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& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

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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 law of cohesion is gradually asserting itself in the grocery trade. Like interests are grouping the forces of localities into distinct bodies, while the movement to unify and concentrate the action of these in a national or provincial corporation makes safe progress. The number of associations formed has been greater during the present than during any former summer, and the number of them that have connected themselves with the Toronto body is gratifyingly large. What will further tend to give compactness to the grocery trade is the coming convention, which will stimulate both local organization and national solidarity. True solidarity is the thing that is wanted. If it exists associations will hang together, otherwise they will not. It is the property which distinguishes common movement, whether for the immediate gain or the immediate loss of the individuals, so long as the ultimate end is the general advancement of the common cause. If the cutter has to be extinguished and it is thought expedient to shear off the whole fringe of profit on some line to suppress him, there ought to be as much readiness to agree to do this as there ought to be to resort to some proposed means to secure direct advantage.

The healthy circulation of opinion within association channels will be provided for when local associations exist everywhere and they are linked together. Such a circulation will be a strong preservative and incentive, and may be expected to withstand the tendency of small bodies to fall into decay when exciting local questions are not present to bring them together. Questions will drift along the current of Association sympathy, through the medium of constitutional connection, and the lack of local issues will be made up for by the introduction by correspondence of questions from outside. The general federation, when it is once accomplished, will no doubt have its council, whose business will in part be the preparation and prescription of subjects for discussion at periodical meetings of all the local associations. This would be useful from many points of view. The lesson leaves of Sunday school associations are analogous outlines of work sketched by a central committee and accepted by all the branches. Such a course would be merely supplementary to the local programme, and would be for the purpose of giving distinctness and force to association opinion.

The most of the local associations formed this year have come into being since the agitation to hold a convention was started. This seems to signify that a general movement to sift questions peculiar to the grocery trade will do more to unite the trade at all competitive points than the pressure of merely local problems. There is a feeling that something can be done by a fusion of all the grocery influence in the country, while there may not be much faith in the potency of an isolated town association. Clearly it seems that one of the best encouragers to the development of local organization is such an attempt as the convention is proposed to be to focus the general sense of the

provincial trade upon leading questions. The importance of that meeting cannot be over-estimated, therefore, and its success is an object in which the services of every Toronto association man ought to be warmly enlisted. It ought to be the forerunner of many other such gatherings held annually.

An object that should be more distinctly enunciated in the statement of benefits aimed at by associations is the protection of the trade against the undermining methods that constitute the competitive strategy of certain traders. Protection against the deadbeat, the jobber or the manufacturer is more easily provided for, but the insidious work of the price-cutter, the unprincipled opposition that speaks ill of a rival, that questions the weight he deals out, the purity of the goods he sells, or the soundness of his position in business ought to be stifled, and associations should set themselves against such practices. Reputable dealing ought to get more encouragement than it does, it should receive not only moral countenance but active and declared support from the association.

It seems to be the case that there are fewer failures among the members of associations than among non-members. Those who become members, by that act show themselves possessed of a desire to do business according to the best light, and are likely to take whatever steps they can to make a success of their trade. They also strengthen themselves as business men to hold their own against the difficulties of trade, when they join an association, and the association may fairly be ranked as a force that makes for solvency. When it gets a little older it will probably rank high among the causes of success. Like all institutions it can not come in for historic treatment until it has unrolled its character over two or three generations, and has established a past that is looked back to for imitation.