

chased by wholesale in New York, are on the average higher than the catalogue prices at which the same books are supplied in the smallest quantities by the Educational Department to the most remote School Sections in Upper Canada.

4. My fourth remark is, that I have no other interest or wish different from that of School and Municipal Corporations which procure the libraries; I cannot derive any personal advantage from the dearness or cheapness of the books; my only interest as well as my ambition is to procure for the Public Libraries a variety of the best books at the lowest prices possible. But I may add, that though the cheapness of books for the Public Libraries is an important consideration, it is still more important to provide for the careful selection of good books, and to provide against the imposition upon local School Sections of pernicious or worthless books. This cannot be done without an official selection of books, the publication of an official catalogue of them, provisions for supplying them, and for preventing the expenditure of the public money for the purchase of other than the books included in the catalogue. In the State of New York, where a selection of library books was recommended by State authority, but no similar State provision made to give effect to that recommendation, the public money has been largely diverted and misapplied, as stated by the State Superintendent in his last Annual Report, quoted on the 42nd page of the preceding report, and the library system there has proportionably declined and fallen into disrepute. I have been informed by a person of much practical knowledge of the book trade in the State of New York, that it is quite a business there with many booksellers to rid themselves of their unsaleable books by getting them bought for the school libraries. This they do through their agents in different ways. Sometimes they impose upon trustees who have not the information or the means of informing themselves as to the nature and real value of such books. At other times, copies of certain books are presented to the agent of the trustees, or to individual trustees themselves, on the condition of, and as an inducement to, their purchasing the books offered for their school district library,—the same as the Annual School Reports show how the agents of school book publishers get their books adopted and introduced into Schools by presenting some of them to the teacher or principal, or allowing him a certain per centage on the amount of their books sold for the use of the School. It is wonderful to what an extent this system of book-selling is carried on in the neighboring States; and it would probably aid some of the Toronto and other signers of this petition to reduce, if not “clear off” the “dead stock” of their school and other books at the expense of School Sections and Municipalities, did corresponding facilities for doing so exist in Upper Canada as in the State of New York. Hence their attacks upon the Educational Department for the protection as well as assistance it affords to Municipalities and School Sections against such a system of imposition and extortion.

7. But while I feel it my duty thus to expose the statements and objects of this petition, I entirely agree in its prayer, that the Legislative Assembly would “cause an enquiry to be made into the scheme and operations of the Educational “Depository in all its branches,”—desirous as I am to remedy any defects, and to make any improvements which may be discovered or suggested by the most careful investigation of disinterested parties,—convinced as I am that I have been too reluctant, rather than too willing, to meet cases of private schools in regard to certain articles which never have been and never would be otherwise accessible to them; and satisfied as I am, from the experiments and examples of other educational states and countries, as well as from the nature of the work, either that nothing at all should be done by Government in reference to the introduction into the schools and municipalities of school-maps, apparatus, and libraries, or provision must be made to supply them similar to or in advance of that which has been established by the Educational Department of Upper Canada.