

are now competing with the bookselling trade, and the reader is too often inclined to borrow an expensive book (an expensive book, be it observed, is anything costing over a dollar) from the library, and put the money which would have gone to buy it to a less worthy purpose. The idea of a man making himself poor nowadays by book-buying is too grotesque a picture to consider seriously.

The daily press can do something to help booksellers in this matter, and their duty should be pointed out to them by those who support the local paper. The London papers devote many columns to book reviews. In fact, they have carried matters to such an extreme that some publishers believe the sale is hurt by the copious extracts which appear. The Canadian papers have not the space to fall into this error, and their assistance may safely be enlisted by the trade.

INIQUITY OF HAVING TO PAY.

ONE of the witnesses before the Tariff Commission is thus reported in the press:

A plea for untaxed literature was put in by Mr. G. T. Gorrell, secretary of the public library of Brockville. He wanted all books made free. This, he said, would knock off \$95,000 of revenue, but would be greatly appreciated by the public. It will injure no one because the copyright law will protect Canadian publications. As an illustration of the injustice of the present law, Mr. Gorrell said a short time ago Canadian booksellers purchased 15,000 volumes of Henty at 23c. each. A Toronto publisher, hearing of this, had imported the plates, printed the books in Toronto, and thereby invoked the copyright law, which shut out the foreign reprints. As a result, the trade had to pay 65 to 75c. a volume.

The amiable secretary would apparently do away with all duties and prices in connection with books. He admits the loss of revenue consequent upon abolishing the Customs duty, but thinks "the people" would appreciate it. Who get the money now collected from duties if "the people" do not?

Then he is indignant because books which he says were 23c. apiece now cost 65c. and 75c. each. Apparently the author, the printer, the publisher, the binder, the pressman are to have nothing for their labor. They are to work free in order that

that benevolent crowd "the public" may have "literature untaxed." After a while we shall hear a proposition, perhaps, to vote a cash bonus to the man who reads the most books in a year.

ALDERMAN RUTTER.

IT sometimes happens that really good men are appreciated. At a late stage of the municipal campaign in Toronto, Mr. A. F. Rutter, of Warwick Bros. & Rutter, wholesale stationers, was pressed by friends to present himself as candidate for the City Council. Alderman Rutter headed the poll in Ward 3, one of the big down-town business districts. We congratulate the city rather than Alderman Rutter himself, because he is a busy man. But the prompt piling up of votes for a first-class business man makes one more hopeful of civic politics.

THE QUEEN'S YEAR.

BOOKSELLERS will do well to remember that 1897 is the Queen's year, and be ready for any demand that may spring up for books about the Queen. It would not be hard to create such a demand.

A forthcoming book on this subject, which promises to be of unusual interest, is being done under the supervision of Her Majesty. The volume announced by Messrs. Boussod, Valadon & Co., entitled "Queen Victoria," and nominally "by Richard R. Holmes, F.S.A., librarian to the Queen," will really embody to a large extent matter personally contributed, dictated and revised by the Queen herself. In this book various misstatements as to the Queen's childhood, education, and early years on the throne will be corrected by royal authority, and the whole story will be told of Her Majesty's reign as Her Majesty herself looks back on it. Her Majesty is taking the greatest interest in the preparation of the work. She has ordered every facility to be given for the illustrations to be reproduced, both from pictures, and from the royal palaces, where, in some cases, the rooms and furniture are to be specially put back into the condition of earlier years, in order to be photographed, and she has consented to examine every detail in the book while it is in progress. Great interest is taken in the forthcoming publication, and a large number of subscriptions have been already received.

THE DUTY ON BOOKS.

MR. DRYSDALE appeared before the Tariff Commission at Montreal last month on behalf of the book trade. He said that he was not prepared with a statement, as the notice had been so short. They were in favor of a specific duty on books. A specific duty on books would favor the book buyer also. They could not carry a large stock of books. When librarians wanted to replenish their libraries they would come to them, and, after looking over their stock, tell them that they could get their books in without duty. In many cases the bookseller took orders just to keep the trade. They had also much trouble in getting books past the Customs for libraries. They got students' text books in free, but they had great difficulty when they sold them, as the clerks might sell a book to other than a student. As they could not produce Bibles or hymn books in this country they were admitted free and he thought that that should be left as it is.

In answer to a question, Mr. Drysdale said that they had not the type to produce the hymn books with the music here. There had been a cry raised by Canadian publishers because the order for Presbyterian hymn books had been sent to the Old Country, and if he had received the order he would have sent it there also. He believed that there might be a cry raised against the taxing of libraries and so forth, but he thought it only fair that the poor bookseller should not be crushed into a corner.

THE ENGRAVING CONTRACT.

THE contract for the Dominion engraving being about to expire, new tenders were called for last fall. The lowest tender was put in by the American Bank Note Co. of New York, who have been awarded the contract for the term of five and a quarter years from July 1. The work consists of engraving Dominion notes, postage stamps, postal cards, revenue stamps, and so forth. Under the terms of the contract the company are required to provide an establishment in the city of Ottawa, where the work must be done under Government supervision. The work has been done by the British American Bank Note Co., known as the Burland Co., for a number of years. They tendered again, but lost it. By the change, and under the new contract, a saving will be effected of \$120,000 as compared with prices paid under the present contract. The American Bank Note Co. is one of the largest and best known concerns in the world, and prints the notes of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and other banks in Canada.