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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.

The coming convention of retail grocers and general merchants is, in its inception, entirely in the hands of the Toronto Retail Grocers' Association. It is in the power of that body to make or mar the success of the gathering. It has done wisely in adopting the resolution to put the convention on the wide basis of the whole trade, not merely upon that of the organized trade. All retail grocers and general merchants are eligible to attend and take part in the discussions. Voting, however, is limited to members of associations. This restriction seems rather anomalous. If every non-member is allowed a part in the discussions upon the same footing as a member, he will have what in many cases is worth more than the right to vote: he will have the privilege of doing what he can by argument and persuasion to sway votes. If he can determine one or two voters to vote nay who would otherwise vote yea, he is doing more than the silent voter does. The power to vote ought to go with the privilege of discussion. Otherwise the effect of the restriction will be to limit the representation of the trade strictly to that part of it which is under organization. This being

manifestly contrary to the intention of the Association it ought to be considered in time.

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The members of associations, having paid fees and submitted themselves to the control of certain trade regulations, ought clearly to have some advantage over non-members. But the sole right of voting is not the form the advantage should take. What would seem to be the best plan of proceeding to bring as many as possible of the trade together and to give an impetus to association forming is this: Treat the present federation of associations, of which the Toronto body is the head, as a Provincial Association; call the convention an open meeting of this Association which all the trade may attend; limit the topics to those strictly of association bearing, by drawing up a programme beforehand of subjects gathered from association sources; let the whole meeting be free to participate in the debates and free to vote on all questions; then let the Provincial Association adopt or reject what it will of these resolutions in the subsequent meetings of its constituent branches. This is the way of all open meetings. They are merely test affairs, intended to give a chance to outsiders to see if the opinion of the latter is in sympathy with that of insiders. The aim is to bring outsiders to the expression of the same views as insiders have declared or are leaning to, and not to bring members to the same views as non-members. Accordingly, if at such an open meeting a decision is reached, it is only provisional so far as the Association is concerned. Its adoption, amendment or rejection is as much at the option of the Association as is the adoption, amendment or rejection of a committee's report.

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The advantage of taking this view of the convention is that thereby a better attendance of the trade will be secured, and that part of the trade which it is particularly

sought to impress—the non-organized part—will have a stronger inducement to be present. It is among them that the association idea has to be diffused if the growth of associations is to continue. The best interests of the trade are served by the propagation of this idea, and it would be unfortunate if any mistaken step should be taken to bring about the rally of the trade this summer. That the convention should be as representative in numbers and interests as possible was the wish of all the parties to the discussion as to its basis at the last meeting of the Toronto Association. There are some momentous questions on which there is an immense volume of outside opinion that has not been publicly pronounced. The convention should bring that opinion into focus, and it can only do so if every member of it is a voter. It would be absurd to bring a gathering of the trade here, if they would come, and allow it to adjourn without having had its opinion formally pronounced upon any question.

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But whether the Association does or does not change its decision to limit the voting to its own and members of associations affiliated with it, the movement to form local associations and link them with Toronto ought to be accelerated between now and the date of the convention. All towns not yet organized ought to become organized at once and get in running order in time for the big gathering. If the example of association—benefits is to tell there cannot be too many associations represented. They who start now will come into the field at a good time, a time when the general trade is infused with more or less enthusiasm begotten of the convention. They will be able at the beginning of the fall trade to drop in step with the older bodies, as the adopted proceedings of the convention will form a common starting-point for all the associations, and will do as much to make the progress of all equable and uniform as grouping round a common centre will.