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the interest was feverishly concentrated on two other matters, namely, the mayoralty and the question of Sunday street cars. A large number of ratepayers went to the polls in ignorance of the fact that

THE overwhelming vote polled in favor of free text-books for the public schools of his city was surely a surprise to even the most sanguine of the triumphant party. The result was not allowed to go by default, as almost everybody voted at this election, but it was a stolen march all the same. There was little said about the text-book question before the election. Not that this was a particularly quiet campaign — on the contrary it was a very stirring one — but all

free school books was an issue. When the ballot stared them squarely in the face they had no time for reflection and usually voted for the idea, as it appeared to be on the side of enlightenment. There were a great many people who voted without really weighing the matter, though they knew beforehand that the question would be decided at this election. The great preponderance of interest upon the other two matters referred to attracted seemingly all the thinking of unbiased people away from the question of free books.

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Just when they have secured the increase in discounts that they had struggled for years to get, it is a disappointment and a hardship that the Toronto booksellers should have to give up altogether the trade in public school text-books. This is an important part of their trade. In a city with a population of close upon 200,000 people, with so thorough a school system and so large a number of schools, the trade in school books could not but be large. It was not only what that trade was worth in itself, but also its value as a means of keeping up connections between the homes of pupils and the store, that must be considered to get a fair idea of what is lost to the booksellers through the adoption of free school books. The by-law is carried, however, and now it is for the city to provide that the loss is not made heavier to the retailer than there is any need for it to be. He has no right to be left with any stock of school books on his hands. All this should be taken by the city, which has taken away the dealer's school book trade. And it is as convenient as it is just to take over these stocks. The city has to buy a supply of books for the schools, and it might as well draw first upon all retail stocks for the purpose, placing no wholesale orders until all stocks in retail hands are exhausted. This the city will surely do. The next means of making partial compensation to the trader is to exempt him for two or three years from the rate that is levied for the purchase of school books. It is enough that he be plundered for the public benefit without being taxed as one of the public for the benefit the masses receive at his expense.

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It is not likely that the movement in behalf of free text-books will end with the success realized in this city. At other large centres it is apt to be agitated and brought to the polls. But if it is, it ought not to be allowed to win through absence of mind on the part of opponents. An energetic campaign should be waged against it. The arguments are numerous and strong. While it is good public policy to make the educational system as free as is consistent with the self-respect of the people, it is undesirable to pauperize it. It is well to encourage the people to think enough of an education for their children to be willing to pay the price charged for the books involved in the acquirement of one. To further cheapen education to the masses is to degrade it and expose it to neglect. It is all well enough to say that education uplifts a man morally and socially, but there is danger that the degree of it sought to be made general by the free school-book advocates will cause discontent and unsettlement more than it will elevate. A point against the community in use that will be introduced by free text-books, is the liability to spread disease by their passage from hand to hand. This consideration will be likely to keep some customers for the retailer, as there will be people who do not care to expose their children to disease, and will provide them with books of their own.

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It is probable too that more money will be spent over the retailer's counter for other school lines than has been in the past. The fact that there are free text-books will make a larger school attendance than there now is. It will also leave more money to be spent for paper, pencils, ink, scribbles, etc. This will make up in a slight degree for the loss of the trade in text-books. But it will be only in a slight degree. The most, however, will have to be made of it. The paternal measure that has been adopted by this city will be looked upon as an experiment, and will be imitated or not as the trial of it here will prove satisfactory or otherwise.