

Job Printing in Toronto.

THE TORONTO WORLD has been looking into the state of the job printing trade in Toronto and has come to the conclusion that it is "rotten to the core." The reason is that prices have been cut too fine, leaving no profit for the printers. Competition has no doubt been very severe and the trade overdone. Blame is attached to the type founders and paper and ink dealers for their leniency in giving credits, and the failure of the firm of Imrie & Graham is cited as a case in point. This is unjust to all parties, as this firm up to three years before its assignment was in good financial condition and paid its accounts regularly every month, taking the benefit of cash discounts. Imrie & Graham's failure was directly due to the fact that they undertook the publication of a Scottish-Canadian paper in Toronto and met with insufficient support. Through this venture they fell behind, and had they abandoned it two years ago they would have been all right. This they would have done but that they were buoyed up from time to time by promises that the paper was to be taken over by one of the Scottish societies. The above are Imrie & Graham's explanations of their failure, and appear to be correct. At any rate creditors have accepted them and resold the assets of the estate for \$5,000, which will pay the creditors about forty cents in the dollar. This failure was distinctly not attributable to any special laxity in giving credit on the part of either type founder, paper dealer or ink maker. The firm enjoyed good credit, their plant and business was entirely unencumbered, and their books showed a surplus in their business. When the firm assigned and stock was taken at little better than auction sale prices a deficiency was shown, but not till then. Under these circumstances it is absurd to blame any one for giving credit.

The assignment of Brough & Caswell is also cited by the World as a case where laxity in giving credit worked to the disadvantage of the legitimate printing trade in Toronto. It would appear that there is some ground for the accusation in this case as this firm obtained a plant of about \$23,000 and paid no cash on account of it. It is needless to add that it was all held by the sellers under lien and that the Toronto Type Foundry did not supply it.

The job printing trade in Toronto is certainly in a demoralized condition, and so are many other trades. A period of depression has been upon the country for the past couple of years, and printers have felt it as well as others. Better times are in prospect, and the cleaning out

of some of the weaker printers will strengthen the trade in Toronto and elsewhere when the revival sets in. The true policy at present is to curtail expenses as much as possible, and do no work unless it yields a profit. Unbusinesslike methods and careless estimating have had more to do with losses than even business stringency. There are innumerable dead-beats who run around from one printing office to another and get work done which they have neither the means nor the inclination to pay for; in their eagerness to get work credit is often granted by printers to these gentry without proper enquiry and losses ensue.

Now a word about estimating. There are some printers who ought to be drummed out of the trade for the reason that they simply do not know how to estimate upon work. These parties are the ruin of the business. In estimating the cost of work they go about it somewhat in the following fashion: Cost of stock, \$10; composition, one man one day at \$12 per week, \$2; press, boy half a day at \$4 per week, say 50 cts.; total cost, \$12.50. Not another item is taken into account, and the work is tendered for at \$15, and the "printer" thinks he is making \$2.50 profit! This is a fair sample of how trade is demoralized by ignoramuses who fail to consider items such as rent, taxes, depreciation of material, power, fuel, light, ink, superintendence, and so on. If due allowance were made for these a piece of work such as is contemplated above would be found to be worth nearer \$20 than \$15, and if done at the latter figure it would entail a loss.

The Hill & Weir Printing and Publishing Co. has also assigned. This company a few months ago took over the old-established and once prosperous business of Hill & Weir. It is said the firm got into financial straits through outside speculations and attempted to save their business by converting it into a stock company. Present demoralization has proven too much for the new company. It is expected to pay nearly dollar for dollar to the creditors, but at the expense of the shareholders. Up to the time of going to press the assets and liabilities have not been accurately ascertained.

THE Rose Publishing Co. has gone out of business. This concern has no connection with Hunter, Rose & Co., but was the outcome of the old publishing business of Belford Bros. Through the absence of a Canadian copyright law adapted to the needs of the country and the trade it was impossible to make the business pay. THE IMPRINT will give its views on copyright in next month's issue.