

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE QUESTION OF THE SCHOOL READERS.

THE position of this magazine on the question of a plurality of Readers for the schools of the Province cannot be mistaken. We have repeatedly expressed ourselves as adverse to any but one new series, and we have as repeatedly pointed out the consequences if more than one set are authorized. Sooner than we thought the policy foreshadowed in the MONTHLY is seen to be the true one, and our words of caution from time to time uttered have been almost instantly justified. Two publishing houses are already in arms, and the profession will soon have the brands of strife actively thrust into their hands. Inspectors and trustees, too, will ere long be ranged in the fight, and throughout the Province nought will be heard but the din of battle. In the press we have statements and counter-statements, one of the former actually incriminating by name a City Inspector who was the first to sport the ribbons of a certain house in the fray. The license enjoyed by this gentleman to prostitute his office to the purposes of trade has always been a matter of surprise to the profession. Some day, it is to be hoped, the Department or his Board will call him to order and compel him to respect the proprieties of his office. The scandal is fast becoming intolerable, and the flagrant defying of order and decency is producing its usual crop of results. Meantime, the publishing houses are carrying on the demoralizing game, and every school in the Province is to be made the theatre of strife. We desire to write temperately on this matter, though with the facts that have come to our knowledge concerning the authorization of two sets of Readers, and of the motives which led to the rejection of what admittedly is the best of the three series submitted, it is, we confess, difficult to curb our indignation and write with restraint. But we will not indis-

creetly prejudge the case, though the public have a right to know that so important a matter as the choice of new Readers for the schools of the Province has been impartially dealt with and the selection judiciously made. In the action that has been taken have both Central Committee and the Government done their duty? We shall see.

In the first place it will be proper to inquire who are responsible for the decision arrived at, and what were the conditions that governed the competition. The answer to the first question is easy, as the Acting Minister and his colleagues have emphatically stated that, in the absence from the country of the Minister of Education, the matter was left entirely in the hands of the Central Committee. This places in an ascertained quarter the responsibility of advising the Executive in the course it has taken. We need not, we suppose, stop to point out who compose the Committee to whom has been entrusted the judicial duties of this responsible office. Though Mr. Crooks himself has resented inquiry into the *personnel* of the Advisory Board, it is an open secret who they all are. It is sufficient for our purpose to know that at least four of the number come into close personal contact with the profession, and two or three—will it be credited?—have intimate business relations with a firm upon whose Readers they were called to pronounce judgment and which, though notoriously defective, they reported for conditional authorization.

As to the conditions that governed the competition, we can only premise that, not only as the law directs but as public sentiment would exact, the series to be chosen should, in its literary and mechanical workmanship, be distinctively Canadian. As a further guide in the right selection to be made, the Committee had before it the expressed views of Mr. Crooks and of members of the Inspectorate, on the expediency of