

WHY NEWSPAPER ADS So Often FAIL the LOCAL MERCHANTS

*Analysis From Retailers'
Standpoint Contains Text
for Newspapermen*

THE Philadelphia (Pa.) *Retail Ledger* was a "child" of the Curtis magazine organization, similarly as *System* and other business publications have grown out of house organs—always, however, really worth while house publications, let be noted.

Now a distinct, distinctive and independent institution, the *Retail Ledger* comes out in newspaper form and circulates among thousands of retail merchants in all lines. It is not a free circulation enterprise. Its contents are "experience stories" of and by retailers, well illustrated.

William Nelson Taft, editor of the *Retail Ledger* is teaching merchants by the hundreds to improve their newspaper advertising, through showing practical examples of successful uses of newspaper columns by local retailers, and strong editorials and features. The contents are noteworthy for absence of impractical leads and mere hip-hooray stuff. The leads are tied, not to spurious "tie-up-with-the-magazines" suggestions, but with local merchandising methods.

WHY IS RETAIL ADVERTISING NOT BEING READ?

Mr. Taft answered as follows in a recent address to retail advertiser-merchants: "Too stereotyped in style. Most of it might as well all come out of the same office, from the same writer—meaningless phrases about style, splashy circus-style cuts,—plus a price reduction appeal. That's all. And such things are expected to bring in crowds of people."

WHY RETAIL ADVERTISEMENTS ARE NOT BELIEVED

"Stores have undermined confidence through insane insistence on featuring cut prices and 'sales'.

"On a recent afternoon two Philadelphia newspapers carried 197 different sales advertisements containing, by actual count, 83 different adjectives used in connection with these sales. In addition to the 'sales' of practically every type of merchandise carried by stores, there were 'momentous' sales and 'epochal' sales—sales that were 'Monumental' and sales that were 'gigantic'—sales that were 'unprecedented' and sales that were 'unparalleled'.

"In order to restore confidence it is necessary that retail advertisements should be frank and that they should



WILLIAM NELSON TAFT
Editor, Philadelphia (Pa.) Retail Ledger

understate, rather than exaggerate. A policy of this kind, coupled with the proper use of institutional advertising, will eventually restore the public's faith in the printed word as it appears in retail copy.

"Today, there is something wrong with retail advertising, but I firmly believe that the moment stores generally analyze the situation and apply the necessary remedies, they will find that their copy pays them as handsome dividends as those which are being returned to advertisers in the national field, where the correct principles have long been applied."

THEY WONDER WHY?

By A. K. CLEVENGER
(Publisher, Claremont, Va.,
Herald)

COUNTRY merchants, all complain

And talk of takin' off the train
Of diggin' up good roads and sich
And runnin' autos in the ditch.

Because the people buy by mail
And with tin lizzies hit the trail—
These ancient traders wail and cry
"We must stop this exodus or die!"

The guy today that gets the trade,
Don't yelp that "Biz's a fickle jade,"
But Advertises and tells what he's got
Makes prices right on the whole
d— lot!

MORAL: The people don't care a
Tinker's dam,
They're goin' where the
Advertiser am!

—Courtesy, Bonnet-Brown SCARAB.

THERE'S a job—whether or not Mr.

Taft is all O. K. or only partly right—in this subject for the newspaper publisher and advertising manager; yes, for the associations, too. It is "NPJ's" opinion that too much time is being wasted roasting the billboards, the magazines, the "other fellow" and all the rest of that, which could be profitably employed in really analyzing local merchants' ad-problems and serving him better.—J. L. M.

SHORTSIGHTED

POOR ole Bill! 'E's so shortsighted
'e's working 'imself to death."

"Wot's 'is short-sighted got to do with it?"

"Well, 'e, can't see when the foreman ain't looking, so 'e 'as ta keep on setting 'em up all the time."

LINCOLN STEFFENS, journalistic "clean-'em up," confesses that after a long rest he was surprised and shocked to discover the world had not fallen to pieces when he let go.

WOULD some newspapers have more backbone if they ran a spinal column?