

CURRENT NOTES—Continued.

children to accept free books and also the danger of disseminating disease germs through the circulation of books. It is pointed out that the financial conditions in Winnipeg school affairs are not favorable. There are, in fact, many objections to this policy. It is a pure fad, imported from the United States, and foisted on Canada without due consideration. The effort of school boards to go into the book business and thus deprive the regular dealers of their legitimate trade is one that should be denounced and opposed by all who are opposed to the invasion of regular business interests by local bodies, whether elected or not. The trade should agitate strongly against this charge wherever it is advocated. Mr. Roberts represents THE BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER in the West, and we are glad that in this matter he likewise represents the interests of the book trade.

Duty on Commissions. The importing firms, especially in fancy goods, are discussing an important question with the Customs Department. The matter, stated briefly, is whether the commissions paid by Canadian importers to British and foreign firms for certain lines of goods should be added to the invoice price of the goods for duty paying purposes. Some time ago, instructions were issued to Canadian appraisers at the various ports to collect duty on commissions charged by the European exporters on goods invoiced by themselves to the Canadian firm. When, however, the commission is for services rendered and the goods are bought in the name of the Canadian firm and on its credit, then duty need not be levied on the commission charged. The importers feel that as the Customs Department have never previously charged duty on commissions, and as these commissions really replace the work of a permanent officer abroad (who would receive a salary on which, of course, no duty could be levied), they should not be asked to pay. We do not see how the Customs can levy duty on the total cost of goods to the Canadian importer. The practice is to levy duty on the market price of the goods in the country of origin. Any other policy would lead to confusion.

Higher Prices Ahead.

A marked feature of the stationery trade which cannot fail before long to have its effect in this market is the advance in prices. The price of fine writing papers, of pencils, of manila copyings (which will affect copy books), and the advanced wages now being paid to labor in the country will, it is claimed, soon begin to be felt in the realm of stationery.

While only in one or two cases can we discover that advances in prices have actually been made to the dealer, yet it is a common opinion that when the Spring freight rates go into force the trade will feel the difference. For instance, "Koh-i-noor" pencils have advanced from \$9 to \$10.80, while Dixon and Eagle pencils are also dearer. Cardboard and envelopes, etc., are also quoted higher, while stationery hardware generally likewise tends to advance. The higher prices paid for raw leathers are expected to make account books, etc., more expensive. How far these advances may affect the Canadian dealer is more than we can say, but it is common talk among jobbers that in some lines, at least, they will be forced to get the advance because they have to pay it.

THE ANNUALS FOR 1899.

WARWICK BROS. & RUTTER, the Canadian publishers, have issued in time for the Christmas and holiday trade the four annual volumes which are so much in vogue for presents and family reading.

The *Leisure Hour* (812 pp.) is as rich as usual in fiction, short biographies, articles on travel, industrial life, science, and current events. It contains seven serial tales, of which "The Prince and His Father," by M. A. Morrison, is the principal. There are a number of short stories. Among the illustrated special articles may be mentioned "The Port of London," "The Queen's Clocks at Windsor," "Fire Islands," "The Australian Aborigines," "The Port of Belfast," etc. There is a wealth of literary variety in the volume, which is complete in itself, and the illustrations are tasteful.

The *Sunday at Home* is remarkable for fine color illustrations. The chief serial is a Canadian story by Emily P. Weaver, "Was it Chance?" Besides the sermons and homilies that abound in the volume, are many illustrated articles on the "Cathedral Cities of England," the story of Aberdeen, "Samoa," "Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey," etc. Short stories are numerous, some being for young people. The illuminated texts, hymns, and pages of

sacred music are very attractive to home readers.

The *Girl's Own Annual* is beautifully illustrated. The colored engravings this year are twelve in number. The contributions include every interest in life which girls have — homework, dressmaking, flowers, art, cooking, etc. The long serials are four in number: "About Peggy Sairlie," "The House with the Verandah," "Our Hero," and "Sheila's Cousin Effie." There are 15 complete stories, some running into several chapters. "Old English Cottage Homes" is a prettily illustrated series. "Our Lily Garden" is both practical and artistic. In the 850 pages of the volume are found every kind of information and amusement presented in attractive form. No gift book for girls equals it.

The *Boy's Own Annual* sends joy to every lad's heart. Of long stories there are "Hunted through the Frozen Ocean," by David Ker; "The Blackbird trap," by G. Manville Fenn; "In the Isles of Countances," by Rev. Dr. Malan; "Allan Adair," by Dr. Gordon Stables; "An Antarctic Mystery," by Jules Verne; "The Three Chums," by E. H. Burridge; "Burton & Son, or Found on the Shore," by G. A. Henty, and several others. The articles for lads are innumerable: About microscopes, conjuring, sports, fretwork, aquarium, boats, model railways, photography, kites, etc. The answers to correspondence are good, and so is every page in the volume. Several colored plates embellish the book which is an ideal Christmas present.

A HANDSOME ALBUM OF VIEWS.

One of the most beautiful albums of Canadian views which we have seen is the "Picturesque Victoria," issued by T. N. Hibben & Co., Victoria, British Columbia. The cover is a fine lithograph in colors, showing a bridge and river scene near Victoria. There are 22 pages of photographs, representing scenes in and about Victoria, Esquimalt, the Pacific Ocean, etc. These illustrations are the highest class of work in this line, and the album itself compares favorably with anything of the same kind issued anywhere in the world. This sounds strong, but the album bears out the statement. Dealers in other parts of Canada who may have sale for the album can doubtless secure copies from T. N. Hibben & Co.

The *Empire Book and Novelty Co.*, have commenced business in St. John's, Nfld.

A. H. Stratton & Co., booksellers and stationers, Peterboro', Ont., have suffered damage by fire and water. The loss, \$16,000, is covered by insurance.