

books, the booksellers were merely anticipating what they had been led to expect would be the Government policy. He did not want the Minister to consider them as interfering, but as being anxious to present their side of the case before any drastic measures were taken.

He thoroughly believed that the handling of the school books in the past by the retail booksellers of the province had been entirely satisfactory to the public, and that any outcry against expensive text-books had been directed solely against the publishers.

If the Government were to take over the distribution of school-books, it would be necessary to establish machinery for this purpose. This would involve considerable expense and would take some time to put into proper running order. He believed this was a departure absolutely uncalled for in view of the fact that the channel of distribution through the medium of the booksellers was already in efficient working order.

In the past, the trade had experienced considerable difficulty in dealing with school boards. The members of these boards, while well-meaning men, were often most unbusinesslike. The Government would probably have to deal through them in the event of adopting Government distribution, and he feared the difficulties of the case would thereby be materially enhanced.

The profits accruing from the sale of text-books, although not very great, enabled a bookseller to keep up his store at an efficient level, whereas, if he were reduced to the handling of miscellaneous books alone, this could not be accomplished. It took the two lines combined to support a bookstore, which invariably was a centre of culture and refinement, while the bookseller had an elevating influence on the community. In Toronto, where a system of free text-books was in existence, it was a re-

compensate many well-established businesses for loss of trade.

C. L. Nelles.

Mr. Nelles, of Guelph, pointed out that in the past too many editions of text-books had been authorized and this had been a serious source of loss to the trade and annoyance to the public. He wanted to impress upon the Government the importance of having only one authorized edition of each book. The numberless editions had been instrumental in creating discontent throughout the coun-



MR. J. G. CLOKE, HAMILTON.



MR. G. W. SULMAN, CHATHAM.

grettable fact that the number of bookstores had been reduced to only two. Under the circumstances it was incumbent on the Government to see that the interests of the booksellers were conserved.

Mr. Robertson also asked the Government to consider seriously the matter of compensation. If they decide to take over the distributions of the books, the first thing they would have to do would be to buy up all the unsold stock throughout the country. The quantity of this stock would surprise them. They would also have to

try, as parents objected to buying so many books. He explained that the deputation were there on behalf of the smaller and weaker bookstores of the country. The loss of the school-book trade would be their ruin.

He maintained that the discounts were small enough now and that it cost 20 per cent. on the original price to pay expenses. In the United States, although the discounts were one-fifth or sometimes one-sixth, the retail price was not controlled by Government regulations.

In his opinion the idea of licensing the stores to handle school books would be a great help to the legitimate bookseller, as at present certain departmental stores used school books as an advertising medium with the public, selling them at a loss to give the people an idea that all other lines of goods sold were also much cheaper than the ordinary retailer could sell them at.

G. W. Sulman.

Mr. Sulman, of Chatham, showed that the booksellers were closer than any other people to the public who bought the books. They consequently heard all the objections that were raised and he could assure the Government that the public appreciated the efforts that were being made to secure cheaper text-books.

He pointed out that it would be to the advantage of the Government to keep the distribution of the books in the hands of the booksellers, no matter what changes were made regarding their publication, because he was assured that distribution could thereby be secured at the lowest cost.

He was confident that the booksellers could be satisfied with smaller profits if the Government had the supervision and protected the trade from losses such as they had suffered in the past.

He suggested for the consideration of the Government the expediency of licensing bookstores handling school