

judgment, can have endorsed this series, is an infinite puzzle to us. It is the more inscrutable, that the Committee, passing by a series of such eminent merit as the "Royal Canadian," should give its approbation of a series notoriously defective, a fact significantly attested by the contingent authorization. But how comes the Committee to recommend it, or any series, for conditional authorization? Does it not see to what it pledges itself, and will it attempt to defend even the most venial errors in the books, or stand by the English which on every page of the series is murdered? If not, why is the series recommended? The answer ostensibly is, as a competitive series to the "Royals," though a better than even it is ignored and shut out from competition.

Now we come to the Committee's justification of authorizing more than one series, the manifest impolicy of which the Chairman of the Board freely admits, though obviously he finds no alternative but the mistaken course he and the Committee have unwisely adopted. The Report gives us an explanation of what was done in the dilemma. The danger apprehended, we are told, was "monopoly," and the remedy for monopoly, forsooth! is a double monopoly, *plus* the demoralization which two bickering houses in the trade will bring upon the profession, in the bitter struggle to get their several series introduced into the schools! If this mode of escape from a dilemma is not an insult to the public intelligence, it comes perilously near a libel on the cumulative brains of the Committee! In all the wisdom of the conclave was their no voice to whisper the course of action that solved the same difficulty in the case of the present Readers? Did it occur to no member of the Committee that the Government held in its own hand the key of the situation, and could withhold authorization from any series which the Department was not permitted to control? A similar arrangement to the existing one, by which the Department would acquire the copyright and farm out the right of publication to the trade, could surely not be improved upon, and to reimpose this as a condition of author-

ization was the ready solution of the problem.* In view of the ills that are sure to wait upon two competing series in the market, and of the expense involved in a pupil's removing from one school to another, a modicum of wisdom, were there no personal or political bias, would have counselled another course. That the right course was not taken has not unreasonably opened the door of suspicion. The extraordinary procedure of recommending a series for *conditional* authorization, and for the reason alleged, will not incite many to close it.

Now a word on the failure to report the "Royal Canadian Readers" for authorization. Determining to authorize more than one, what reason is there for placing the limit at two, and why exclude the third series? If the public is to gain by competition, three rivals are certainly better than two; and other members of the Committee besides the Chairman were of this opinion. Then, if one series was to be favoured with a conditional authorization, what justice is there in withholding the right from another? Had the excluded series any defects as bad as those which the Gage Series was privileged to remedy? This is not stated, but on the contrary, the "Royal Canadian" is spoken of as "a meritorious series," though "not on a par with the other two." No! *it is NOT on a par with the other two*, and some members of the Committee rightly placed it at the head of all!

In these columns it would of course be useless to argue with the Committee on the comparative excellence of the three series. We are ourselves confident that the majority of the profession would unhesitatingly declare for the "Royal Canadian." The unbiassed opinion of any competent literary critic would, we are convinced, give a similar judgment.

* In a later and fuller report of the proceedings of the Committee, published in the *Globe*, it is stated that there were practical difficulties in the way of the Department's acquiring the copyright of the Readers it chose to authorize. The difficulty, however, must be of the Department's own making, for we know that, so far as the Royal Canadian Series is concerned, its owners had in view the possibility of being asked to sell their rights, and would, we believe, have entertained any reasonable proposal with that object.