

the margin which should be left to the dealer, has entirely disappeared. Added to reduced profits has come the extension of the credit system to unlimited proportions.

With this state of things existing, it is indeed high time, that action should be taken by the grocers toward ameliorating their condition. There is no reason why grocers should cut each other's throats and bring the whole trade to the verge of ruin, through a senseless system of reducing profits until it would require a microscope to detect the margin remaining to the dealer upon his sales. The practice is entirely without justification, and shows an utter disregard for the simplest business principles, as well as a lamentable absence of the commonest kind of sense. Competition, erroneously believed to be the life of trade, here proves clearly that it is the death of trade. Combination, and not competition, is what is required, to place the grocery trade upon a healthy foundation.

The practice of making leaders of certain lines of goods, whereby such commodities are sold at or near cost, and in some instances even under cost, for the purpose of drawing custom, is an unbusinesslike proceeding. A fair, legitimate profit, no more nor no less, should be made upon all lines of goods handled. In the smaller towns, where there are general stores, such dealers sometimes reduce the profits upon their groceries to very small margins, to the exclusion of men who would engage in groceries alone, relying upon the dry goods and other lines for their profits. In Winnipeg grocers have had no such disadvantage to contend with, but they have themselves, by senseless competition, reduced the prices of sugars and some other staples to about cost. It should be the first work of the Winnipeg Grocers' Association to restore prices of such commodities, so that a fair return can be had from all sales. A grocer cannot legitimately afford to handle sugar for nothing, any more than he could adopt the same course with tea. In regard to the credit system, customers who have refused to pay bills should be made known to the association, with the understanding that such parties should not thereafter receive credit from any member of the association. A fine for disregarding such provision might be attached. A regular time might be arranged for presenting accounts, and a limit fixed wherein the payment of the same would be expected,

though in some special cases grocers would be compelled to allow deviations from the latter rule.

Winnipeg retail grocers have claimed as one of the reasons for forming an association, that some wholesale grocers and produce dealers in the city have been in the habit of selling at retail. If this claim can be substantiated, it is a just ground for complaint, and one which the retailers would be warranted in taking decisive action to prevent. So far as the wholesale grocers are concerned, it is not likely that there is any very great ground for complaint on this score, but should such be the case, measures should be taken to prevent it.

It is to be desired that all the retail grocers in the city will see it to be their duty to unite with the Grocers' Association. By united action a great deal can be accomplished toward bettering the condition of the trade. No doubt some dealers will hold aloof from the association, and some may even continue in the unbusinesslike practices previously referred to, but this should not discourage those who have undertaken the formation of the association. Perseverance should be the motto, and if conducted properly, the Winnipeg Grocers' Association will undoubtedly prove of great benefit to the retail grocery trade of the city.

THE LOCAL ELECTIONS.

It has at last been announced that the date of the elections for the Local Legislature of Manitoba has been definitely fixed, and that they will take place on December the 9th. The nominations for the same will accordingly take place one week previous to the date named, on December the 2nd. The House has been called for December the 16th. The verdict of the province will therefore soon be rendered upon the doings of our Provincial Parliament for the past four years. What that verdict will be it is exceedingly difficult to tell. It is said that by constantly repeating a story, though at first knowing it to be fictitious, a person will finally believe that such and such things did actually occur. On the same principle, if one were to read the opposition papers only, he would long ago have been forced to the conclusion, no matter how reluctantly, that the Norquay Government was irretrievably lost, and is now only awaiting the result of the election day to unceremoniously resign. On the other hand a perusal of the Government organs

alone would lead to quite the opposite conclusion, and the reader would be carried away with the belief that the opposition was to be swept away root and branch. But all these predictions are the merest conjecture and will carry but little weight with the experienced reader. The fact of the matter is, that until the election returns have been summed up, the general public cannot have the faintest idea as to the probable result. One thing, however, is certain, and that is, that both sides have been working for months back with a vigor scarcely ever outrivalled in an election contest, and whatever the result may be, a single constituency will not be allowed to go by default. The Government on their side have the favorable influence which naturally pertains to the party in power, and which especially in Manitoba, with a small population and a proportionately large public patronage, will amount to no insignificant factor in deciding the result. Added to this is a solid French vote, which in a closely contested election is quite large enough to turn the scales decidedly in favor of the Government. On the other hand the opposition have the opportunity of making as much capital as possible from the mistakes of the party in power; and that discontent and natural desire for a change which must arise, will undoubtedly be worked to the best advantage of those desiring to come into power.

One cause for regret in connection with the present campaign, and which cannot but be deplored by all right-thinking people, is found in the frequent charges of corruption preferred against their opponents by both parties. It appears to be a case of pot calling kettle black, for one party is as deep in the mud as the other in the mire. "Forgery," "perjury" and "criminality" are the pleasing epithets which have been applied by each side to the opposing party, and what is most to be deplored, these charges appear to have been substantiated by undeniable evidence. Party politics in Manitoba appear to have sunk to a low state indeed, when such practices have been so freely resorted to, and no stone left unturned to gain a point, either by fair means or foul means. It is to be hoped that candidates who have been detected in corrupt practices to secure their election, no matter to which party they belong, will be forced to retire from the contest; or in the event of their remaining in the field that they will be relegated to obscurity by the electors. The cause of either party is not so pressing that miscecity and corruption should be condoned, for the sake of returning a candidate who will vote for or against the Government.