

The Printer's Miscellany.

AN EXPONENT OF PRINTING AND ALL THE KINDRED ARTS.

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The School-Book War.

The school-book battle goes merrily on, and each Province in the Dominion—especially Ontario and New Brunswick—finds it necessary to marshal all the forces at their command to do battle with that hydra-headed monster, "Monopoly." In Ontario the publishers combined to raise the price of school-books by virtue of copyrights, and Mr. Adam Crooks, Minister of Education for the Province, places his foot upon the monopoly by stating, in a letter to the publishing houses of Toronto, what he proposed to do by way of protecting the public against the extortion. He says:—

I propose at once to settle upon a new maximum retail price, which will apply to all text-books, in whomsoever the copyright may be vested; and in cases where the publisher controls the copyright it will be a condition of its conditional authorization in future. In case any publisher should not agree to the maximum retail price as thus revised, which is intended not to be unreasonable either to the public or to the publisher, it will be my duty to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council the revocation of such authorization. I do not propose to permit of the mere circumstance of the copyright being held by a publisher to place him and other publishers in a position to combine, and so obtain extravagant profits at the expense of the public. The Public Schools are entitled not only to books of merit, but to cheapness in price, and I see my way to accomplish this either with or without your concurrence in the mode in which I propose to check your present attempts.

This action stands out in bold contrast when compared with that taken by the Board of Education of New Brunswick. In Ontario, we find the Minister of Education (and, of course, the Government) doing battle for the rights of the people, while in New Brunswick the head of the Department of Education is seemingly (we say *seemingly*, because we have seen nothing to the contrary) doing battle for the monopolists, and these monopolists, in this case, are not of Canada, but of foreign countries: they are foreigners to all intents and purposes so far as our deriving any benefit from the money spent is concerned.

The public, especially the voting portion, will do well to remember those who have stood quietly by and allowed them to be plundered to the tune of at least 40 per cent. in the purchase of their school-books. The printing and publishing fraternity will, no doubt, remember who cheated them out of thousands of dollars to which they were justly entitled by all the laws of equity and justice. We do not believe such a state of things would be allowed to exist for a month in any other province in the Dominion, yet, it has existed in New Brunswick for years. Let the people of the Province arise in their might and strike down this gorged monster, "Monopoly," which is sucking their life's-blood and extorting the last drop of sweat from the poor man's brow. Let them call the roll of their representatives and see who and how many have the heart to grapple with this "job." The press of the Province will aid them, no doubt, for they (or a portion thereof) have already evinced a relish for the encounter. One of our local publishers has come out over his own name, and his letter, which appeared in the *Daily Sun* of this city on the 26th of January, has the right ring about it. Hear him:—

It appears that we are being duped, and that it is about time our people were beginning to know their rights and gather courage to maintain them. Is there any just reason why we should not manufacture our own school-books if we can produce them at lower figures than they can be imported from England? After close investigation, I am prepared to furnish satisfactory guarantee for the production of a