



THE CANADIAN GROCER
& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

**PUBLISHED
WEEKLY
\$2.00 PER YEAR**

Published in the interest of Grocers, Cannery, Produce and Provision Dealers
and General Storekeepers.

Vol. V.

TORONTO, JULY 10, 1891.

No. 28

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THE J. B. McLEAN PUBLISHING COMPANY,
FINE MAGAZINE PRINTERS
AND
TRADE JOURNAL PUBLISHERS.

HEAD OFFICE : 6 Wellington West, Toronto.
MONTREAL OFFICE : 115 St. Francois Xavier St.
G. Hector Olemes, Manager.
NEW YORK OFFICE : Room 105, Times Building,
Roy V. Somerville, Manager.

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.

The Patrons of Industry are in this country favored with a good deal of gratuitous advertising. Their attempt to gain a foothold has been aided by the advantage which seeming success gives to a struggling cause. That they have not succeeded is a fact; that they have seemed to succeed partially is due to the reports of their meetings, circulation of their professed principles, laudation of their aims and personal notice of their leaders and organizers. All these oblique indications of progress have come from the news paper press, whose references in those and other connections to the Patrons, have roused that curiosity which advertisements awaken in anything new that is sought to be launched upon public attention. People who never heard of the Patrons are made inquisitive concerning them by such news items, they are led to take an exaggerated estimate of the Patrons' numbers and influence, and soon are on the high road to becoming Patrons themselves.

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It is possible in this way to make that a success which intrinsically has not the elements of success in it. If reports of lodge meetings contain complimentary references, if an enthusiastic tone pervades accounts of movements to organize, the aid thus given will have a strong effect in forwarding the

union of consumers that the Patrons aim at. Lately the Patrons have been hailed by several newspapers in terms that would leave the impression on readers that a general emancipation from the bondage of trade was a crying necessity, and that the Patrons were to be the instrument of the people's deliverance. It is noticeable that identically the same matter has more than once appeared in different papers at about the same time, which is apt to cause a suspicion that its form was due to a member of the society and not to any of the papers' own staff. It also suggests the possibility that the newsy paragraphs with headings calculated to stimulate strong interest may be paid for as advertising matter.

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One thing is clear : it is not to the interest of newspapers that the Patrons should succeed in fastening their shackles upon the trade of this country. If retailers have to forego the greater portion of their profits because the Patrons get a controlling hand upon the trade of the country, the retailers will have to cut down the expenses of doing business, and one expense that will be unnecessary in such a supposed subjection of the trade will be that for advertising. When the country has got organized into lodges of Patrons of Industry, each with its own storekeeper bound to it, where will there be need for advertising, every group of consumers being bound to deal with none but a particular dealer, and that dealer aware that all consumers outside of his group are arranged in similar systems round their dealers? No trader will be able to dislocate from another trader's custom a single consumer, and he will be sure of what he has. Then why advertise? There will be no need to advertise, and the occupation of the newspapers now booming the Patrons will be gone. The local traders have heretofore given these papers strong support. It is difficult to see, looking ahead or looking backward, any reason for the remarkable readiness such papers have shown to make themselves the auxiliaries virtually to co-erce traders to surrender the greater portion of their profits.

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We have an outspoken newspaper here and there, and the Huntingdon Gleaner is one of them. That journal has not feared

to risk the alienation of a few agricultural subscribers by speaking the truth. It opposes the attempt to put the trade of the country upon an arbitrary and irrational basis, and for this has drawn upon itself the displeasure of the Patrons. It does a public service by taking the attitude it takes. The newspaper press generally would not only be working in its own interest but would be benefiting its readers if it would leave the Patrons to stand or fall on their own merits. To give them a factitious importance is not called for by the duty of that press to the public.

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Newspapers have little to gain by the advancement of the combine principle among either consumers or distributors and manufacturers. The more that principle informs departments of trade or bodies of consumers, the deeper is buried the hatchet of competition, and the less reason have producers and others in the same line to vie with one another in the advertising ring. The competition which is least fettered is best for the newspapers, and it is hard to reconcile with an apprehension of that truth the more than lukewarm support the Patrons get from certain papers in this country.

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Despite the help of the press in question the cause of the Patrons languishes. Lodges do not spring into existence under the wand of the professional organizer, and the farmers show a commendable hard-headedness in yielding to the persuasions of the emissaries of the society. The farmers indeed have their own reasons, because they have their own experience, to counsel them. Theirs is the only trade in the country which has given a trial to the plan of co-operative buying, and the Grange they have to a very large extent given up as a failure. The Patrons regard all producers as eligible for membership to their society, and would put all mechanics', etc., on the same footing as farmers. This is not in accord with the movements towards union among farmers, who have regarded mechanics, etc., as very much in the same category with tradesmen. For that among other reasons the society is not apt to come to much strength. Reports from the United States show it to be a waning movement there.