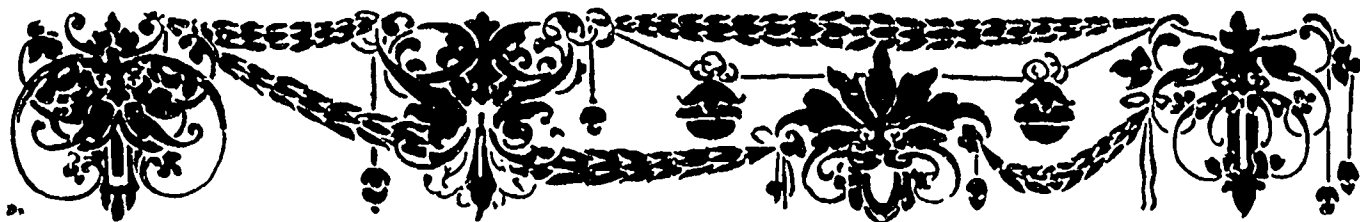


The Bookseller and Stationer



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TOPICS OF TRADE INTEREST.

THE Canadian copyright question has been reopened by the meeting of the booksellers' section of the Toronto Board of Trade, and by the deputation which went to Ottawa. Copyright in books has an interest for the public, the author, the publisher, and the book-

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seller. The interests of the three latter can be reconciled by legislation. But the clamor of the public is for cheap books. They give little attention to the rights of authors and publishers who certainly have, in all civilized countries, an admitted claim to dispose of and to protect their own property. This indifference of the public reacts on Governments and Parliaments, and renders anything like comprehensive legislation affecting copyright a difficult matter to obtain. The Act of 1900 was a decided step in advance. It was not, however, passed by the Government after careful consideration and inquiry, but was, as we are informed, entirely the work of private persons who were public spirited enough to do work which the Ministers should have done for themselves. We have always contended that a satisfactory copyright law would work to the advantage of author, publisher and dealer and any efforts made by those in the trade should receive courteous consideration from the Government. Politicians acquire an idea that they know everything and listen with a languid air when shrewd business men approach with practical suggestions. They should be

cured of this habit. They are our servants, not our masters.

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Regarding the recent deputation to Ottawa on copyright, it is related that the members received no encouragement from the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Fisher, who is placed in charge of the subject. This gentleman may be an unquestioned authority

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on ensilage, turnips and the best breed of cows. But on copyright he is no authority. He should have the good sense to know this. It is neither wise nor politic of him to do anything more or less than just this: To listen with civility and attention to what experts in copyright lay before him and promise to lay the matter before his colleagues. The idea of his attempting to argue the minutiae of this technical and complicated question is simply a joke. No doubt, as long as the electors will put up with this contemptuous attitude on the part of politicians regarding most of the questions brought before them, we shall be treated to periodical displays of the vanity and self-importance exhibited by persons of inferior ability whom chance and party loyalty have elevated into important offices.

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A NEW
BRUNSWICK
INCIDENT.

Another example of political conduct which is not to be commended is the criticism bestowed upon The Educational Review in the New Brunswick Legislature by two of the members, Messrs. Tweedie

and Hill, simply because that journal had exercised its undoubted rights in commenting upon the school book policy of the Provincial Government. These gentlemen had declared that The Educational Review was not read by one fifth of the teachers of the Province, and that an article opposing the new geography was inspired and paid for by a rival publisher. The respected editor, Dr. G. V. Hay, promptly nailed both these statements, and they were formally withdrawn by the two speakers. It is not often politicians are so quickly brought to time. Whether The Review's comments were reasonable or not has nothing to do with the case. We are all entitled to free discussion, and, as politicians have the additional privilege of saying what they please in debate without being open to legal penalty, it is all the more necessary that they should stick to facts and not make untrue statements. However, in this case, the remedy was quickly applied.

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Nothing more has been heard of the free text book idea in Ontario. We trust it will make no progress. The proposal involves loss to the trade, and should be resisted, because, if we are going to interfere with private enterprise and launch out into socialism, let us do it on a comprehensive scale, not in patches to suit faddists or schemers. The position of this question in the State of Minnesota is worthy of note. The law there allows school districts to make contracts direct with publishers for three or five years. This is subject first to approval by the voters, and by the Superintendent of Education. The law provides that five or more legal

THE FREE
BOOK FAD.