

# THE CANADIAN GROCER

& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

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and General Storekeepers.

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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.

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 :

Sell honest goods at honest prices and nobody will ask you what church you belong to.

The indefatigable secretary of the Toronto Retail Grocers' Association is testing the strength of the early closing cause, by passing round a memorandum whose subscribers thereby bind themselves to close at a uniform hour or on Wednesday afternoon. He has had some success, but the main result of his visits on this errand is the discovery that the supporters of late closing have a good many excuses for keeping open beyond a reasonable hour. The bad faith of competitors who sign an early closing agreement, the need of every hour to make sale of fruit that would have to be carried over another day in case of early closing, the plea in behalf of workmen who can do no shopping apparently before midnight—these and many more similar reasons are assigned for the continuance of a practice that all its observers condemn. On Yonge street Mr. Corrie found but six grocers who would sign an agreement to close at eight o'clock in the evening or take a half holiday on Wednesday afternoon. On Queen street west he succeeded in getting all to sign an agreement to close at 9 p.m., instead of keeping open till 11 and 12 o'clock at night. From Pape avenue to the Don all have subscribed

to close at eight o'clock from the first of June to the first of August. The secretary is continuing his canvass along the eastern part of King and Queen streets.

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Salesmen or others who are agitating for an early closing hour ought to try what an appeal to popular opinion, as distinct from trade opinion, will do. It is difficult to get an arrangement on foot upon the joint promises of the trade to close at a particular hour, for those promises are hard to obtain, and when obtained they are hard to enforce. It would go a long way towards disposing the trade of any given locality to consent to a uniform closing hour, if they were presented with a petition from the majority of their customers asking that a certain hour be chosen for closing up all stores. The usual plea of late closers is that the people are late buyers to a considerable extent; if the people can be led to show themselves in favor of reasonable business hours, reasonable business hours will be the rule. Let the clerks organize and get up a concert or some other entertainment to which the public are freely invited, and unless their powers of pleasing are very limited they will be sure to enlist the sympathy of the people on their side, and may depend upon a strong vote in favor of early closing.

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It is as well that retailers should take note of the fact from this till the potato crop is taken up, that Paris green is not to be handled like tea or sugar. A little carelessness about the sale of this article is likely to cost more than neglect to mark mixed coffee as compound. The law is offended every time a half-pound of Paris green is put up and sent out, unless the salesman is careful to have entry made, in a book kept for the purpose, of the following particulars: The date, the quantity bought, the purpose for which it is bought, the pur-

chaser's signature, the salesman's initials. Disregard of this important matter is punishable by a fine, which may be \$20, \$50, or any intermediate sum, according to the discretion of the magistrate. Hellebore is not to be sold by grocers or general merchants. Druggists alone are licensed to sell it, and to them consumers must go to get this means of exterminating the pests on their currant bushes.

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A line of goods that is causing some concern to holders just now is canned fruit. There is a very considerable surplus yet unsold, a great part of which is likely to be carried into next year's stock. The great advantage of factory production over domestic production, which previous to 1891 had caused a big shrinkage in the volume of the latter that was put up yearly, was offset a year ago by the unprecedented cheapness of sugar and abundance of fruits. The readiness of holders to concede a little on prices for the sake of making sales is moderated somewhat by the belief that this summer's pack will be a very light one, the last year's experience being likely to make the canners chary of going in to put up fruits on a large scale. This likelihood furnishes ground for hoping that a surplus carried over from this year will find a good market next year. The general feeling, however, appears to be that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, and any chance of getting a customer now is not let slip if a few cents from the price will hold him.

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One cause of cutting in staple groceries is the variety of grades or brands that are to be found in some lines. If there were but one standard in each class of goods prices would be found to be generally fairer. It is a rule with prices that they always assimilate towards that of the lowest-valued variety or grade in any line. If there were six grades of granulated sugar, and the lowest were selling at 4¼ c., the higher grades would have to be quoted at figures approximate to this. Hence to-day prices rule low in Valencia raisins, sugar, canned goods, for the reason that the prices of the lowest grades are those kept most prominent by sellers.