

# THE Bookseller and Stationer

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## TOPICS OF THE DAY

**T**HE organization and co-operation of retail booksellers is not only of great importance to themselves but is very desirable from a national standpoint. There can be but little question that on the whole less progress has been made in the bookselling trade in proportion to its possibilities than in almost any other.

Our country is now on the eve of great increases; our population, wealth and commercial activity are certain to grow with remarkable rapidity in the next few years, and when that time comes the book trade should be in a position to make the most of their opportunities and should now do all that they can to improve the conditions of their trade. Books will be read and bought in enormous quantities in the coming years, and the public, trained by better service in other directions, will expect better service from booksellers. It is then necessary for the book trade to prepare in advance for this demand that will be made upon them, so that when the good times come they will not find their trade rapidly flowing into other channels.

Intelligent organization is the only root from which can grow any permanent improvement in the conditions which surround the bookselling trade, and, believing this, we urge every bookseller in Canada to unite with the association of booksellers, whose first convention was held on October 17 last in Toronto.

A full report of the transactions of this convention and of the resolutions adopted by them at their meeting will be found on another page of this issue, and we commend its careful perusal to all who are interested in the efficiency and well-being of Canadian booksellers and stationers. A reading of the report will clearly show that many unjust conditions now prevail in the trade, and, while we believe many difficulties will arise in the just solution of the problems which vex and harass booksellers, yet we believe that if the present organization meets with the support it deserves, results will be obtained of the greatest importance and benefit to all.

We are glad to note that the chairman in his address to the meeting pointed out the fact that many of the evil conditions which now seriously affect the trade are not founded on causes for which either the retailer or wholesaler are entirely to blame; and we think the suggestion of co-operation between wholesaler and retailer, which is to be inferred from this remark, is one that should be kept carefully in view. That antagonism, rather than co-operation, should prevail between wholesaler and retailer would be most disastrous to both

parties, and we strongly advise a greater consideration for the well-being of each other than has been shown in the past. Many wrong practices have crept in on both sides and these have largely been the result of secret and mean jealousy rather than of an upright and enterprising rivalry. Both wholesaler and retailer must accept responsibility for these conditions, and nothing can so remove the obstacles in the way of a better understanding and a saner manner of doing business than the meeting together half-yearly, or oftener, of the various members of the wholesale and retail trade. For this reason alone, we believe that a permanent organization of the trade is worth almost any reasonable cost; and every dealer from the Atlantic to the Pacific should give his hearty support to the efforts which are being made for the benefit of the trade. If you, the reader of this article, either by procrastination, neglect, or other cause, fail to give your support to the efforts which are being made on your behalf, there will belittle reason in grumbling at conditions which are gradually undermining your business.

It is not our purpose in this issue to enter into a discussion of the various resolutions adopted by the convention, for many would require an entire article to give any adequate consideration of them, but we cannot lay too strong emphasis on the fact that every dealer in the country should carefully consider the points raised by the resolutions, and, by studying the questions, so inform himself that he can bring intelligent help to a solution of the difficulties with which they are faced.

Needless to say, our columns are always open to reasonable discussion on any subject of interest to the trade, and we specially invite correspondence at this time on any matter involved in the resolutions adopted by the booksellers' convention.

Frank Norris, the brilliant Californian author, is dead, and, like George Douglas Brown, he died on the threshold of his career. He was an author with a purpose—not a mere searcher for public favor. In the preface to "The Octopus," for which work he shall justly be remembered, Norris set forth his purpose. This was no less than the production of a powerful "epic of the wheat," to be completed in three stories. "The Octopus" dealt with production, "The Pit" with distribution, and the third, unnamed as yet, with consumption. The ranches of the West, the speculators of Chicago, and the peasants of Europe were the three classes covered in the trilogy.