

## TORONTO WHOLESALE MEET

THE dry goods section of the Toronto Board of Trade met November 1. Among those present were Messrs. John D. Ivey (president), in the chair; W. R. Brock, John Macdonald, Wm. Blackley, A. A. Allan, Anderson, Darling, Cockshutt, and others. The meeting, which was one of the most interesting and important held for a long time, discussed, among other things, the following. Private agreements re chattel mortgages, the long arrears of rent on stores, the delivery of Custom House warrants, claims by customers for shortages, and the question of trade excursions.

In the matter of agreements re chattel mortgages and arrears of rent in case of insolvency, a committee was appointed to wait upon the Provincial Government in regard to changes in the present law.

The question of claims for shortages was discussed at some length. The wholesale trade feel that some of their experiences in this matter constitute a well-grounded grievance. They do not believe that the customer ever fraudulently makes a claim for goods which are really sent to him, but cases have occurred where negligence on his part entails considerable annoyance and inconvenience to the trade. It is claimed that carelessness in unpacking and undue haste in checking over the goods often leads to unfounded claims. The claims cause lengthy inquiries and correspondence, which finally result in clearing the sender of any error. The trade claim that their system of double checking before shipment of goods renders mistakes next to impossible. Errors, of course, may occur, but they believe that in nine instances out of ten, a little care and search on the part of the customer will stop the frequency of claims. A case was reported at the meeting, typical of others, wherein a claim was made of short shipment. A correspondence ensued which extended over several weeks. No explanation was forthcoming, and the firm shipping the goods were positive that they had been sent as per order. Finally, when the empty cases were received back, the missing goods were discovered in a corner of one of the empty cases. The opinion was expressed at the meeting that an intimation of this grievance, through THE DRY GOODS REVIEW, was all that was required to have it remedied, the trade feeling sure that the body of retailers throughout Canada were desirous of acting fairly and squarely in the matter.

The delay in the delivery of Custom House warrants between the Custom House and the railway freight sheds came in for severe criticism. In many cases 24 to 36 hours elapse between the time entries are passed and the delivery of goods, resulting in serious loss to merchants. The secretary was requested to communicate with Controller Wallace on the subject.

A committee was appointed to secure from the railway companies the arrangements for trade excursions similar to those now being arranged for in Montreal.

The future prospects of trade were also discussed. THE REVIEW was informed by Mr. J. D. Ivey, the president, that members present took a very hopeful view of the situation, the general impression being that the country has turned the corner and was in for better times.

## THE MERCHANT'S INTEREST IN DEEP WATERWAYS.

IN answer to a few questions put by THE DRY GOODS REVIEW to Mr. O. A. Howland, M. P. P., Toronto, president of the Deep Waterways Association, he replied: "What interest, I am asked, have merchants as a body in the question of deep waterways. Merchants are of the nature of middlemen, so that their prosperity and the activity of their business depend directly on the prosperity which surrounds them. Anything that will facilitate and stimulate production will make exports and imports brisker, and the people who will secure the advantage are the merchants. The question of freights is of prime importance. A deeper channel and longer locks must inevitably lengthen the distance to which Nova Scotia coal can be brought to Ontario. It would tend to create, as far west as Toronto or Collingwood, a competition between eastern and western coal which would keep the price of coal down. Further, the effect of deep water up to Toronto would render it possible to assemble at Toronto the ores from the northern and interior parts of Ontario, and to utilize them with the coal at the reduced prices which would result from competition.

"As to traffic with the Northwest, the advantage of deep water would be evident, since it would be found equally economical to ship all the products of the west and around the shores of the lakes—minerals, timbers and agricultural products—over the Northern Railway to Toronto for trans-shipment into deep water vessels of large capacity in preference to taking them round by Lake Erie and the Welland Canal. Making an inland port the market for Northwest products, so much nearer than New York, would unquestionably secure for the producers a larger share of the price of their products. It would depend on the energy and enterprise of our merchants of all kinds to develop the advantages which deep water would place at their doors. As to burden of the cost of completing the whole system, it should be remembered that at least one-half of the hundred millions necessary for the entire work would be spent on Canadian soil or along the borders of Canada, giving employment to Canadian labor and causing a great demand for supplies and stimulating business of all kinds.

"Once the work was determined on it would take some time to complete, and vessel owners and builders would have fair warning of the necessity of constructing enlarged and more economical vessels. I see no reason of a noteworthy character why Toronto, or Collingwood, or Owen Sound, should not become great ports for the construction and owning of such vessels, because it must be understood that the international negotiations precedent to the agreement to construct the work will involve stipulations for the free use by Canadian built and owned vessels of every part of the system. Would this, one may ask, necessitate an alteration in the present coasting law. That would be struggled for and only be waived if it could be shown that the coasting regulations would not interfere substantially with the fair and free use of the whole system by vessels of either nation. On this point it may be said that the majority of cargoes of great bulk are no doubt shipped from end to end of a long voyage, but undoubtedly the abolition of the coasting laws would logically form part of the whole scheme of free equal use.

"The feeling of the people in the Canadian west on this scheme is a matter of importance. As far as any indication appears, public sentiment among all classes in our Northwest is enthusiastically in favor of the development of this trunk route, even if a large part of the cost were once more borne by Can-