

affected, few men are strong enough to always keep within safe lines, and the office check is a safeguard. A man sitting in his office can lay down the law with better effect than even his own performance would be if on the field of action.

#### MUST DECIDE HIS OWN COURSE.

No one set of rules could be written out as a commercial traveler's guide. Just as a multiform of church creeds make suitable homes for the variety of mankind, so the aptitudes peculiar to different travelers will find expression in different ways. But we must be true to correct fundamental principles no less in business than in religion.

Many a retail merchant has been able to avert disaster by following the counsel of a level-headed commercial traveler supported by his house. The majority of the men on the road are, however, simply good salesmen possessing a holding power by straightforward dealing and a magnetism born of an agreeable, hearty manner, which ensure a kindly welcome from all but soulless men. A few succeed for many years by force of energy without those qualifications which make a man popular. They usually talk value and extol the merits of their house beyond compare, but being somewhat economical with the truth, the old saying about not being able to fool all the people all the time, forges their chain of limitation none too soon.

The ideal traveler will make large yearly sales, has the ability of anticipating, and in some cases correcting mercantile agency reports, will not try to overload his regular customers, can successfully advise inexperienced merchants, and possesses nerve and tact sufficient to secure the approval, even sometimes control the actions, of his employers.

#### ARE TRAVELERS UNNECESSARY?

People not in touch with business methods fancy commercial travelers are detrimental to healthy trade. Farmers and consumers in general imagine the cost of goods is increased, also that merchants are coerced into over-buying through this medium of sale; but an accurate knowledge of the facts will destroy the hallucination. I am not referring to the special agents who sell direct to consumers. These people usually get a commission equal to merchants' profit and expense of selling by travelers combined. It costs from 3 to 7 per cent. by the traveling system now in vogue to secure orders, varying according to the class of goods. In a few lines of luxuries or specialties the estimate is 10 per cent.

For the sake of illustration, suppose every traveler was "called home." Merchants would require to visit the trade centres at regular intervals, and depend on letter orders for sorting. The expense incurred by such trips must be added to the cost of purchases, and it is doubtful if the wholesaler would be able to reduce prices sufficient to create a balance in favor of house buying. Their home expense would at once increase, good salesmanship would be in demand, while now it is a well known fact mechanical effort is largely all that is required out side of the heads of the departments.

#### A DEFENCE OF THE PROFESSION.

A shrewd buyer can make a better selection of dry goods from sample than out of stock. He has the whole range before his eyes at once, even if the sample is comparatively small, but at the house only a few designs of each line are in sight. Besides, every traveler knows the leading lines and is not backward in calling attention to them. In buying from sample he

deals with one man whom he respects and trusts. At the house he meets a different salesman on every flat, and seldom the same man on returning trips. They may be good fellows, but undesirable lines will find their way in through the doors of every warehouse, even if fortified with the best buyers the country produces. These piles are eyesores to house-men, and it is their daily effort to close them out. The mistake of the European buyer is repeated by the retailer, although less liable to occur in sample buying.

These off lines may be all right at a price, but are seldom so offered until sorting season. Large buyers usually get them, because they can clear the lot, and for such men at such times alone is house buying an advantage.

History teaches us that all systems change, and it may be that the future will close this door of useful employment, but at the present there is no evidence of its waning influence as a factor in business life. To my mind it is nearer the morning than the evening of its day of grace.

#### LONG SERVICE RECORDS IN THE TRADE.

Some time ago an English paper offered a prize to the person who could show that he had been longest in one employ in the dry goods trade. The winner of the prize is Mr. Nathan Meadows, who has been in the service of Messrs. Ryland & Sons, Manchester, since July, 1834, making a total of over sixty-one years in the one concern.

Mr. Jonas Snowden has a record of fifty-four years' service in one firm. He writes: "I have been in the employ of my present firm, Brown, Muff & Co., drapers and silk mercers, Market street, Bradford, Yorkshire, since early in 1841, so that I have completed fifty-four years' service. I am in my seventy-second year, and am still doing active duty."

Mr. George F. Davey, 121 Gipsy road, West Norwood, who has a record of fifty-two years, writes: "I have been engaged in one of the largest drapery warehouses in the city of London for over fifty-two years, and I may state that I commenced my duties on the 9th September, 1843, at Messrs. Cook, Son & Co.'s, St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C."

Mr. William Bushell has been fifty-one years at Waterloo House, Northampton. He began his duties there on the 3rd August, 1844.

Mr. Thomas Harris has been in the service of Messrs. Atkinson & Co., Westminster bridge road, Lambeth, for a little over fifty-one years.

Messrs. A. de Gruchy, Jersey, send the following note: "This is to certify that Miss Rebecca Hannah Shore, whose signature is subscribed below, is and has been in our employ for an uninterrupted period of fifty-one years."

Mr. Thomas Spencer, 15 Beacon Hill, Blue Bell Hill, Nottingham, entered the service of Mr. Robert Dickinson, Long Row, in 1845. He has remained in the same house till now. He is in his sixty-second year.

Mr. Marshall, of Messrs. Brady & Co., drapers, Barnsley, has just completed his fifty years in the employment of that firm. Mr. Marshall, through the consideration of his employers, will in future only attend business on the two weekly market days.

How do these cases compare with Canadian records?