

## HARNNESS.

### *The Dealers' Varied Lines.*

But a few years back the carriage or implement dealer deemed it good policy to look after sales in his own particular line and that alone. What would he have thought of the dealer of to-day? This is an age of concentration; that spirit has invaded every branch of industry, and none to a greater extent than in the lines before mentioned. The dealer of to-day is a member of a class unheard of less than a decade ago. Versatile to a degree, he is at home selling anything, provided it will add to his income; carriages, all the various lines of implements, harness, and in many cases bicycles are to be found in his salesroom, and in his tactful handling of the varied classes of patrons with whom he is as a sequence thrown into contact, he demonstrates an enviable ability to adapt himself to circumstances.

In pursuing the course he has taken the dealer has been wise in his day and generation. In the economical working of agencies, it has been found that carriage and implement lines "jibe well together," for the farmer who purchases a reaper or plow from a dealer is just as ready to talk carriage or buggy to the same man, when he feels that he wants something in that line. It is generally more convenient for him to keep his accounts in fewer hands.

It is only recently, though, that harness has proven to be a profitable side-line for dealers. Altered conditions have given him that opening. Less than five years ago the local harness makers controlled the trade, but since then the springing up of large harness factories has put a different face upon matters. The law of supply and demand created the harness factories; the consideration of production at the lowest possible cost led to its establishment; and in marketing the product thereof the dealer has been the best agent available. It looks as if, from a dealer's standpoint, the carriage, implement and harness trades would work hand in hand for some time to come.

### *Selling Below Living Prices.*

The harness trade has lately taken on a peculiar phase. Quotations on leather have within a year gone up over 33½ per cent., and with that the natural conclusion would be that harness prices must be raised proportionately. The factories have taken this step, but the local harness makers have thus far neglected to follow suit. The wholesale leather men recognize that a persistence by the latter in their stand means ruin to them, and consequently affects adversely their own position as creditors. They may, it is stated, adopt in self-defence, drastic measures, and refuse to supply

leather to makers who are determined to maintain their old harness quotations. It is thought that the free discussion of costs entered into at the Harness-Makers' Convention, now being held in the city, will lead to an understanding all round.

### *Progressive Harness Manufacturers.*

A firm that can justly lay claim to be one of the most successful and progressive in the Canadian harness industry to-day is that of Mr. George A. Rudd & Co., 10 and 12 Alice Street, Toronto. Their business was originally started in a small way at Brockville, 25 years ago. Moving along on conservative lines, their trade gradually extended, until desiring more scope they removed to this city in 1895, and the wisdom of that step has been abundantly proven.

A representative of THE CARRIAGE AND IMPLEMENT JOURNAL, who called at their place of business last week, found them exceedingly busy filling a volume of orders which he was shown came from all parts of the Dominion, east to Halifax and west to Vancouver.

The firm's specialty is hand-stitched goods (they make no machine goods), turning out about 200 sets of harness a week, and they make 55 different lines, ranging in price from \$8 to \$150 per set. They also manufacture horse collars and carriage tops, which latter branch of their trade is also attaining large proportions. In the past three years the firm have twice been compelled to increase their capacity, and their large three-story brick factory on Alice Street, with its up-to-date plant, now presents a busy appearance, lending probability to the assumption that in the no distant future still more space will be requisite.

Asked regarding the present status of the harness trade, Mr. A. E. Rudd drew attention to the revolution that has recently overtaken it. "Five years ago," he said, "not

40 per cent. of the goods sold were factory made, but now the conditions are reversed, the percentage being almost the other way on. The dealers and buyers have had it proven to their satisfaction that factory harness is more uniform in quality, and as we can also turn it out cheaper, the local harness maker, as a rule, now buys instead of manufacturing, limiting his shop work to his repairing trade."

Mr. Rudd believes that the harness industry was never upon a more solid basis than at the present time. "Whether it is," he said, "for pleasure driving or for heavy draught purposes, buyers are not afraid to lay out money for the better class of stuff. Times are all right,

