

To endorse this anomaly, we apprehend, few will deem it either prudent or right. It shuts out all competition, and repeats that economic wrong—Government interference with trade—and leads to the repression of those industries and literary enterprises, on the part of the publishers of the country, which it ought to be the duty and pride of the Government to foster and protect.

This reckless disregard by the Department of trade interests was first shown in throwing the work of two years' enterprise back in the faces of the publishers, at an aggregate loss of not far from one hundred thousand dollars. It was next shown in taking the work entirely out of the hands of the trade, and dealing with the publishers merely as intermediaries between the Department and the public. We are frank enough to say that the exigencies of the case, after Mr. Hardy had muddled matters by his obstinate and vindictive partisanship, necessitated a bold change of Departmental policy. But we are far from saying that this policy should have been reckless of the interests at stake. Indifference so hurtful to the enterprise of our publishers, and contemptuous of the capital actively and beneficently employed by the trade in the preparation of the various series of Readers submitted to the Department, was sure to bring a harvest of trouble. What Mr. Ross ought to have done was not to have undertaken a new series by Departmental *proteges*, and opened the door to the inlet of intrigue and party wire-pulling, but to have shown justice to the third set of Readers, the merits of which Mr. Hardy had refused to consider, authorized it equally with the other two, and restricted the use of all to a limited period. With the judgment of the country to help him, he could then have narrowed his choice to the best of the three series in the market, and, on the most advantageous terms

to the public, given it exclusive authorization. An alternative course was open to him in submitting the three series to a competent and rigidly impartial board of appraisers, ascertained which was the most meritorious and useful for both teachers and taught, honourably and fearlessly authorized it, and given compensation to the publishers of the rejected series that had snatched a hasty and partizan authorization. Instead of taking one or other of these courses we know what has happened. The Department has gone back to a system impolitic if not vicious, and the country is committed to a series without the advantage of competition, and of the merits of which it knows nothing. This, unfortunately, is what we pay for a political chief at the head of education.

It were well if this were the worst. Already, we learn, it is contemplated by the Department to lay hands upon other text-books besides the Readers. New Geographies, it is rumoured, are to be prepared under the direction of the Minister, autocratically authorized, and put upon the market. Property in the existing text-books is to be ruthlessly sacrificed, and this without the courtesy of calling upon the publishers to amend or remodel their books. If the Department thus ordains to do unjustly by the trade we warn it of the consequences. Already there has been a wholesale and reckless waste of money, a souring and ruining of publishers, a worrying and debauching of the profession, and an utter ignoring of educational interests and regard for the public weal. We speak in all kindness when we ask the Minister to pause and reflect. Public forbearance may be too long strained, and public impatience may turn to wrath. We are confident that the Department is committing itself to a policy which the country will have none of, and it behoves the Minister to retrace his steps.