

That in order to ascertain what the actual rise in prices for printing (as well as in cost of living) had been, I issued a circular to a considerable number of the leading printers in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, as in these Provinces the most accurate idea of this rise, as affecting Ottawa prices, could be obtained. To these circulars I have received sixteen answers, from printers at various places between Montreal on the east and Sarnia on the West. The rates of increase vary from 10 per cent. to 50 per cent. the average being over 27 per cent. since the summer of 1869. The only one below 20 per cent. was from Toronto, and, owing, in some measure to exceptional causes, the increase of prices had taken place several years earlier there than in most other places in the Old Province of Canada. They were certainly exceptionally high in 1869. For instance the price per week of a good journeyman in Toronto in that year was \$9, against \$7 paid in Montreal. The disparity is not now nearly so great between Toronto and Montreal or Ottawa wages. In fact they are now nearly equalized. The trade in Montreal forms a much better comparison for wages with Ottawa than any other large centre. Five leading firms in Montreal have answered my circular, and the average increase of wages and cost of living as certified by them is about 27½ per cent. : and printers prefer to take their chances of employment in a great city and great commercial centre like Montreal, rather than in a smaller one like Ottawa.

Quebec has been generally the cheapest of the large towns in which to procure work done, but there the Provincial Government has been paying about 100 per cent. more for composition than the Dominion Government has paid and is paying to Mr. Taylor, and 30 to 40 per cent. more for press work. Yet at the beginning of the last Session of the Quebec Legislature, the Contractors declined to proceed with their work. 20 per cent. additional was allowed them *pro tempore*, and new tenders were afterwards ordered to be asked for.

The prices for composition and press work paid by the Provincial Government at Toronto are twice as great as those paid by the Dominion Government here. At London (Ontario), the prices agreed upon by the master printers to be charged to customers are 65 cents per 1000 ems composition, against 12½ in Mr. Taylor's contract, and 50 cents per token press work against 12½ and 15 in Mr. Taylor's Contract. Mr. Perreault, one of the leading printers in Montreal, estimates the fair price chargeable there for work is 50 cents per 1000 ems for composition and 50 cents pr token press work. In view even of the lower price prevailing in 1869, it is apparent that Mr. Taylor must have depended upon other things than the half rates charged for those great staple operations to make his contract remunerative. It seems to me he must have depended :

1. Upon the fact that having already the contract for Parliamentary Printing, he would be paid a second composition for all the heavy Departmental Reports ; and, during the first year of the contract, the late Queen's Printer, seeing that the cost to the Government would be no more (if not less,) than would be paid to the Contractor for Departmental work, if he happened to be another than the Parliamentary Contractor, instead of the same, allowed this charge. The Parliamentary Committee on Printing have since deprived him of this source of profit.

2. That the same method of audit would prevail, as in former years, and that the precedents of the Queen's Printer's Office in the past would guide it during the term of his contract.

This has not been the case. The audit has been more strict, and the contract more rigidly enforced than he seems to have anticipated. Nevertheless, certain allowances have been made to him for portions of the work performed, not mentioned in the specifications, and, therefore, not specifically contracted for, which are liberal. That made for two proofs required for vouchers and settled by Mr. Desbarats, is one (in place of this, the Quebec Government has allowed 5 per cent of paper for waste, instead of our 2½ per cent). The allowance for "change of headings," or "alteration of forms," settled by me, and that for opening and cutting paper, have also been generally liberal. Those, however, form really an inconsiderable part,—not more than \$, I think less than 7 per cent—certainly than 10 per cent. of the total payments. But, as another source of profit, the Contractor must have reckoned on—