

matter is one of wisdom ; and his remarks in the House shew that if, when the trade disturbance first broke out, he forgot what was due to publishing enterprise in supplying the wants of schools with meritorious text-books, it was only for the moment that he did so. On the other hand, the Minister has an unmistakable duty to perform, in seeing not only that the schools are provided with efficient text-books, but that they are furnished at a price reasonably suited to the pockets of the people. In the performance of this duty the intelligence and honest purpose of Mr. Crooks will doubtless continue to be his best guides in dealing with so delicate and important a matter. While the policy is maintained of having a uniformity of text-books throughout the schools, the duty of the Minister carries with it serious responsibility and necessitates a nice discrimination. The system of options in the choice of text-books, wherever practicable, should, however, be maintained. This, of itself, will, by competition, do much to minimize their cost, though care should always be exercised in maintaining excellence of manufacture. Slop book-making is always dear book-making, and, moreover, tends to slop-teaching. The throwing open the manufacture of authorized text-books, to any house offering to produce them, is, but too apt, unless rigid checks are applied, to lead to slop-production. There is the more reason, therefore, to be watchful. In comparison with the prices at which school books are sold in England and in the United States, the rates obtaining here cannot be said to be other than favourable. Some consideration, however, must imperatively be given to publishers' rights and to authors' royalties. The author of a good text-book can scarcely be too generously dealt with ; and manuals of a high character will not be forthcoming unless their writers are well paid for their work. That the Department should control the copyright of books it authorizes is a matter for the Government to consider and for the Legislature to decide upon. But no dishonest administration of educational affairs will seek to obtain these except upon equita-

ble business terms. Neither official wire-pulling nor trade communism should obscure the course of honour on this point. A popular error into which even the Minister, to some extent, seems to have fallen, here also requires to be corrected. We refer to the fallacy that a school manual derives its value from being authorized by the Department. The approval of the Department attests its merit but does not create it. As a property, authorization, of course, makes it of more value to the publisher. But, unless the character of a text-book is of no account in its selection for school use, Departmental authorization cannot be said to give it a value which it has not. There have been books issued by native publishers which have merited, but have not received, authorization by the Department, as there are some on the authorized lists whose title to official favour is not that of merit. Intrinsically, the worth of the former is as appreciable, without the approval of the Department, as with it. It is misleading, therefore, to say that authorization creates the value of an author's property. Let Mr. Crooks have sound views on this point and it will be well for education. For good text-books he will have learned ere this that he has to look outside the Department, and not within it. To obtain these, the hands and brain capable of producing them necessarily have to be paid for. But this the public will not grumble at if the books be few and good. The Minister's danger is in their being many and bad ; and the trade connections of his advisers are at present rapidly placing them among the latter. The evil, moreover, is aggravated by the trade-touting of the Inspectors, and their immoral coercion of the teachers to introduce unauthorized books. *This* is the "Book Ring" Mr. Crooks should "see his way" to checkmate.

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