

Interrogated in open court we doubt if a single member of the Central Committee, who gave his preference for the Gage Series over the "Royal Canadian," would stand by his verdict. These are strong words, but they are our deliberate opinion.

There is but one more point to touch, and our disclosure of its purport will, we doubt not, be a surprise to the profession. It has transpired that the decision of the Committee, with reference to the excluded Readers, was come to without any member of the Board seeing the Fourth Book of the series, though a dozen copies of the completed first part of the work were lodged with the Department twenty-four hours before the Committee met to consider its report. The injustice of withholding from the Committee the crowning volume of the Public School course of the series needs no comment from the writer; and the explanation of the act, we regret to learn, has yet to be made to the Central Committee and the publishers. We must do the Committee the justice to say that, in view of this circumstance, we understand that some of its members have asked the Government to resubmit the question of the Readers for more careful appraisement. This, for some reason, the acting Minister as yet declines to do, though, looking at the interests that deserve consideration, he cannot fail to give the publishers justice. To hold the Committee to its first judgment, had it before it the means of rightly forming its opinion, is both official and right; but manifestly the Committee was not in the position to give an intelligent verdict, and none should have been rendered. To refuse it and the publishing firm the justice of reconsideration is to cast reflections on the Committee or on the Minister's sense of right, and the motive we hope is wanting for either act. If the motive exists, it would be a grim commentary on the non-political administration of the Department and painfully justify the public clamour for the reembodyment of the Council of Public Instruction. At present a feeling of insecurity in the existing order of things is everywhere manifesting itself, and the Government will not be wise to give it the opportunity to spread. In the

matter of the late authorization of Reading Books there is much to excite disturbing comment and little to allay the feeling of distrust.

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE DEPARTMENTAL EXAMINATIONS.

FOR the papers set at the Departmental Examinations, on the Central Committee as a whole the responsibility rests. Each paper is made out by two examiners and submitted to the others for approval before being finally passed. At least, so say the regulations, and we presume the Departmental officers faithfully carry out the instructions of their superiors. At the late examinations two papers in particular are for different reasons open to the gravest objections. One of these, the Intermediate paper on History, is altogether too difficult for the class of pupils for whom it was intended. No objection can be taken on the score of the examiners' knowledge of the subject. Evidently they know it well, but they do not know the condition of the High Schools of Ontario. There can be no doubt that the paper has been set by some university professors wholly inexperienced in the teaching of young pupils. We must conclude also that the Committee as a whole is censurable either for neglect of duty or for incompetency. An effort, we are informed, has been made to rectify matters. The sub-examiners were instructed to examine with the utmost leniency, and to the marks so given no less than 50 per cent. has been added by the Committee. This will to some extent remedy the injustice done to teachers and candidates, but nothing can rehabilitate the character of the examiners. *They* are either incompetent or careless or both. The Intermediate English Literature paper, to our mind, clearly proves that the Committee does not understand the function of this subject in the High School course of study. We may go further—it gives us reason to doubt the literary culture of the Departmental examiners. Over 30 per cent. of the paper is mere etymology and parsing, and the other questions, we are prepared to show, are almost all wholly unsuitable as a test of