

to be thrown open to the public. In the case of no other of these books has publication yet been permitted by any publisher other than the one who may have been fortunate enough to secure the monopoly from the Minister of Education in the first instance, notwithstanding that Mr. Gage himself, as he very suggestively states, has offered to publish some of them at from twenty to fifty per cent. less than the prices fixed under present arrangements. It is surely time that an end were put to a system which places the school-book trade under the control of a partisan Minister and puts it in his power to make the fortune of any publisher who may be fortunate enough to gain the good-will of the Department. That this is not too strong a statement will be evident to anyone who remembers that the authorization of a text-book for use in the public schools assures the sale, in many cases, of hundreds of thousands of copies of that book. Even a very moderate profit on each volume, under so safe an arrangement, means a great deal for the happy possessor of the monopoly. Before the approach of the Provincial election, it is to be hoped that the leader of the Opposition may see his way to announce clearly the policy of his party with regard, first, to the continuance or otherwise of a party Minister at the head of the educational system of the Province, and second, to the continuance or otherwise of the monopolistic system in the publication of text-books.

The most vulnerable side of the defences of the Ontario Government is, probably, its Education Department. We have referred to the glaring oversight in the matter of the Readers, and to the objectionable features in the text-book system. Another of those administrative blunders which are, in the eyes of shrewd politicians, worse than crimes, has recently come to light. We refer to the matter of the omission of British History from the list of subjects for the examination for entrance to the High Schools. The facts are, we suppose, that, especially in view of the unsatisfactory text-book authorized, British History has been found in practice too difficult to be made the subject of a written examination for pupils at the tender age at which most of the candidates for entrance present themselves. This being the case, the Minister, very wisely we believe—and we do not doubt that most of the teachers concerned would be found of that opinion—resolved to drop it from the list of prescribed subjects, a list which is always too heavy. By retaining Canadian History alone, he no doubt thought himself to be making an acceptable concession to the opinions of those who are always dwelling on the necessity of paying more attention to Canadian history and institutions, as a means of cultivating patriotism. As a matter of fact, no one who gives unprejudiced thought to the matter can fail to see that, owing to the close relations which

have always existed between the colonies and the Mother Country, there can be no more effective means for promoting loyalty to British institutions and British connection than the study of the history of Canada. Whether the Minister was equally judicious in retaining British History as a subject to be taught orally in the public schools, under the supervision of the inspector, is open to question. No doubt that is the way in which the subject should be taught, if taught at all, to pupils in the public schools. But it is unfortunately the fact that, under the examination system which now prevails, it is well-nigh useless for the teacher to attempt to create interest in any subject which is not on the programme for examination. Nor is he very likely himself to give much time or energy to such a subject, at the risk of his own reputation and position, which often depend very much upon the results of the Entrance examination. Be all this as it may, the shrewd enemies of the political head of the Education Department could not have asked a better "cry" than that afforded them by the fact of the dropping of British History from the programme for the entrance examination. The great majority of our people are peculiarly strong in their loyalty to the Mother Country. Hence the disloyalty cry, for which this change afforded so good a pretext, and which was most lustily used, proved so effective that the Minister has actually yielded to it—another sign of weakness—and hastened to replace British History on the list, much to the disgust, we cannot doubt, of the hard-worked teachers all over the country, who had their hands more than full without it. It will be strange if this vacillation and pliant yielding to what was clearly an election cry, pure and simple, does not do more harm to the Minister and Government than could have resulted from pluckily standing to his position. If it should lead to the severance of our educational system from party politics it might be a good thing for the country.

#### SIR JOSEPH BANKS AGAIN :

QUEEN CHARLOTTE, AND SOME CANADIAN LOCAL NAMES; A SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE.

A few years ago I printed in pamphlet form a letter addressed to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society of Great Britain from 1777 to 1820, by Lieut.-Gov. Simcoe, prior to his leaving England for the as yet non-existent Province of Upper Canada; in which letter the Governor lays before the learned President, confidentially, his views of the principles and practices which should give character to the new territory about to be organized by him. As detailed in my preliminary remarks, I obtained possession of a manuscript copy of this letter, made by the hand of a member of the Simcoe family, and it seemed all the more important in consequence of the fact that it is not to be found in the manuscript series of the Simcoe papers, preserved in the Parlia-

mentary library at Ottawa. Many persons, as I have reason to know, have been interested in this reprint, which bears the date of 1890. When the papers of Sir Joseph Banks were offered for sale by the eminent London dealer, Mr. John Waller, the original of this identical letter was in the collection, and I did my best to get possession of it, but failed. I secured, however, from among Sir Joseph's papers, an original manuscript document, which is curious, as showing the friendly and even intimate relations subsisting between Sir Joseph and the royal family of the day, and which I should certainly have given somewhere or other in the pamphlet of 1890, had I at that time been in possession of it; especially as the name of its writer is to some extent associated with the local nomenclature of Ontario. The manuscript document in question is an autograph letter from no less a personage than Queen Charlotte, consort of George III., and written throughout by her own hand. It would appear that it had been the Queen's custom to present to Sir Joseph, through Lady Banks, at the close of the year, the homely gift of a Christmas cake. In 1813, as Sir Joseph had been suffering from a severe attack of gout, the Queen forwards to him along with the cake a recipe for the malady which she affirms had been effectual in the case of a certain gentleman whom she names. This recipe consisted, strange to say, of a charm, supplied from Golconda, in the East, and procured thence at the special request of the Queen. The whole document reads as follows. It is addressed to Lady Banks and is dated at Windsor, Dec. 19, 1813 :

"The Queen sends Lady Banks a Christmas cake, which she hopes Sr. Joseph will find as much to his taste as the one of last year.

"She also accompanies it with a Charm for the Gout, the Effect of which, if report speaks Truth, is wonderfull. Colonel Strangways, uncle to Lord Ilchester, has been free from that Tormenting Complaint ever since he wore it, which is about nine Months ago, it is to be worn round the Neck, as it is now prepared. It comes from Golconda, and was procured for the Queen by a Lady, who by her Desire wrote for it, and the Queen wishes most Sincerely that it may prove as Beneficial to Sr. Joseph as it has given her pleasure to obtain it."

"CHARLOTTE."

It would be curious to speculate as to what the scientific President of the Royal Society thought of such a fanciful remedy for the gout, but out of deference to the wish of the benevolent donor Sir Joseph may have placed it around his neck, and may possibly, through the power of the imagination, have enjoyed some of the happy effects experienced by Colonel Strangways. The note was enclosed in a very informal cover, addressed "To Sir Joseph Banks, Spring Grove, near Hounslow." The impression of a seal bearing the royal arms, in red wax, appears on the envelope in the usual position. It will be of some interest to add that the name of Queen Charlotte, consort of George III., is associated with local nomenclature employed in Canada. The names given to streets in the first plan of York, now Toronto, were, as is well known, tributes of loyalty to the reigning family, on the part of the founder of Upper Canada, Governor Simcoe, in 1793. King street was an allusion to the King, George street referred to his eldest son, afterwards the regent; Caroline