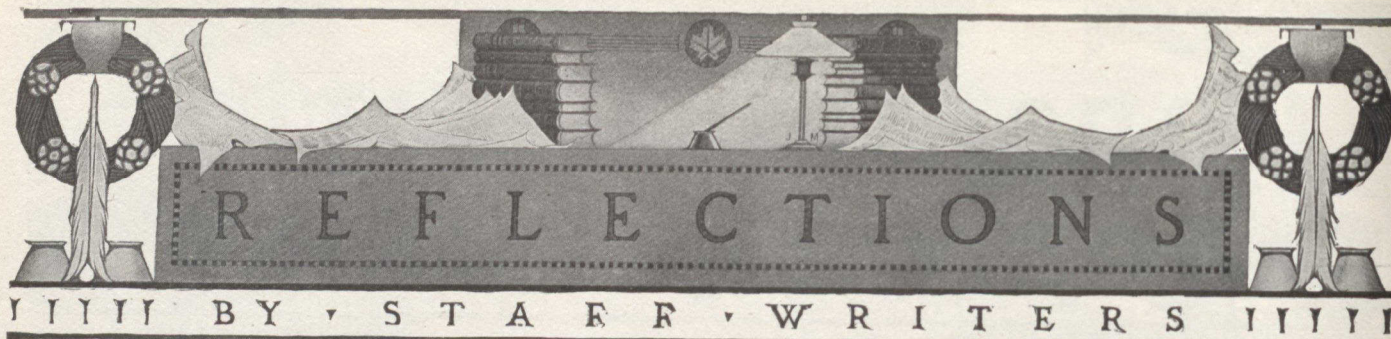




REFLECTIONS

IIII BY STAFF WRITERS IIII

SOME newspapers through the country have been accepting without reserve the statement that "the improved quality and reduced price of the Ontario school books will be as good as the distribution of \$100,000 per annum among the families of this province." The statement is scarcely justified by the facts.

ONTARIO'S CHEAP READERS

In the first place there is considerable question as to whether the new Readers will be improved or not. The Education Department has not taken the public into its confidence and given an outline of the improvement proposed. Those who profess to know seem to think that the books will be only slightly superior in quality to the old. They claim that, as the contract was made with the former publishers of the books and at a low price, much improvement cannot be expected.

In the second place, the total average price paid each year for all the Readers sold in Ontario is only \$45,000 a year. The price has been reduced from \$1.15 a year to \$49c. a year. This means a reduction of about \$25,000 a year, which is a long distance from \$100,000.

Further, this reduction in price lasts only one and a half years. What will happen then is a matter of conjecture. The probability is that if a new set of readers is prepared and the paper and binding brought up to date, the price will go back to the old figure, if not higher.

This explanation is not given to lessen the credit which should come to the Education Department for its new bargain, but in the general interest of the publishers and the public. The latter would be unwise to fancy that good books can be bought in the regular way far any such prices as now obtain in Ontario. The circumstances there are exceptional and temporary, and the total saving will be not more than \$25,000 a year.

A VERY interesting story was hinted at but not told at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church a week ago to-day. Principal MacLaren presented a report concerning Knox College funds and intimated that on three of these investments made by the late Dr. Warden there had been a loss of \$37,000. Further, other investments made by the deceased treasurer of the church funds were not according to charter and hence illegal; these securities would be sold at the first opportune moment. The Principal intimated that the board of the college would like to collect the loss from the estate of the deceased officer of the church. Apparently the result of the discussion which followed was a decision to drop the whole matter into oblivion.

To those of us who love investigations, the action of the General Assembly is disappointing. It might be delightful reading, this story of how Dr. Warden became a wealthy man and of the part he played in underwriting syndicates, stock speculations and bank founding.

The late treasurer of the church was put into his office to make money. If there had been no losses, little would have been heard of his departures from the strict lines laid down in the charters of Presbyterian institutions. That is quite evident.

A different result has brought a measure of publicity. He was, like other Midases, beset by occasional mis-

fortunes. One of these was that all his stock speculations did not turn out well; only a percentage of such usually prove remunerative. Then again, a near relative of his was unfortunate and is said to have lost a sum of money in excess of one hundred thousand dollars. Whatever the amount was, the indirect effect on Dr. Warden's position in the financial world was undoubtedly discouraging.

To speak seriously—the General Assembly would have been well advised to clear up all the rumours that are afloat and set new lines so that, if anything unwise was done, the result would be a warning to all those who now have or in the future may have charge of church, college and other institutional funds.

IN rejecting the application of the Rational Sunday League to provide free music in the Toronto parks on Sunday, the civic authorities are taking an attitude which, in all probability, they will be unable to maintain in the face of advancing public sentiment. The population of Toronto is daily becoming more cosmopolitan, and this means that in time the city will have a modified form of the European Sunday. They have it now in Montreal. It is impossible to shut up a large city for one whole day in the week, and this is becoming more apparent with the growth of every big city in this country. We recall—almost with surprise now—that there was a time when street cars did not run in Toronto on Sunday, and the frenzied efforts that were made to prevent people from getting about in that city of twenty square miles, on one day in the week.

It is useless to try to stem the tide of expansion in a community, and those who try will find that they have simply provided a mouthful for the juggernaut of Progress.

Frankly, we do not see why the Rational Sunday League should not be allowed to provide free music in the parks on the only day in the week when multitudes in Toronto would be able to enjoy it. Of all the refining influences which can be introduced in a community, good music is perhaps the best. It is the one language which all people can understand. It is without creed or factional appeal. Its whole effect is to soothe, to elevate, to inspire. It breathes harmony for all who listen to its message. But let the music be good music. Trashy stuff is never elevating and could well be dispensed with at any time.

WHILE the evidence of Orchard, the self-confessed murderer, is the central fact in a sordid and brutal murder case in the courts of Idaho, it is in reality the methods of the Western Federation of Miners which are on trial. The subject comes home to Canadians because the Royal Commission on disputes in the mining industries of British Columbia returned in 1903 a scathing indictment of this organisation. It found it to be an organisation with no care whatever for law and order; ready to use violence regardless of the effects of this either on employer or on employed. The Royal Commission, in a finding which, in view of recent developments, was prophetic, held that the methods of the