

PRICES OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

Referring to the change in the prices of school books, mentioned in last issue, no action has yet been taken. It is understood that, on the instructions of the Minister of Education, an arbitration is likely to be appointed to consider the question of the prices at which books are being sold. There is some speculation as to whether any changes will be made or not. Some dealers hint that if any action will be taken at all it will result in a reduction in the prices of drawing books. It is not yet announced when the arbitration will meet.

DUTY ON STEREOTYPED MATTER.

A representative delegation of publishers and journeymen printers from Toronto met Hon. Messrs. Bowell and Foster this morning, and argued in favor of raising the duty on stereotyped matter and printed sheets of hymn and prayer books to a practically prohibitive limit. The delegation consisted of Messrs. G. M. Rose, W. A. Murray, Shepard, R. R. Elliot, Chairman of the K. of L. Legislative Committee, J. T. Gilmour and John Armstrong, of the Toronto Typographical Union. They were armed with petitions signed by prominent publishers of the Dominion and a number of typographical Unions, and urged that if the American plates and sheets were kept out of the country their production here must provide work for Canadian printers.

MR. WALLACE'S BILL.

Mr. Wallace's Bill is evidently not going through the House without meeting with the most determined opposition. The Minister of Justice was waited upon last week by a deputation, consisting of Messrs. W. F. Gault, D. Morrice, C. B. Hebert, J. Cowan, R. G. Leckie, H. Watson and C. Chaput, of Montreal, and R. Turner, of Quebec, accompanied by Messrs. Curran, Labelle and Desjardins, to point out the objections they held against the passage of Clarke Wallace's Anti Combines Bill. They represented that if the Bill were passed it would put a stop to a great proportion of legitimate business by compelling wholesale dealers to sell at retail prices, or at sacrifice prices, because other dealers might do the same. They said the Bill was too vague with regard to those offences which were created by unduly raising the price of goods, and would unreasonably affect the exchange of commodities. They contended that it would be oppressive to insist on the forfeiture of the charter of any incorporated company consequent on a single conviction which might be for a very trivial offence. It was urged also that it would be unreasonable to have to submit to a jury the decision of the question whether a company should forfeit its charter or not

by unduly raising the price of commodities, and they alleged that there were no combinations, so far as the interests they respectively represented, which were unfair or likely to be detrimental to the public interests.

NEWSDEALERS AND LIBEL.

Every newsdealer is legally presumed to know the contents of every publication which he handles, even if the interval between the time when he receives the paper from the office of publication and the time of his delivery of it to the purchaser is so short as to negative conclusively the possibility of actual knowledge of the contents. He is liable even in his absence, where the paper containing the libel is received and sold by his employé, unless it is proved that the paper was sold against his orders, or secretly, or that some deceit was practised upon him, or that he was absent under such circumstances that the presumption of his connivance in the sale is conclusively rebutted.

THE EARLY CLOSING ACT.

An application has been made in the Local Legislature for a return showing the names of the municipalities which have passed by-laws under the authority of the "Ontario Shops Regulation Act," distinguishing between cases where such by-laws were passed in pursuance of petitions therefor and the cases where by-laws were passed without petitions in favor thereof; and showing, also, which of the by-laws have since been repealed. The object is to get all the information possible in regard to the working of the Ontario Shops Regulation Act, which, it is asserted, had not been operating successfully, but on the contrary led to trouble and turmoil in many municipalities where it was still in force, and in many municipalities where it had been repealed. The people, in many cases, regarded it as a direct interference with their rights and liberties.

Mr. Meredith went for the Act very strongly. He said that many had supported it, thinking it would be a success, but was not. It was stated last session that the Mother Country had proposed, and would carry into effect, some such legislation, but the House would remember that the session was hardly over when the proposed measure was laughed out of the Imperial Parliament by a large majority of the members, and among the strongest opponents of it were those who might be assumed to be most interested in the labor question. The experience of the Act in this province was that it was wholly unworkable, not by reason of any defect in the machinery, but simply because of the unsound principle upon which it was based of attempting to interfere with the liberty of the subject. He did not deny that it was most desirable to shorten the hours of labor by some proper means, such as by calling upon the owners of

shops throughout the country to support the idea, but when hon. gentlemen undertook by legislation to declare that people shall conduct legitimate business in such and such way, and according to such and such ideas, they were introducing a tyrannical power, belonging not to this century, but to centuries long since past and gone. This Legislature undertook to say "It is an offence to carry on your business by selling in the ordinary way for the purpose of meeting your obligations. Why, such a thing belonged to the dark ages of legislation. Not only in the city of Toronto, but in every city throughout the province the Act had been found unworkable. The majority in the city of Toronto originally favored the measure, but when it was attempted to work the measure it was found to be a gross interference with the liberty of the subject, and it should have been at once repealed. He understood that in the city of Toronto to-day there was not any trade which would have the Legislature control it, and in the city of London only the druggists, who were eight or ten in number, allowed themselves to be governed by it. The trial of it all through the country had shown it to be a measure which should never have been placed upon the statute books of the province; it had met with so little response.

A CUSTOMS CIRCULAR.

The following circular has just been issued by the Customs Department to the collectors at the various ports.

You are requested to use all possible vigilance in collecting the duty of 12½ per cent. on reprints of all British copyright works, in addition to any other duty provided for by tariff.

Complaint has been made to the Department that reprints of the following works, all illustrated by Gustave Dore, are being largely imported into Canada, and the copyright duty not collected, viz.: The Holy Bible; "The History of Don Quixote" (Cervantes); Milton's "Paradise Lost"; "The Fables of La Fontaine," translated by W. Thornbury; "Atala" (Chateaubriand), translated by J. S. Harry; Dantes "Inferno" (The Vision of Hell); Dantes "Vision of Purgatory and Paradise"; "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen"; "Fairy Tales Told Again," by Tom Hood. Copyrights, Messrs. Cassell & Co. (Ld.), Ludgate Hill.

NOTE. Entry of all copyright works must be made on the authorized form, B. 3, or they will be returned for correction.

"Have you Browning?" she asked at the village store. "No," replied the clerk, "we have blacking and whiting, but no browning."

Irate passenger (as train is moving off):—Why didn't you put my luggage in, as I told you, you old—? Porter:—E—h, man! ye'er baggage is nae sic a fule as yersel'. Yer i' the wrang train.