

inflexible, and to open it at the centre is almost impossible. The spring-back is full of life and vitality, holding the edges with a firm grip, and any attempt to force it will prove disastrous. A new book should be placed on its side on the desk, and, after throwing back the cover, a few leaves should be lifted at a time until the desired page is reached. It should be closed in the same manner. The glory of a blank-book is its strength, and opening and closing it violently or carelessly, will likely result in breaking the back or impairing the sewing.

SPECIAL NUMBERS AND SPECIAL MENTION

The Boundary Creek Times, of Greenwood, has published a neatly-printed, well-written and handsomely illustrated Christmas edition.

The Regina Leader's calendar for 1899 is a fac simile of the first page of the paper with a cut of the building. A good ad. and well done.

The St. Johns, Que., News got out an artistic two-color circular, descriptive of the features and merits of the paper. It is one of the neatest and most readable things of the kind we have seen.

The Barrie Gazette got out a handsome special number, with many illustrations, much historical data, etc., all making a well-printed and attractive issue. The paper, one of the best weeklies in Canada, has celebrated its thirtieth birthday.

The Christmas edition of The Parry Sound Star was a triumph of the publisher's energy and taste. It not only included the handsomely-illustrated write-up of Montreal, but also a 32-page issue on good paper, with holiday matter and illustrations.

For years, the Christmas papers issued in Newfoundland have been models of clean printing and fine half-tone illustration work. This year, Christmas Bells, issued by Gray & Goodland, St. John's, is a 20-page number on coated paper, with several special articles and some good half-tones.

Apted Bros., Toronto, issued a nice greeting card to their customers at the New Year. The card was four page, on the outside a maple leaf embossed and in the centre a small reproduction in colors of "What We Have We'll Hold." The good wishes were on the second half of the card in script, hard to distinguish from engraved work.

THE CANADIAN STENOGRAPHER.

This is the title of a new Toronto Journal for shorthand learners, teachers and newspapermen generally, which fills a felt want. It is published monthly at \$1 a year and has been placed on a good foundation, and is in excellent hands. The publisher is W. E. McKinley and the associate editor is J. M. Jackson, formerly of The Mail staff, a competent and successful stenographer. The first issue contains about eight pages of stenography (besides several pages of reading matter), and, while the greater part of the matter is based on the Isaac Pitman system, it is intended to cover different systems of stenography. For instance, one page in this number is a fac simile of Mr. Alexander Downey's and is accompanied by a key.

The St. John, N.B., compositors have authorized their secretary to call the attention of the board of trade to the fact that many merchants and barristers of St. John are having their printing done outside of the city.

THE ONTARIO PRINTING CONTRACT.

THE Ontario Government's five-years' contract for Provincial printing has not yet been awarded, at least, no official announcement has been made, and considerable discussion has taken place on the subject amongst printers. Six tenders were put in, which shows a good deal of competition for the work, the profits on which, it is generally admitted, are no longer what they were, as prices have been forced down owing to competing tenders. The Government first fixed the date for receiving the tenders, and then extended the time by one week, a policy we do not approve of, although it was doubtless done with good intentions in order to give every possible tenderer sufficient chance. But we prefer a fixed date for tenders on any sort of printing. Fortunately in this case all the tenderers held back to the last moment, so that no one had any advantage in time.

A contract of this kind always raises political discussions, usually not relevant to the subject, but with this factor we have nothing to do, preferring to consider the question entirely from the business standpoint. The following put in tenders, and it is rumored that they stand as to price in the order given :

Methodist Book Room,
Hunter, Rose & Co.,
Salvation Army,
Murray Printing Co.,
Warwick Bros. & Rutter,
Warwick & Wilson.

All the tenderers, except the last mentioned, have well-equipped printing offices, and could take over the work at once. If the Government intend to award the contract, as a business concern would do, to the lowest tenderer possessing a printing office, they would, therefore, renew the contract with the present contractors, Warwick Bros. & Rutter. But business conditions do not always rule with governments. There is a feeling among printers that to encourage the building-up of another extensive printing office in Toronto, with the Provincial contract as a basis, would injure trade, as there are, in Ontario, enough, if not too many, large printing concerns in existence. This is a point which, we admit, the Government are not bound to consider, but it weighs with the printing fraternity.

As already said, there is no official statement that Warwick & Wilson are the lowest tenderers, but it is believed that on the single item of composition their figures are the lowest, being based on a rate considerably below the standard, or union, rate of wages to printers. This has caused the Typographical Union to approach the Government, urging that, whoever gets the contract, union wages shall be paid. Here, again, we admit, that the Government are not actually bound to consider the claim of labor, although it is generally felt that public printing calls for union rates, and that the Province, in its desire to get its work done at a reasonable rate, should not force the cheapening process too far. As Warwick & Wilson, though no doubt personally competent men, are not a firm in the ordinary sense, possess no plant, and would take some time to get one equipped, it is hardly believed that the contract will go to them.

The present Government printers have undoubtedly a great advantage in tendering, since they have already in existence a