

to exclude the scripture history and religious part of those books for infidel purposes. I have official correspondence from the very authors of that memorial, insisting upon the use of an *American* series of readers by Sanders, in place of the national readers. In another instance the series of American readers, by Wilson (published by the Harpers, New York,) is urged in place of the national readers. Two or three other series of American readers have been urged by teachers, and even by some trustees. In one instance, a teacher not only insisted upon using American readers, but also in having some of the most inflammatory anti-British pieces in them learned and recited by the pupils at the public examination of the school, though forbidden by the Local Superintendent to do so. In that, and in the other cases referred to, I had to inform the authorities of these schools, that the payment of the school fund would be withheld from them if they persisted in using such unauthorized text books. Could interested booksellers succeed in their theory, and claim to have the teacher decide upon the text book, we should have a babel indeed of text books in use in the schools; for the American book agents are scarcely behind some in Canada in canvassing teachers and trustees to get their books introduced into our schools.

#### CHARACTER AND MERITS OF THE NATIONAL READERS.

The national readers have a prestige beyond any other school readers. They were prepared by some of the best teachers in Europe; they were revised by a large Board of highly educated men, composed of both Protestants and Roman Catholics, and not one sentence was retained in them to which any one member of the Board objected; they underwent the revision of Archbishop Whately, an experienced teacher and afterwards professor; a man of the finest taste, as well as of great learning and vast knowledge. The first and second of these readers have never been objected to; and the third, fourth and fifth readers are entirely composed of selections from the standard English poets and prose writers—whose writings will never grow old as long as the English language is spoken.

#### OBSELETE FACTS OF THE READERS PROVIDED FOR.

The Canadian Geographical and Historical parts of those books have been rendered needless by a Geography and History, prepared in Canada, and published by Mr. Lovell, as also the chapters relating to natural philosophy and chemistry, by special Canadian text books, prepared by Dr. Sangster on those subjects. So that the few pages in the advanced readers, on which alone the real objections to these readers have been founded, are superseded by Canadian text-books, and the readers are only required for the legitimate purpose of school readers, and for which purpose they are as a whole yet unexcelled. Since the universal use of them in Canada our schools have advanced beyond all precedent, and our School Readers have become cheaper than ever before. A uniform series of Readers is absolutely essential to the classification of both pupils and schools, as well as a great convenience and saving to teachers and pupils removing from one school to another. This uniformity and great interest of the schools should not be allowed to be destroyed to satisfy the caprice of any individual teacher, or the avarice of any bookseller.

#### GOOD FAITH SHOULD NOT BE VIOLATED.

The national readers have, in one sense, become Canadianized by having been printed in Canada, and having become universally used in the schools. But I think every educating country should provide its own educating books as soon as it can. I have intimated this on several occasions during my recent tour to the several counties of Upper Canada; but I have said, and I now say, that what has been authorized by law and become universal in the schools, and provided for by enterprising publishers on the good faith of Government, should be changed with great caution, and only after timely notice, so as not to disturb the order of the schools, or put parents of pupils to needless expense, or do injustice to printers, who, like Mr. Lovell, have invested large sums in stereotyping the whole series of readers for the use of the public schools.

#### COMMITTEE TO REVISE THE NATIONAL READERS.

Also, the basis and Christian non-sectarian character of the national series of readers should be maintained; some omissions as to foreign countries and other matters may be allowed, and the introduction of more respecting our own country is desirable, but the excellencies and character of the series should be maintained. With this view, a committee, including practical instructors, has been appointed to revise them. Various series of the best English and American readers have been provided to facilitate the labours of such committee; but the national readers are as good now as they have been in past years, and it would be premature to make any change in their use in the Schools during the current year.

#### INTERESTS OF THE SCHOOLS (AND NOT OF SPECULATORS) TO BE CONSULTED.

The public schools are established for public and specific purposes; their interests and efficiency and those of their supporters are to be consulted, irrespective of the speculations of an individual bookseller. Not a member of the Council of Public Instruction has any other interest than that of the efficiency of the public schools. The whole field of science and literature is open to every publisher and bookseller without their attempting to destroy what all educationists in all countries maintain as essential to the highest efficiency of public schools—uniformity of text books in the essential departments of reading, arithmetic, as well as of elementary geography and history.

#### 2. UNIFORM TEXT BOOKS IN ALL OF OUR SCHOOLS.

An improper attempt having been recently made by certain interested persons to destroy the uniformity of Text Books in our public schools, the Chief Superintendent (in a letter published in the *Toronto Globe* of the 27th inst.) thus expresses the views of the Department on the subject:

#### NECESSITY FOR UNIFORMITY AND CERTAINTY IN SCHOOL BOOKS.

First,—All educationalists in Europe and America agree that a uniform series of text books is an essential part of an efficient system of national schools. This is recognised and acted upon in all the cities of the neighbouring republic, and is provided by law for the whole of the several States; and where it has not been so provided, the State Superintendents, in their annual reports, lament the deficiency. It is an integral part of the Irish national system, and it has been so provided for by law in our school system from the beginning.

#### THE PROPER AUTHORITY TO SELECT BOOKS.

Secondly,—In order to have a uniform series of text books in the schools, there must be one authority to select and prescribe such books. It cannot, therefore, be left to any teacher or bookseller to introduce, at his pleasure, books into any of the public schools.

#### COUNTY BOARDS AND SCHOOL CORPORATIONS MUST NOT VIOLATE LAW.

Thirdly,—Acting upon this principle, the Legislature has authorized the Council of Public Instruction to prescribe and sanction text books for the national schools, and to prohibit the use of others; and every School Corporation and County Board are required to select text books from the authorized list of such books; and if any such Board has recommended any text books not in the authorized list, it has acted without authority, and has violated the 3rd clause of the 98th section of the Common School Act. With a law-abiding people the law should be supreme.

#### TEACHERS NOT AUTHORIZED TO SELECT TEXT BOOKS.

Certain interested parties in Toronto having endeavored to ignore and supersede the Council of Public Instruction altogether, and even trustees and parents, in the selection of text books, and would fain make each teacher sole judge of the text book to be used in his school, the Chief Superintendent thus exposes this pernicious system:—"This is a novel feature and a new authority in our school system, to set up the teacher above trustees, parents and the Council of Public Instruction itself, to decide what books are best for the school he is employed to teach. The Superintendent of Schools in the State of New York represents, in one of his annual reports, that one of the greatest evils to the Schools in that State was booksellers and their agents bribing teachers, by presents of books, and sometimes by giving a per centage on the sale of their school books, introduced by the teacher into his school: so that each new teacher employed in a school would decry the books introduced by his predecessor, and insist upon throwing them aside, and getting new ones recommended by him. To such an extent did this evil grow in the State of Massachusetts, that the Legislature passed an Act rendering it penal for a bookseller, or his agent, thus to try and get his books sold in any school. Yet such is the course of proceeding which has been adopted by certain booksellers in Toronto. \* \* \* And this explains the reason of the appeal in behalf of the teacher as the authority to decide upon the school books to be used in the school. Under such a system any one must see how soon our schools would go back to their former state of chaos, and their supporters be made the unceasing victims of individual speculation between teachers and importunate booksellers.

#### GENERAL REGULATIONS IN REGARD TO THE USE OF THE TEXT BOOKS ON THE AUTHORISED LIST.

A committee having been appointed by the Council of Public Instruction to revise the list of text-books for Grammar and Com-