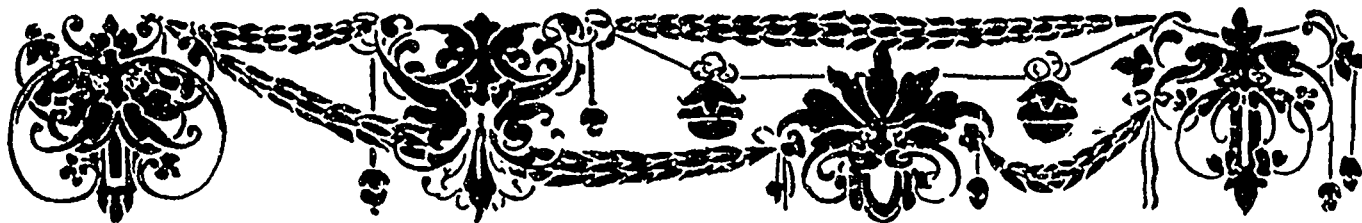


The Bookseller and Stationer



Vol. XVII.

TORONTO AND MONTREAL, CANADA, FEBRUARY, 1901.

No. 2.

CURRENT NOTES AND COMMENTS OF TRADE INTEREST.

School Text-books—Inter- The discussion on text-book changes as they affect the view with Hon. retail booksellers has aroused Mr. Harcourt. great interest all over the country. Even outside of Ontario dealers are considering the question.

Feeling that the able and interesting letters from leading members of the trade which have appeared in these columns warranted some action by *THE BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER* in bringing the matter before the Ontario Department, a representative of this journal waited upon Hon. Richard Harcourt, Minister of Education, early in February and presented a statement of the views of the trade. Mr. Harcourt, it will be remembered, only became Minister of Education on the formation of the Ross Government about a year or so ago, having previously to that been Provincial Treasurer. Having heard with attention the statement made, the Minister said:

"I quite understand the ground for these complaints, and have already been con-

sidering the best means by which announcements of changes could be made."

"You do not think the complaint unreasonable?"

"By no means; there is no reason why any genuine grievances should go unredressed, and the booksellers, like any other portion of the community, are entitled to attention and courteous treatment when a matter of this kind is brought up. No changes in text books have been made since I became Minister of Education, the changes of last year having been arranged before I took this Department. As to those changes, I might remind the booksellers that there is a clause in the regulations—in fact you might reprint it in *THE BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER*—which provides that the trustees can continue the old books which were in use until such time as further notice is given. This clause is as follows: "4. Any text books used in any school on July 1, 1900, and recommended by resolution of the trustees to be continued in use, shall be deemed as authorized in such school until further notice. The vertical or slanting copy books heretofore authorized, and published by the Rose Publishing Co., may be used in any public school."—[From Departmental regulations approved August, 1900.] In any locality, therefore, where any special injustice would be done by a rapid change, the Department does not force changes, but leaves it at the option of trustees.

"That, of course, Mr. Harcourt, deals with the past, and the trade are anxious about the future. What about that?"

"Well, as to that I can only repeat that I see no reason why timely notice should not be given, although no definite plan has yet been agreed upon. Still, I can see no reason why your paper should not be kept informed of changes, and this can be a subject for future consideration."

"But are further changes contemplated in the near future?"

"Oh, no," said the Minister with a smile, "not for months and months."

From subsequent inquiries—not made of the Minister—*THE BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER* found that last year's changes were all that were expected for some time. As the former rule of the Department was not to give any public announcement until changes were definitely resolved upon, it was not easy; in fact, almost impossible, for anyone to learn of them. The only exception to this was when the author of the book entrusted with the duty of preparing it, chose himself to let people know that he was at work. In this way information leaked out in an accidental manner. We assume, however, that the Department is contemplating a change of policy in this respect, and that future changes will be known in time.

Two points at least occur to us in this connection which seem of importance to the trade; first, how long a time should be given for changes to go into operation; secondly, if notice is given to the general public at the same time as to the trade would the interests of the booksellers in any way suffer? These points, and others, we would like our readers to consider, and we shall be glad to have their opinion at an early date. Now is the time for action. Let no delay take place in urging the Department to agree upon a definite plan and keep to it.

We have received a letter from a Western dealer which we print as an evidence of how widespread the interest is in this question of text-book changes. Mr. J. H. Taylor, Carnduff, Assiniboia, says:

"I have read with much interest your