

THE CANADIAN GROCER
 & GENERAL STOREKEEPER

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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.

OUR MONTREAL OFFICE.

Our Montreal Office is located at 115 St. Francois Xavier St. Our representative, Mr. G. Hector Clemes, will be pleased to have subscribers and advertisers call upon him there. He will also pay special attention to gathering business items and attending generally to the interests of this paper.

Wherever there are two or more retail grocers or general merchants within the range of each other's competition, there ought to be an agreement now entered into to limit the hours of shopkeeping throughout the summer. In many places the only guarantee for the keeping of such an agreement is in the honor of the parties who undertake it. In this province we have an early-closing act which empowers municipalities, upon the petition of three-fourths of the resident traders, to pass a by-law fixing the hour of closing, and making the carrying on of business beyond that hour a misdemeanor. In all cities, towns and incorporated villages the grocery and general store trade ought to be solid for the passing or the yearly renewal of this local by-law. When the hour of closing is fixed by statute, though the statute be merely local and temporary in its scope, it is on a better basis than voluntary arrangement can put under it. But sometimes voluntary arrangement is the best foundation for early closing that can be got. In those towns, etc., where the by-law is not recommended by a sufficient majority of the traders, traders of a particular class can get limited hours only by agreeing among themselves to adopt and maintain them. The same is true of traders who do business in

country places or hamlets. Their locality has no municipal existence apart from the whole township, and it would be difficult to get a petition signed by three-fourths of the traders in the township. They have therefore no basis for an early-closing hour other than their own mutual pledges. These they ought to collect now, and be ready at latest by the first of June to begin closing at a specified hour.

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Long before it took any formal step to extend its influence beyond this city, we looked upon the Toronto Retail Grocers' Association as a promising nucleus for the formation of a provincial or probably a national association of retail grocers. From the way things are developing now it looks as if we were right. Since the passing of a resolution, embodied in a report of the executive committee, recognizing grocers outside of the city as eligible for membership, several outside bodies have sought and obtained the right of representation in the Toronto Association. The proceedings of the Toronto Retail Grocers' Association are therefore a matter of no longer merely local importance. They never were, so far as that goes, but there are many grocers in the provincial towns for whom those proceedings will henceforth have an interest that can pertain only to members. The members of any other association that has representatives in this one are the men who elect those representatives, and they are concerned in all that is done by the body in which they thus have a vote. The admission of outside grocers ought also to be a spur to the Toronto body to improve in all local respects. If the outside members become numerous, it is conceivable that the Toronto body might be outvoted on some question where local interests are not identical with provincial in-

terests. That possibility ought to be a stimulus to it to increase its local membership all it can.

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At their March meeting the members of the Retail Grocers' Association gave their unanimous approval to the idea of making Wednesday afternoon a weekly half-holiday throughout the summer, and expressed themselves as ready to adopt it if it were practicable. How far it is practicable can be learnt only by finding out what proportion of the trade not in the Association can be got to acquiesce in the half-holiday. If a majority of the city grocers can be got to support the movement, there is no doubt the Association will pass a resolution to make Wednesday afternoon a time of recreation to themselves and their employes. Each member of the Association ought to be making observations as to the disposition of neighboring grocers not in that body to close on that afternoon. In this way a considerable volume of information could be collected and brought to bear upon the discussion of the question at next meeting. It is highly desirable that the half-holiday should have the sanction of a resolution passed by the Association. There are many non-members who would close simply because some association man close by had closed. The suspension of the nearest competition would prevail more than previous persuasion would. When they see that they have not to keep open in self-defence they will be more likely to close than not. If therefore the Association should give its voice for a mid-week half holiday, there would be a big advance made towards the general adoption of their idea, as members, scattered over the city, would extend the observance of the holiday by their example. Further, the association has now a big influence with the public, and if it advertised broadcast that its members would not trade any on Wednesday afternoon, the buying would be put off until Thursday very generally, and outside grocers would have less motive for keeping open.