

**THE CANADIAN GROCER**  
**& GENERAL STOREKEEPER**

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 and General Storekeepers.

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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.

**OUR MONTREAL OFFICE.**

Our Montreal Office is located at 115 St. Francois Xavier St. Our representative, Mr. G. Hector Clemes, will be pleased to have subscribers and advertisers call upon him there. He will also pay special attention to gathering business items and attending generally to the interests of this paper.

**UNDERPAID, ILL-TRAINED CLERKS.**

A large proportion of the business failures of the country is yearly attributed to incompetence. Men undertake to manage before they have learnt to serve. Every year it seems the number of callow fledglings who go forth on their own untried wings grows larger, and unfitness becomes an increasing cause of commercial breakdown. Why is this? Are the young men of to-day more conceited or more ambitious than were the young men of twenty years ago? Possibly they are. It is no doubt a fact that the farther we get from the time when youths were apprenticed to the trade of shopkeeper, the more unruly become the aspirations of young clerks. In the freer circumstances that surround a young man's entrance into the trade of salesman these days, precocity is apt to find congenial soil, and a bumpish self belief is a more common outcome than it was of the rigorous system whereby the young fellow was indentured, and his father bound for him, to serve his probation. The schooling was usually hard enough but it was thorough, and tended to crush out the foolish over estimate of himself that freedom to leave or stay too often leads the novice to

cherish. We are behind the old countries in the matter of service to-day, simply because we have not so complete a training school for our clerks. We have good clerks, but it is to their own credit and to the credit of their trainers that they are good, and not to the credit of the system.

The fault of our system is that it recognizes a beginner's service as being worth money at the outset. As the learner progresses he expects more pay, and if he does not get it he seeks for it elsewhere. His belief in himself soon comes to outrun the value that is put by his employer on his work, and then the young fellow thinks it a pity that such a high order of ability as his should be given for so meagre pay to the advancement of others. If he can get a hold of any money, and if he cannot he can usually get credit, he will open a store, and after a brief career will take the plunge that a thorough training would have fitted him to avoid. But the training there was no means of forcing him to submit to, as there were no articles binding him, and the modern substitute for bonds, the inducement of a small salary, is mischievous in its effects. It fails to keep the boy in training and gives him a sense of independence that will not brook training.

The pay of clerks who are supposed to have got through their training is also a cause of injury to trade. These men do not usually make enough in the service of employers, and they take the first opportunity to set up for themselves. They may possess the business ability to do an independent trade, but in many cases they lack the means, and their failure speedily comes. Better pay when men are through the training stage, and more thorough drilling while they are in it would do much to lower the failure rate every year.

**WHOLESALE SEEDSMEN AND FARMERS.**

Complaints having reached us that wholesale seedsmen in this city were quoting to farmers the same prices as to retail traders, a representative of THE GROCER took the matter in hand for the purpose of verifying or correcting it. He called upon Mr. R. C. Steele, president of the Steele Bros. Co. (Ltd.) and asked that gentleman if the complaint was according to fact. Mr. Steele did not deny that it was, but stated that so far as the practice of his house was concerned there was no truth in it. He believed in doing all the business possible, both in the buying and selling of stock, through the country merchant, and had not dealt and would not deal with farmers upon the same basis as with country merchants. The injustice complained of was probably wrongly placed when laid at the door of wholesale seedsmen. If the retail merchants would look into the facts, they might find that most of the quoting and selling to farmers on the usual trade terms, were done by houses that were not jobbers at all, but strictly retail traders. Some of these were working up a trade throughout the country, and their offers and sales might be confused with those of wholesalers. It was not unlikely too that some of these were giving consumers the same terms as were given to dealers.

Other seedsmen called upon stated that the evil no doubt existed, but that it was impossible to remedy it. The Farmers' Institutes were blamed by some of them for getting consumers upon the same terms as retailer. The members of these agricultural bodies did all they could to damage the retailer, and when they could not get from him seeds at wholesale prices they would apply to jobbers, some of whom, sooner than