

make the jewelry trade a healthier and far better paying business than it now is.

Our correspondent, H. D., whose letter will be found in another part of this issue, has had in his experience a practical knowledge of more than one of these abuses, and everyone who reads his letter must admit that such things can only be regulated by concerted action amongst the retailers themselves.

Nine tenths of the abuses and drawbacks in the jewelry business are occasioned by the greed or shortsightedness, not of the jobber whose interest is identical with that of the retailer, but of the retailers themselves, and with themselves alone lies the remedy.

Will they band together and look into these matters and then take steps to counteract them, or will they sit quietly by with folded hands and expect others to do it for them?

So far, we are afraid our retail jewelers have quietly let things drift, and been content to kick only in a mild way; but all such kicking has been done by individuals and in the quietest manner possible.

Things in the retail trade have now reached such a stage that prudence demands that there should at once be vigorous and concerted action amongst the retailers themselves if they want to make their business financially healthy and worth following.

Of course we do not want our readers to infer that the jewelry business can't be made to pay under the existing circumstances, but we do wish very plainly to state, considering the skill and capital required for its successful carrying out, that on account of abuses that can easily be cured by united action amongst retailers themselves, it does not pay one-half as well as it should do.

As several of our correspondents have plainly pointed out, many of our jewelers are selling not only their goods, but their services as skilled mechanics at about cost, instead of at a fair living profit, and are thus spoiling their neighbors' business without doing their own any good.

This is not as it should be, nor as it might be were the trade to put their heads together and insist upon having a fair return for the skilled work of their hands and brain and the capital they have invested in their business.

In our opinion, retailers want to be protected against themselves as much, if not more, than anyone else, and the sooner they set about reforming these trade abuses, the better for them. The remedy lies in their own hands, will they apply it?

In this connection we have a suggestion to make. Perhaps in no place in Canada is the trade more cut up, on account of competition, than in Toronto, and certainly in no place are those curses of legitimate business, auction and discount sales, more frequently to be met with. Now then will the retail jewelers of Toronto, who have probably more abuses to contend against than any other city in Canada, set the example and organize for the purpose of putting the trade upon a common sense basis? If there is not life enough in the members of the trade to help themselves, they must continue to suffer, but let it be in silence, for no one will take any heed to the complaints of those who, having the power, are either too timid or apathetic to help themselves.

We could, did space permit, enlarge considerably on this important subject, but we withhold anything further at present; in our next we propose to point out a few of the abuses that are demoralizing the retail trade, and show how they can be remedied.

CUSTOMS SEIZURES.

As long as people in their haste to get rich, will persist in smuggling, so long will the customs authorities, in the discharge of their legitimate duties, be compelled to make seizures of goods thus fraudulently brought into the country. Instead of being blamed, these customs authorities are deserving of credit, and honest traders should at all times render them whatever aid they can in helping to bring the guilt home to those parties violating the law. By so doing, they are not only crippling unfair and injurious competition, by making such competitors buy at the same prices as law abiding merchants are compelled to do, but they prevent the demoralization of trade that is sure to take place where smuggled goods are put in cut-throat competition with regularly imported stock.

When we say, however, that the customs authorities are therefore entitled to consideration and respect in the performance of the necessary though disagreeable duty of seizing smuggled goods, we do so with the qualification that such seizures should be made on good grounds, and that the details are carried out in a business-like and gentlemanly manner. Customs officers are invested by the law with a great deal of power, and may, if they choose, exercise it in a very arbitrary manner, to the hurt and discredit of those whose goods they are compelled to attach. We are glad to say that so far as Canada is concerned, our Customs officials as a rule, are not only thoroughly painstaking and honest, but where seizures have to be made, it is done in such a manner as to cause as little friction and loss as possible.

We are sorry to say, however, that to this high standard there are some very notable exceptions, the worst of which is probably Mr. Mingaye, Collector of Customs at the City of Winnipeg. We have had occasion to refer to this gentleman before, for he has made himself a terror to every merchant, whether honest or dishonest, that has been unfortunate enough to have anything to do with the Winnipeg Custom House. Winnipeggers, as a rule, are not noted for tame submissiveness, but they seem to have put up with their collector's tyranny and impertinence until patience ceased to be a virtue, and a few weeks ago, their Board of Trade, many of whom are in political accord with Mr. Mingaye, unanimously passed a resolution "that in the interests of the mercantile community, as well as of the Dominion Government, the present Collector and Surveyor of Customs be removed."

It is probable that the Government will be compelled to listen to the appeal of their friends in regard to this matter, and that ere long the City of Winnipeg may be freed from one of the greatest martinetts that ever infested it. If the Government can not afford to dispense with his services, we would respectfully suggest that he be translated to our northern border line and commissioned to prevent our Indians from smuggling fire-water and other luxuries from Alaska into the Dominion. The man is evidently a crank of the first water.

During the discussion in the Winnipeg Board of Trade at the meeting above alluded to, considerable stress was laid upon the seizure of Mr. Wm. Perret's jewelry stock by the collector, and the unjust and arbitrary manner in which he has acted towards that gentleman in the matter. Although this seizure was made about the middle of July last, Mr. Mingaye has steadily refused to proceed any faster than his own contrary