

WHO IS TO BLAME?

EDITOR PRINTER AND PUBLISHER:

DEAR SIR, —The following from The Brockville Recorder will be read with interest no doubt by your many subscribers:

"A printing firm, Brough & Co., failed in Toronto yesterday with liabilities of \$16,000 and practically no assets. Good printing is being done too cheaply in most cases these days. People want first-class work for second-class prices. The Journal discovered this when it was in the job-printing business some years ago, and got out of it. Another trouble in the business is that the press, type and paper manufacturers seem ready to give big credit to every new printer who starts in business, whether he has capital or brains or neither. This is unjust to the older firms. Last year and the year before there was failure after failure in the printing business in Toronto, and most people interested thought that a more conservative course would follow on the part of the type-founders and paper-makers who suffered losses by the failures; but the Brough failure seems to show that they have not learned either justice or wisdom. There must be a huge profit in the price of type and printers' equipment in general, in the cases where the manufacturers are paid."

"The above is taken from The Ottawa Journal and places the case pretty accurately. Printing matter has a value, and so long as those engaged in the business pay for their type, paper, ink, and their employes' wages, that value has to be secured in prices charged customers. When less than value is charged some person is being defrauded. Either the type and press dealers or the paper sellers are not being paid, or the hard-working employes who perform the work in connection with printing, are being cheated out of what justly belongs to them. In either case a great wrong is being perpetrated. It is no wonder there are scores of failures among the printers of Toronto, for it could not be otherwise. The Recorder has personal knowledge of Toronto firms offering to accept printing contracts in Brockville for less than the cost of the blank paper, and it also knows of one or two contracts being taken on which, if the printers and wholesale men got their pay, there was certainly a loss of from 10 to 15 per cent. It is a significant fact that nearly all this kind of thing is done in the vicinity of Ontario's capital, and that centre furnishes more insolvent printers than all the rest of Canada combined. The Recorder buys its type, presses and paper as cheap as any house in Canada, and it pays its employes a trifle more wages than are paid in most towns the size of Brockville, and it will do as The Journal did, throw out the job printing part of the business if it cannot be conducted on a business basis. The job printing department of The Recorder has facilities for doing all classes of work that are used by the business houses of Brockville, and it is anxious to secure all the work available at fair prices, but it has no desire to get on the route to the goal of insolvency, reached by so many Toronto printing houses, neither has it an ambition to defraud the paper, press or type men, nor to rob the printers who labor hard every day, in order that somebody may get a printing job for less than its value."

Will The Journal and The Recorder please say from whom they purchase their type, presses, ink and paper? Are they in the same boat with a prominent printer—pays cash for everything he buys—who stopped me on the street the other day and expressed a hope that PRINTER AND PUBLISHER would jump on the Brough Printing Co. with both feet. The single question I asked brought out the fact that he bought all of his supplies from the very people who are the heaviest creditors in the present failure. Now, in the name of goodness, who is to blame for the present failure? I do not think it is Mr. Brough. It is the man who can afford to be independent and buy where he pleases that is responsible for the rotten condition of the printing trade in Toronto and its demoralization in other Canadian cities. The printers' supply men must live, as well as the employ-

ing printers, and if the former are not given to understand that they must not open competing offices, they are at liberty to sell as much as they like and on whatever terms they like. If Mr. Brough had not sense enough to see that he was incapable of managing a large printing business, the printers' supply men should have pointed out that fact to him and the master printers of Canada should have seen that the supply men did so. The supply men will not protect the hundred-cent-on-the-dollar-man if he does not endeavor to protect himself. Why has not the Canadian Press Association or the Toronto Employing Printers' Association taken the matter up? It is well known that anyone can go to Miller & Richard's, Toronto Type Foundry, Canada Printing Ink Co., Buntin, Reid & Co., and sometimes Westman & Baker, and get all the material they require without paying down one cent. This is certainly not fair, but we ask again: Who is to blame? Simply the man who can afford to dictate terms and conditions and does not do so. Your apprentice may leave you tomorrow, and next day you may find him in next door with a complete plant.

What do printers' supply men care about you? Absolutely nothing. Do you suppose the wholesale dry goods, grocery or hardware houses of Canada would be allowed to sell as the printers' supply men sell? Not much. As I said before, you have yourselves to blame. Force these supply houses to your terms by refusing to purchase from them. PRINTER AND PUBLISHER told us two or three years ago that Buntin, Reid & Co., under the management of Alexander Buntin, were going to reform; that they had been great sinners in the past. Will some one please tell me if the reformation has set in, as I should like to join in the "Hallelujah chorus." In conclusion, if printers who can afford to do so will refuse to buy from these supply men, the disease is cured.

Respectfully yours,

KINGSTON.

CANADIAN BLOTTING PAPER.

The E. B. Eddy Co., Hull, are now turning out a very superior blotting paper. Little, if any, blotting paper has been made in this country, and, according to samples received, the E. B. Eddy Co.'s make will compare well with the imported article.

A NEW COVER PAPER.

The "Defender" cover paper is a novelty lately introduced into the market by an American manufacturer. It has sprung into popularity in the States, and promises to do the same here. The paper comes in regular cover paper size, 20 x 25, in various colors and weights. By a special arrangement, Buntin, Gillies & Co., Hamilton, are in a position to sell the goods at the same price in Canada as the paper dealers in the United States sell it. The firm offers to send samples to any one interested.

THE CANADIAN PRINTER AND PUBLISHER for February was a special Press Association number, and particularly attractive and interesting. Every Canadian publisher should have it; we don't mean that number only, but this up-to-date printers journal right along.—Markdale Standard.

Mr. T. H. Butler, formerly of The Stratford Herald and Times, will take charge of the editorial department of The Chesley Free Press in future.