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E. Desbarats, Manager.

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Euro can Branch:
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THEY USE THEIR BRAINS.

SOME people do and some do not believe that business success depends to a great extent on the use of brains rather than hands, on the pie mater rather than the limb muscles. A strong example of the benefit of brain work was cited by a retailer a few days ago. When the recent changes in the prices of the Toronto dailies to newsdealers were published, he sat down and carefully figured the matter out, and his calculations just net him, he claims, nearly two hundred dollars a year. He takes 150 dailies. If he would pay for these monthly at two cents a copy it would amount to \$78 each month, or \$468 for six months, this being computed at the rate of two cents a copy. But he doesn't do this, he pays 150 subscriptions six months in advance, and these cost him \$2.50 each or \$375 for the whole number. Now the difference between \$375, or the cost by paying six months in advance, and \$468, the cost of the same number of papers when paid at the two cent rate, is ninety-three dollars. This amount is saved every six months on 150 copies, or \$186 every year. Take off \$26 for interest, loss, etc.—a very liberal allowance—and the dealer claims a net gain of \$160 from this piece of arithmetic. Now this is a huge sum to save on a small adjunct of the ordinary booksellers' business. Most newsdealers and booksellers say that there is no money in selling daily papers, and yet here is a dealer making nearly two hundred dollars a year by a mere discrimination in the manner of payment. Other examples might be given,

but each dealer must find these things out for himself, by deep study, business conversation, and intense watchfulness. These savings are what make one man a millionaire, in the same business in which another is starving. The active, intelligent business man cannot be left behind if he uses his brains. Hire clerks to do the manual labor, and do the brainwork yourself. Don't slave doing work worth five or ten dollars a week, when you can work in your office at work worth \$100 per week. Hands are certainly to be used, but so are brains. But the brains are what make the wealth, not the hands.

PERFECTLY MADDENING.

TO wave a red cloth before the eyes of an angry bull, will raise no more maddening thoughts in the cranium of Mr Taurus, than will be raised in the mind, brain, face and eyes of the ordinary wholesaler in Toronto when he is asked how import orders are coming in for rubber balls. The honest dealer bubbles over with righteous wrath, the less honest dealer with unrighteous wrath. To find the cause of this trouble, one would need a search-warrant, but still we have been lucky enough to receive a few pointers on the subject.

The wholesale merchants are jealous of one another; the travellers are jealous of one another, and the result is blood-thirsty knifing and murderous slaughter—of prices. Why this should be, no one can assert any weighty reasons, but the lamentable fact nevertheless presents itself in all its discouraging hideousness. Some firms who a few years ago were engaged in handling rubber balls have ceased to do so. They felt no doubt that the business was not on a safe and honest basis, and they dropped it. Others are disgusted and discouraged, and would drop it if they dared. What is the cause of all this trouble? Purely and simply a want of honesty—a want of honesty in giving instructions to travellers—a want of honesty in travellers, and a want of honesty in retailers—these are the places where the dishonesty lies. Not that we would dare to say that all of any of these classes are dishonest, only a portion of each is so tinctured. The traveller comes into the house and says, "So-and So are quoting below us on rubber balls, and I can't get orders." The merchant is perplexed. He doesn't want to meet cuts, but what is he to do? The retailer asks the traveller, "What can you quote me rubber balls at." He gets his answer. "Oh, I can do better than that," is the reply. The traveller quizzes him, but he won't tell how much better, and seeing he is a good customer, the traveller is finally scared into offering a little more discount, and the dealer has, often dishonestly, made a gain. Sometimes the fault lies with the traveller, just as often it lies with the retailer.

Just at this season of the year all the houses send out a price list, quoting certain

prices, subject to certain discounts, for rubber balls. The prices vary very little, but the discounts vary very much. In the first place, import orders placed before January first are subject to a discount not allowed after that date. But the trouble is that circumstances other than market fluctuations send that discount up and down more irregularly than the movements of the barometer. Competition overcomes business rules and often business integrity.

This cutting would not be so disastrous if it were confined to rubber goods only. But the trouble is that the evil is more or less general in all branches of the book, stationery and fancy goods trades. It makes business very unsatisfactory, and in many cases brings profits down to starvation level. This unsoundness of business methods is leading to extreme unsoundness in the financial condition of some of the firms. But it is to be hoped that nothing disastrous will result. There should surely be enough honor left among the retailers and wholesalers to rid the trade of this mean and dishonest practice.

AN INSOLVENCY LAW.

A T a recent meeting of the dry goods section of the Board of Trade, it was decided that the Dominion government should be asked to act at once concerning the proposed Insolvency Act, as the country was suffering from the lack of a proper Bankruptcy law. The need is much felt among all classes of mercantile trade. A wholesaler of this city remarked a few days ago, that accounts in the Maritime provinces were so uncertain, that when word arrived that a merchant had failed down there, his firm simply closed the account into the loss and gain account, and tried to forget that they ever had such a customer. But the bill proposed last session had many serious defects which should be remedied before passage; the main objection to it, being its complicated and lengthy nature. The main feature of the bill were as follows: Creditors have power to attach the property of insolvent debtors who refused to assign; unjust preferences are prohibited; provision is made for the equal distribution of the assets among the creditors, and provision is also made for the discharge of insolvents. There are to be no official assignees, but, except in counties or districts containing cities with a population of more than 20,000 the sheriff of the county or district (and in the Province of Quebec the prothonotary) is to be a guardian, and in counties and districts where there is a city of over 20,000, the Board of Trade is to appoint a guardian to take charge of the insolvent estates and call meetings of creditors, and at such meetings liquidators are to be appointed by the creditors. These provisions are apparently all right but they might have been written down in a more concise form.