

is to strive to maintain the closest kind of commercial relationship without justifying suspicion of combination. If that principal of business conduct animates the mind of men who control huge enterprises, and who seek in concert to secure a monopoly, then the principle, as one of business logic, is good in minor cases. We would advise as an experiment that where a few druggists do business in the same town, they meet together and talk over their business affairs. If they do this, and frankly discuss matters of mutual interest and strive to harmonize their prices, we are certain that the outcome would be fittingly expressed in the heading of this article.

Action Is Needed.

Perhaps the most serious question amongst merchants to-day is what is to be the outcome of the determined onslaught by the departmental stores on the business of regular dealers.

The question is a very serious one, inasmuch as it means to many business men the life or death of their business, the cutting off of their income, the depreciation of real and personal property, and the ultimate ruin of many who are now getting their livelihood by honest business-like methods.

Although these "stores" affect all classes of business, none, we believe, feel it more than the druggist, and to many of them it means more perhaps than is generally realized. The druggist whose business is in a city where the department store is in evidence feels keenly the inroads which are made, not only into the profits on the goods which he sells, but also on the amount of sales. The "bargain" hunter is willing to be humbugged in purchases of drugs, just as much as in patent medicines, dry goods, or shoes, and the mania for bargains extends even into the dispensing of prescriptions, the endangering of human life not entering into the mind of the one who is all intent on the "scalping" of prices. But not only does it affect the city druggist, but those in the towns and villages throughout the whole country have begun to realize that the falling off in the volume of business is due in a large measure to the amount of goods sent in by mail or express from the department stores.

We know that goods are sent from some of these stores in Toronto to all parts of the Dominion, and the mail orders received include, amongst other

purchases, goods which are usually sold only in drug stores.

Is it not a lamentable fact, and one that reflects but little credit on the purchaser, that amongst many of them are men engaged in business in other places, men who owe their "bread and butter" to those immediately around them and whom it is their duty to patronize? Yes, and even members of the drug trade who make much ado about the "cutting" of prices and the dullness of times can too often be found purchasing at these same stores.

Self-protection lies first in protecting your own neighbors in business, and expecting the same treatment from them. The man who for a few cents will send or go to a "bargain" store, instead of purchasing from those whose business is done legitimately and who have a right to expect support, will find that he, in his turn, will lose some of that trade which he claims rightly belongs to him, and which he has, by his own actions, invited others to take from him.

The department store, however, is with us, and the question what is to be done to thwart its efforts to monopolize everything is one that must be met. The efforts of any association organized to protect prices can be of but little avail while this evil is gradually covering the whole country and making itself felt even where "cutting" is not supposed to exist. We are personally aware of numbers of towns where the druggists hold to their prices, both in proprietary medicines and drugs, but a large share of the business which should properly be theirs is sent to the "stores" in the cities, who by price lists and other lavish advertising invite the trade.

A suggestion has been made that legislation be asked for such as that which has been proposed for the State of Illinois, levying heavy licenses on stores handling more than one line of goods, each department having an additional license fee.

This would perhaps in some measure remedy the evil. We believe, however, that in any event tradesmen should organize protective associations in every locality, and endeavour by concerted action to do all in their power to stem the tide, which must, if not impeded in some way, overwhelm many now in business and bring disaster to numbers, not only who are engaged in trade, but are wholly or in a large measure dependent on their earnings from those who are.

Editorial Notes.

A large seizure of smuggled opium was recently made by the United States Treasury agents at San Francisco, California. A raid was made on the store of Qwong Fong Tai & Co., and a thousand pounds of opium, valued at \$12,000, was seized. As practically all the opium in the city fell into the hands of the officials, there was a sudden advance in price of from twelve to twenty-five dollars per pound.

In one of the Toronto daily papers there appears the advertisement of Du Barry's Revalenta Arabica Food, with the foot-note: "Sole agents: The F. Eaton Co., Ltd., Yonge street, Toronto." This, of course, should be sufficient warning to druggists to let the food be sold by this department store, and by it alone. *No chemist need apply.*

The University of Wuerzburg has awarded to Professor Behring, of Marburg, the Rinecker prize, which consists of a gold medal and 1,000 marks, for the most important discovery of the last three years, the antitoxin for diphtheria. By this decision his discovery is ranked as more important than that of Professor Roentgen, who is a member of the same faculty.

A bill has been introduced in the New York Legislature, entitled "An Act to regulate the sale of merchandise and to suppress misleading and dishonest representations in connection therewith." The bill is intended as a blow to the department stores, and refers to the "bargain days." It provides that any firm, person or partnership, or any employees of such who, either in the newspapers or other periodicals, wilfully makes or disseminates any statement concerning the quantity, quality, value, price, method of production or manufacture, or fixing the prices calculated to divert his, her, or their trade, or to disturb the carrying on of said business, or to injure the credit and standing of competitors, which are untrue, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

The eighth International Pharmaceutical Congress will be held at Brussels during August of this year. It is being promoted by the Association Générale de Belgique, and it is proposed that the matters under discussion will be of pharmaceutical interest rather than on technical chemical subjects.