

THE CANADIAN GROCER

& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.
\$200 PER YEAR

Published in the interest of Grocers, Cannery, Produce and Provision Dealers
and General Storekeepers.

Vol. V.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 23, 1891.

No. 43

J. B. McLEAN, President.
HUGH O. McLEAN, Sec.-Treas.

THE J. B. McLEAN PUBLISHING COMPANY,
FINE MAGAZINE PRINTERS
AND
TRADE JOURNAL PUBLISHERS.

HEAD OFFICE: 6 Wellington West, Toronto.
MONTREAL OFFICE: 115 St. Francois Xavier St.
G. Hector Clemes, Manager.
NEW YORK OFFICE: Room 105, Times Building,
Roy V. Somerville, Manager.

SPECIAL TO OUR READERS.

As the design of THE CANADIAN GROCER is to benefit mutually all interested in the business, we would request all parties ordering goods or making purchases of any description from houses advertising with us to mention in their letter that such advertisement was noticed in THE CANADIAN GROCER.

There are some wholesale grocers who adhere strictly both to the letter and the spirit of the rule to sell only to retailers. There are others who consider that the principle of this rule is upheld, so long as the only exceptions from it are in favor of employes, very intimate friends, and people they have other than grocery business connections with. There probably could not be much said against that view of the matter, if the exceptions admitted were few. A wholesaler, like any other man, ought to have some latitude of discretion in the management of his own business. But the exclusion of everybody except retailers from its list of customers is a creditable thing to any house which enforces it, and we learn that one firm has decided to make this an inflexible and invariable practice. It is purely a recognition of the rights of the retailer and a desire to avoid any seeming violation of those rights which has led the house in question to adopt this rule. So thoroughly is the principle carried out that members of the firm even have to buy their household supplies from retail grocers. Thus there is no ground for suspicion that faith is broken with the trade. Such a

method is the only one to put a stop to business between wholesalers and consumers. The fact that it has been adopted in the case referred to transpired in conversation in the most casual way. The firm to whom honor for the departure is due desire that their name shall not be connected with it, for fear that a bid for cheap popularity may seem to be the motive which led to it.

* * * *

It is right to say something from the point of view of the employes. The travellers, the office men, the warehouse men, who have families, no doubt have been taught by usage to look upon their standing as privileged customers of the firm as part of their remuneration. It pieces out the stipulated salary very considerably to add to it the discount of retailers' profits on the groceries they consume in a year. To take that suddenly off is to reduce salaries in effect. It means twice the retail grocer's profits to them, for instead of having those profits on a year's bill added to their stated salaries, they are to have them taken off. A time-established custom like that of regarding employes as retailers ought not to be revoked without compensation to the employes in the form of increased pay.

* * * *

There are wholesale houses in the grocery trade which are engaged in other commercial or industrial activities as well as that of the grocery trade. Employes or associates in these other relations, as well as wholesalers in other departments of trade, are apt to expect favors that will make them independent of the retailer. An instance of a house that finds such claims as these embarrassing on account of a good reciprocal spirit on the other side, has also come under our notice. This house sends for some retail grocer who deals with it and is near the would-be preferred customer, and asks this grocer to deliver the goods as ordered, and take the

margin. The retailer sends his delivery wagon to the warehouse, brings the goods to the man who ordered them and gets his profit the same as if he made the sale. Here the wholesale house gives a profit it does not get itself. It charges the customer the wholesale price and charges itself the retail price. The same house has been known to make the sale as ordered, deliver at its own expense, and forward the margin of profit to one of its customers who locally would be entitled to the order.

* * * *

This is scrupulous dealing. Is it appreciated always? A generous man cannot fail to be grateful for such treatment, but all men are not generous. It is a fact to which many retailers can certify, that very often wholesale grocers fill orders they receive from large concerns or corporations in a town, forward the goods and send a check to the local retailer who is on their books as a customer, the check representing the difference between the aggregate retail and wholesale prices of the goods involved in the transaction. In too many instances these checks are not even acknowledged. An extreme case of thanklessness is reported: An hotel man sent an order for a quantity of goods to a Montreal wholesale house; the house at once forwarded the order to the only grocer in the hotel man's village, and wrote to the hotel man informing him that he could deal as cheaply with the resident retailer and advising him to do so. That was the end of the matter for some time, no further communication being heard from either hotel man or retailer. But one of the firm happened to stay at the hotel in the village some weeks afterwards. He then learned that the retailer had made the sale, but that the retailer had placed the order with another wholesale house, one in opposition to that which had furnished him the order and bespoke the custom of the hotel man. Of course such a man as that must be an exceptional one, and it would be a pity that his indescribable meanness should endanger the principle of selling only to retailers.