

Like people at an auction sale, city residents willingly take the risk of getting something they do not want, merely because it looks "cheap," or they ignore the lasting quality of goods so long as they appear to save a dollar or a shilling at a time. And people in country places, hundreds of miles away, send their post-office orders to these big caravansaries for goods they could buy just as well within a block of their own doors. Buying "in the city" is a popular craze, and the claims of the village or town shop are forgotten.

It is perhaps not too much to ask consideration for the small store among all this hurry and bustle. There are small stores everywhere in Canada making a valiant fight for existence, and we are among those who believe that there is a function for the small shops to perform, and that they ought not to be swallowed up and will not be swallowed up by the voracious department store. That there are too many small shopkeepers for the business to be done has been true at any time these thirty years, and is true to-day—some of them deserved to go to the wall. But hundreds upon hundreds of capable merchants are keeping small shops, and keeping them well. Hundreds upon hundreds are putting skill and knowledge and hard work into their business, providing merchandise for communities, paying their taxes to their municipalities, doing their duty as citizens of town and village.

Is it fair to these merchants that their neighbors should go past the very doors of such shops to the post-office, there to buy postal orders for goods ordered by catalogue from the cities? And is it fair that the already heavily burdened post-office cars should be carrying merchandise for a song, day after day, hundreds and thousands of miles from the department store to the country customer at the expense of the country? We think not.

Nor is it fair that railways should give cheap fares to passengers to the cities on department store bargain days, thereby enabling the country customer to divert normal custom from the smaller local stores. The withdrawal by the railways of the cheap trip tickets, which were so largely used with this result, is distinctly to be commended. It is no part of the business of railways or of the post-office to build up department stores in the cities to the detriment of the country merchant.

Some instances have come to our knowledge of plucky resolve on the part of retailers in Ontario towns not to be ruined by the department store. One man in Napanee writes, "We are much alive here, and find no difficulty in competing with departmental store humbug." Another in Stratford says, "It is no use denying that we have felt the competition of these department stores; but there is some common sense left among the people yet, and many, if not most of our customers, know that we give them as good value in goods as they can get in Toronto. And so they save the expense of going there or writing there."

Precisely. If people in town or village would stop to consider the value they can get for their money at home, not so many would send it abroad. But the trouble is that they follow the fashion or join the crowd under the impression that a department store always gives "bargains" which the smaller shop cannot do. In this they are often mistaken.

It is true that these big stores, by means of system, economy, cash buying and cash selling, have reduced prices of many goods. But they have no monopoly of ability or economy in management. And there are many merchants who buy for cash as well as they. The impulse that has of late years been given to buying for cash, and the demonstration of the advantages of care, taste and system in merchandising, have done good to the smaller

merchant as well as the large. And the cheapening of goods to the consumer is a result. But, for this result it would be wrong to give department stores all the credit. A large body of reputable and capable retail merchants all over Canada have been steadily working toward cash trade at small profits.

#### FOOLISH MINING INVESTMENTS.

So many people are making hasty and foolish investments in mining ventures without proper enquiry, and without any knowledge of what they will get for their money, that they need to be protected from the rapacity of mining "sharks." Few persons are able to distinguish a genuine mining proposition from a fake; and supposing the mine to be real, few know whether they are buying promoters' treasury shares or development shares. For the sake of many foolishly speculative people safeguards should be provided. In order to prevent the flooding of the markets with promoters' stock in mining companies, the *Rossland Miner* strongly favors a provision that all treasury shares should be so marked that any investor might be able to satisfy himself whether his money was going into development or merely into the promoters' pockets. And we find the *Rossland Record* exposing a pernicious system of publishing bogus quotations, a system which has been encountered by the *Vancouver World* in connection with mining matters. "It is the practice," says the latter journal, "to publish what purports to be the market quotations for mining stocks by interested brokers and stock gamblers." By such a scheme, unscrupulous scoundrels can easily bull or bear the market at will. Steps are being taken in British Columbia, it is said, to have this sort of swindling stopped.

—The council of the Toronto Board of Trade, which has had many recent consultations as to methods to be pursued for advertising Toronto and for increasing her commerce, may get a serviceable hint from the action of the St. John, N.B., board. That body has succeeded in forming a Tourist Association, composed of a large number of citizens, not necessarily members of the board, we understand, or in any way connected with it. The function of this association is to make known abroad the attractions of St. John and its neighborhood, and to invite the visits and the residence of tourists. Is not Toronto well worthy of a like effort? The St. John folk are proud of their city, and with reason, but they have "snap" and public spirit. The people of Toronto profess great pride in their city, yet when a meeting of the Board of Trade was called the other night to discuss measures of civic interest, the attendance numbered 37, all told! These are days when there is competition between cities as well as merchants. The city that works with tact and makes herself known outside as welcoming enterprise, will attract capital. The city that says by its actions, "I am the superior place; people *must* come to me, and when they do, I'll see how much I can squeeze out of them," stands a fair chance to "get left." St. John has spent \$431,000 in order to develop a winter port transatlantic business, and now she is beginning to get her reward.

#### ST. JOHN'S WINTER PORT BUSINESS.

An interesting meeting of the St. John Board of Trade, which appears to have been principally designed as complimentary to the president of that body, Mr. W. S. Fisher, was held on Thursday of last week, and between forty and fifty members attended. Mr. Fisher was presented with an address, and was besides warmly eulogized by several speakers for his devotion to the interests of the board. He has suggested, if he did not initiate, the Tourist Association of that