

DO NOT XEROX

# 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. VI.

TORONTO, MAY 20, 1892.

No. 21

We beg to advise our readers of a change in our premises. Our office and place of publication is now at No. 10 Front St. East, next door to the Board of Trade building. This removal, itself an improvement, enables us to add many other features that former limitations of space would not allow. Correspondents or visitors will please remember the change.

### 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.

This paper leaves the Toronto Post Office Thursday evening. Subscribers not receiving it promptly should write us at once. Their doing so will be considered a favor.

### THIS WEEK'S MOTTO :

The best way to better one's circumstances is to improve his opportunities.

On another page of this issue is copied a letter, which was published a few days ago in the Halifax Morning Chronicle. It is written by a man evidently very familiar with the class of questions insolvency legislation will have to deal with, and familiar too with the business processes that make bankrupts. It contains as well a very good statement of the grounds for whatever doubt exists as to the value of a national insolvency act. There are some people who look upon a measure of that description as statutory impertinence. They hold that failures and their consequences, unless when criminal, are the result of commercial freedom, and since the cause—excessive competition, bad buying, inexperience, depressed prices, overloading, scarcity of money, etc.—cannot be regulated by law, law should have nothing to do with the effect. That would hardly do, however, as a general principle for

defining the scope of law, as a comparatively harmless initial cause is often the beginning of destructive results. It is not unlawful for a man to take a glass of whiskey, or a dozen glasses, but it is unlawful for him to murder anybody under the influence of it. Those who oppose insolvency legislation, admit that much and serious mischief results from failures and injudicious settlements, but they place the onus of this on the creditors, who are free to sell as they will, but who ought, they claim, to be responsible for any bad judgment they show in granting credit. The theory of the "freedom" argument, even if more admissible than it is, would be swept away by commercial opinion if the matter of an insolvency act were left to be settled between the two.

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A market municipally free is not an unmixed good. It is sure to be a haven for fakirs and itinerant vendors, whose competition will harass stationary merchants. Mercantile influence is usually opposed to tolls, market fees, and other restrictions to the sale of agricultural products by the growers, whom it is the policy of all established traders to bring to town as often and in as large numbers as it is possible to bring them. Freedom to sell invites liberality in buying, and the money the grower gets on the market place he usually leaves in the town. But while merchants are enlightened enough to help along this sort of exchange, by supporting the abolition of fees, etc., they ought to be sufficiently alive to their own interests to lobby the Council in favor of putting a license fee on all transient traders, whether they occupy a store for a few weeks to sell off a bankrupt stock, or offer their wares on the market place. The settled trade cannot afford to see its business go to maintain a brood of parasites. The seed merchants of London, Ont., have had their business this year seriously cut into by a stranger who sold garden seeds at one cent a package. A protest of the wholesale seedsmen against this business was heard the other night before a committee of the City Council, and resulted in the introduction of an amendment to the free market by-law, which limited the appli-

cation of that by-law to producers only. This was due to the tax-paying merchants of the city.

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Cheap excursions to central trading points play havoc with the trade of provincial towns. They are got up for pleasure, but are usually taken advantage of by a very hard-headed lot of pleasure-seekers, who contract their purse-strings for days ahead that they may be able to bring home a lot of bargains. In this way a single day will often affect local trade for weeks both before and after it. Special passenger rates on market days also work against the welfare of small towns. The interests of the railway companies are not always identical with those of the towns along their line. Of course the larger the commerce of the smaller interior trading points the more they are a source of revenue to the railways, as they yield a big freight income if they have a big distribution. The railway companies, however, are willing to forego the slight increase in their freight returns for the sake of the greater increase in their fare returns that popular excursions can produce. A correspondent in the Times of Port Hope refers to an excursion from that town to this city, and estimates at \$2,000 the purchasing power transferred from Port Hope to Toronto by that excursion. The church which got it up, he considers, made about \$30. Here is a great deal of mischief done to local and substantial interests for a very small benefit. If the concerns which get up these excursions would make an estimate of what they consider the net returns derivable from a popular excursion should be, and then assess the local merchants for this, it would often be more profitable for the latter to pay it than let the excursion go on. Thirty dollars is far short of the profit the local trade should make upon an outlay of \$2,000. The business men who are members of bodies that get up excursions ought to use their influence against any that are likely to be in the interests of buyers. The main point, the great drawing card nowadays with these excursions, is not solid pleasure, but solid business. A destination is not always picked out for its picturesqueness, but often for its price attractions.