



VOL. XIII.

TORONTO, CANADA, AUGUST, 1897.

No. 8.

J. BAYNE MacLEAN, President. HUGH C. MacLEAN, Sec.-Treas.

THE MacLEAN PUB. CO.
Limited

Fine Magazine Printers

Trade Newspaper Publishers

TORONTO:

26 Front St. W.
Telephone 3248.

MONTREAL:

Board of Trade Bldg.
Telephone 1255.

John Cameron, General Subscription Agent.
Major A. G. Campbell, General Subscription Agent.

THE DEPARTMENT STORES.

AN experienced bookman said to BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER the other day: "I do not see that anything can ever be accomplished in the direction of curtailing the present methods of department stores by legislative action. You are striving after the impossible, unless you can get at and educate the buying public. That is where the evil begins. I doubt whether people ever read the attacks on the department stores."

Now, we have no desire to quarrel with those who agree with this gentleman. They may be right. But then, again, they may be wrong, and time alone will show whether the proper policy for the trade is to sit down with folded hands until the commercial undertaker comes along, or keep up a vigorous campaign against the enemy. The department stores, by two widely different systems, are draining the life blood out of legitimate trade. First, they sell some articles below cost, and, secondly, they grossly deceive the public so as to get a big price on other articles. The man who buys a bill of goods at a big store probably pays, on the

whole list, a heavy price. If he simply purchases the one article which is being sold at a cut price he of course saves the difference between that figure and the regular price. In the long run he suffers with the rest of the community, but temporarily he wins. In any event, legitimate trade is injured. Against this system we believe it is right to protest until legislation is obtained to stop it.

The American Stationer says: "The department store has proved a vexing question in several states. It is causing dealers in stationery no little concern in many cities. It is a difficult problem to attack, for, while it is a fact that the average dealer is made to suffer by the propagation of the scheme, on the other hand the department store is conducting a legitimate business and is apparently making a 'howling' success of it. And so it is hard to see just how state interference can assist the unfortunate dealer in his up-hill fight."

Quite so. This is in line with the argument of the Toronto gentleman quoted above, except that the departmentals which are conducting "a legitimate business" are not interested in the agitation because they are not aimed at. It is those which conduct business on illegitimate lines that the regular trade are after. Apart from that, we cannot see that the concentration of business is an advantage to the community. If the people are to buy all the books and stationery at half a dozen establishments, why not their wheat from a few big farms in the Northwest, or their manufactured goods from one or two large factories, which would

choke off the rest? The postal facilities given to the department store by the Government are a direct aid by the state to kill off the local trader. What would the individual farmer say if the state helped to concentrate wheat-growing in the hands of a few companies?

CANADIAN BOOKS.

GO into a second-hand shop and the books bringing the best prices are Canadian books. The second-hand dealer can always find purchasers for these, and makes a good profit on every one sold. Now, the regular trade are not particularly enthusiastic over new Canadian books. They find a certain demand for them, (according to the merits of each book), they supply that demand and there it ends. If Canadian books, second-hand, are snapped up, why are they not the best stock when new? We do not profess to explain the apparent mystery, but there it is. There may be a good deal of indifference amongst Canadians which the bookseller has to encounter when handling native works, but some of the difficulty must lie with the dealer himself. Often when a large circulation is wanted for a Canadian book the author publishes by subscription, which mode simply does the trade out of so much business. To sell by subscription is the only possible way to market certain bulky works, those sold in parts, for instance. But there are books sold by subscription which do not come under this class. It seems as if the trade would have a hard task, suppos-