

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE United States congress has been considering a bill to make the postage on merchandise one cent for two ounces. The Chicago Dry Goods Reporter commenting on this, says it will go a long way towards diverting a certain class of trade from the retail stores in the country to the great retail establishments in the cities. This is a point the retailers of Canada should remember. We have not this danger from the huge retail houses yet, in any great degree, but it is coming surely and the start has been made. It is an oft repeated saying that the consumer in a rural district would sooner pay money to a city house and get his goods there, than buy from his suffering dealer whom he only pays once a year and perhaps not that often. The consumer knows no gratitude and if the Canadian rate of postage was changed from one cent per oz. on 5th class matter to one cent for two ounces, there is no telling what consumers would do to help the big city stores.

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Here is a very suggestive story:

Tailor—You had your suit cleaned and pressed the other day. The bill was \$3.50, and I would like to collect it.

Stubber—But I haven't paid for the suit yet.

Tailor—That's all right, but the cleaning is done outside, and we have to pay cash for it.

Our scissors found it some where and it suggested some thoughts, as to who was losing the interest on the money which "Stubber" had not paid. It brought forward again, the old trouble of dating ahead, and long credits. Even when it is crushing them, dry goods men go on with the long credits and there is no improvement, no change for the better. Will they ever wake up?

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The employees of the Toronto Street Railway Co. are donning new uniforms. These blue, brass-buttoned suits are quite neat, but the charge seems extravagant. Three and a half yards at one dollar a yard would be the cost of the cloth if one may judge by appearances, and \$7.50 for making and trimming would seem a good price for such a large quantity, thus bringing the cost to \$11, while the suit costs the men \$15. Some one is making money and it has been hinted that it is the company, but it is difficult to believe that the company would exploit its men for the purpose of making a few dollars in that way, and hence we conclude that the tailor must be reaping the gain.

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Our best writers and thinkers are criticising very severely the by-law which the city council passed exempting plant, tools and machinery used in manufacture for a period of ten years from January 1st, 1893. The Montreal council is seeking to acquire authority to levy taxes on merchandise, bank shares, etc. Surely there is need of a study of municipal taxation to exp ain the incongruity witnessed in the plans of the two cities. Business men should look carefully into the exemption plan and be prepared to meet it fairly and learnedly. The question is: "Are exemptions ever justifiable?" Our opinion is that they are dangerous, because unfair. Montreal wholesale men have long had a boon which Toronto wholesalers have not had, in the fact that their merchandise was exempt from municipal taxation, but under financial stress this will probably be taxed in Montreal, but it will only be temporarily.

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Clark's M. E. Q. spool cotton, 200 yds., 6 cord has dropped in price from \$3.80 to \$3.55. This is due to the arrangements made by the manufacturers on the establishment of the central agency. When the sales of a certain line of cotton thread falls below the par line of sales, the manufacturer has the privilege of reducing the price, so as to allow the increased sales to bring the output up again to the par line of sales. This is what has happened with the M. E. Q., and some dealers maintain that this thread has not been up to the proper

standard of quality, hence the lessening of the output as experienced by the manufacturers. It is sold very little in Canada.

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It is exceedingly gratifying to notice how careful dry goods merchants are to provide their clerks with all the time for recreation during the hot months, that can conveniently be given to them. In Hamilton Messrs. Pratt and Watkins and Messrs. A. Murray & Co. have decided to give their employes a half holiday on Saturday afternoon during July and August. These firms should be benefitted in two ways; firstly in the increased carefulness and good will of their employes, and secondly in increased public favor. This consideration of employes has been observed in Toronto by many of the wholesale and retail houses for some time. But some of them have not reached it yet. In fact some of the retail dry goods stores have not yet learned that their sales would be just as great in volume, if they closed at six o'clock Saturday evening instead of ten o'clock. But then there always were people in the world who were about twenty-five years behind the times, and we shall always have them with us. Reformation is one of the slowest of movements.

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A suit between John J. Eaton and J. H. New, referred to in another column, has been settled out of court. Mr. Eaton and Mr. New were formerly partners, the firm being engaged in business as manufacturers' agents. They separated, and this spring Mr. Eaton sued Mr. New for over \$4,000, and applied for an immediate judgment, saying there was no defence. But he did not secure the judgment, as a plea was entered by the defendant New. Since the court decided that the case must be tried on its merits at the Assizes, Mr. Eaton has settled for less than \$3,000. Their business, while working as partners, was not very successful, and Mr. Eaton seems to have tried to save himself by putting in an extra claim for wages, but he has been unsuccessful in supporting his claim.

OUR MONTREAL LETTER.

THE business outlook in dry goods during the immediate two weeks has wonderfully improved. It is true that in the early part of the month the indications were far from satisfactory. The weather was disagreeable and far from seasonable, with the result that the retailers did little or nothing, and their dullness, in the natural course of events, reacted on the wholesalers. Now, however, matters have brightened up. In wholesale circles the tone is not only hopeful, but present trade is brisk, all through the lower provinces and the west, according to one big house. The conservative policy pursued by the retailer has changed to an extent positively unexpected. In point of fact, the dull winter compelled country dealers to practically starve their stocks, and those who could afford to buy only bought the smallest possible quantities. This naturally resulted in a depletion of staple goods, which retailers all over the country urged on, not only by the bright weather, but by the extremely encouraging crop reports, are eager to fill. Your correspondent has interviewed four of Montreal's leading wholesale dry goods firms, and each and everyone are feeling good over the improved state of affairs.

Another point worthy of note, and one which shows the prosperous trend of trade is the fact that the number of failures reported during the past few months is much less than for the same period in previous years.

It is a fact that payments might have been better during the first three weeks of the month, but even this has improved. Contrary to general expectation prints are obtaining a large share of business. It was thought that they would be a drug on the market, but instead of this they are in good demand, and the houses which are fortunate enough to be well stocked in this line of goods are proportionately elated.

A curious circumstance in connection with the wholesale houses, and perhaps not pleasant news for the travellers, has been becoming very manifest of late years. Several wholesale men have told me,