looked for since the formation of this association, but to his business methods ever since he came here.

I am, sir, respectfully,

B. G. DAVIS,
Secretary.