

PROGRESS OF THE MACHINES.

MACHINE typesetting is the great theme of the day, and the situation is more complicated to-day than ever. Canadian printers would do well to follow the matter closely, as there can be no doubt that there is a sphere in newspaper printing which the machines are destined to fill. While many difficulties are arising, the tendency is in favor of the machines.

During the past month The J. B. McLean Co. have decided to cease using their Rogers machine, and this because of the unsatisfactory work that has been done. Their discarding it only proves that for trade journals and magazines the machines are less suitable than for daily papers. Every chance was given the machine. Constant improvements in running gear, etc., were made at the suggestion of the Rogers people and paid for by the office. It was sure to get out of order on an average once a week. A messenger would have to be sent over the city in quest of the machinist. When he arrived the machine would be taken to pieces in a hunt for "the trouble," thus consuming from one to three hours, and throwing back presses and workmen. A weekly or monthly paper of the class wished by this firm require to present a better appearance than is necessary for a hastily printed and hastily read daily paper. More artistic clothes are necessary for the former, and hence the machine dress, in its present imperfect condition, is unsuitable. Probably this will explain why the proprietors of The Week have also decided to discard the Rogers machine.

The Toronto Mail has just put out its 13 Rogers machines, but this action cannot be explained in the same way. That they have not lost faith in the machines' ability to do suitable work for a daily paper is seen in the fact that they are putting in eight new Mergenthalers. It is extremely probable that the Evening News will replace some of its Rogers machines with Mergenthalers; but the Empire is likely to continue using the Rogers, as they claim to be satisfied with present progress.

On the face, the above changes look bad for the Rogers machine, and a fair explanation will be attempted. In the first place, the nonpareil face on a minion body, used on the Mergenthalers makes a clearer appearance and approaches more nearly to hand-set type than the brevier used on the Rogers. That is, the face is slightly heavier, and gives the impression of possessing a better alignment. In some cases the letters produced by the Rogers will, when examined closely, be found to be of different fonts and thus productive of an irregular line. These are of course imperfections which the makers of the Rogers can easily overcome.

But another explanation given by some who have had to do with the Rogers machine shows that the management has, wittingly or unwittingly, failed to secure as much sympathy among the publishers as is necessary to give the machine a lengthened trial. This friction has arisen in various ways, and has tended to make people more anxious to have the Mergenthaler, as vexatious little dispute as to terms of contracts, cost of repairs, losses when machines are out of repair, etc., seem to be less frequent. The machines are necessarily far from perfect, and only by constant use can these defects be discovered and overcome. If the trade generally is not sympathetic enough to give the machines sufficient trial to discover these imperfections, then no machine can ultimately succeed. This perfection of the machines is now going on at the expense of the present users, and it requires careful courteous treatment to enable the manufacturers of the machines to possess the co-operation of these publishers. As one publisher remarked, "The Rogers people

have tried to get too much for the present, and have not tried to prepare for the future." It is reported that the Rogers people offered to renew some of their Toronto contracts at a reduced rental—the reduction amounting to 25 cents per day.

Mr. Lundgren, the foreman of the Empire composing room, when asked about the machines, declared that they were doing good work. He explained that the fins, which sometimes appeared when the type set by the machine was used on a flat press, disappeared when this was merely used from which to take a stereotype plate for a fast rotary press. He thought that the stereotyping removed many of the defects and gave a face more nearly approaching to that presented by hand set type. He believes that the machines are bound to succeed, and stated that in his opinion, neither the Mergenthaler nor the Rogers were the machine of the future. The Monoline was nearest his ideal, as he was convinced that the coming machine must cast each letter separately as the Monoline does. The corrections would thus be more speedier. He threw out a good hint to publishers when he hinted that all copy for the machines should be carefully prepared typewritten if possible so as to reduce corrections to a minimum.

Mr. Conter, foreman of the News composing room, when interviewed, also expressed his firm confidence that the machines were here to stay. He preferred the Mergenthaler face used on the Mail to that of the Rogers now used on the News. In his last week's report of the amounts set the highest was 131.4 thousand ems, most of which was straight work on stories for the News-Ledger. The number of hours was 45½. The lowest record was 105.6 for 47 hours; but this was on the daily paper, where the operator had less chance.

It has been mentioned before that the fins which appear on the cast type are very troublesome and give a bad appearance where no stereotype plates are used. This feature is obviated in Pittsburgh and other American cities by the cold casting system. In this method the dies are assembled instead of the matrices. A cold piece of lead is forced against the face of the dies and an impression taken. The impression or matrix is then placed in another machine and a cast taken. This gives a new matrix for every line, and as the dies are made of steel there can be no fins.

THE LATE J. E. DAVIS.

THE editor, like other men, must die, but their passing away is always an occasion for general public comment and oft times general public lament. The editor knows everybody and everybody knows him, especially when he is editor, owner, subscription agent and advertising agent all in one for a country weekly. Trained in the cunning school of business friendship, even the most morose nature becomes softened, and the lines of the face indicative of good nature, and his good nature wins him hosts of friends, who miss him when he has gone.

The Mitchell (Ont.) Advocate was founded in April 1862, by W. R. and J. E. Davis, and both found wealth and honor in its publication. A few weeks ago J. E. Davis died, and the Canadian press has lost a prominent member. Born in Ireland in 1838, he came to Canada in 1852, and since that time learned to love this land as fervently as he admired the land of his birth. Three sons and three daughters mourn his loss, and they have the sincere sympathy of those editors who were favored by acquaintanceship with their deceased parent.