

# JOURNAL OF

Province of



# EDUCATION,

Ontario.

VOL. XXIII.

TORONTO, MAY, 1870.

No. 5.

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## EDUCATIONAL DEPOSITORY AND ITS ASSAILANTS.

So much has been written and said by interested parties against our Educational Depository, that we deem it desirable to give some space to the subject, with a view to consider the various objections which have been urged against it.

### POSITION AND OBJECTS OF THE DEPOSITORY.

Previously to doing so, it is proper to state what is the position which the Depository occupies in connection with our system of public instruction, and what are its objects. It forms a necessary, though subordinate, feature in that system, and cannot, and should not, be viewed apart from it,—as its existence depends entirely upon that of the school system itself. It is the only source of supply to the schools of maps, charts, apparatus, prize and library books. It, or some equally efficient instrumentality for its special object, is as essential to the growth and prosperity of our schools, as is the Normal School for the training of teachers. The one provides effective workmen for instructing and training our youth, the other furnishes these workers with the necessary tools and appliances of their profession, and furnishes them of the best material and *at the lowest price*. This is all the Depository professes to do. For this (and all the more for the fact last stated), the Department is incessantly attacked, not by the public, or those most competent to judge, but by interested booksellers, or those prompted by them, or who derive advantage from them. And yet no one attempts to deny that the duty itself of supplying the schools with these requisites is a necessary one, and is essential to the completeness of our system, and the thorough efficiency of our schools. The only question is, "who shall do it?" Interested parties, for the sole purposes of gain,—or a disinterested and efficient agency, whose responsibilities to the Government

and Legislature are commensurate with its obligations to make the schools entrusted to its care the source and centre of light and knowledge throughout the country? This question we now propose to answer in full.

### THE PROMPTERS OF, AND MOTIVES FOR, THESE ATTACKS.

With this view we shall now take up in detail the objections which have been urged against the Depository. Before doing so, however, we may again premise.

1st. That none but interested booksellers, or those prompted by them, or who derive advantage, or gain, from them, have urged any objections against the Depository. [See note, page 71.]

2nd. The real reasons which prompt these objections are invariably kept in the back ground, and the ostensible reasons only are put forward to the public. Sometimes a pretence of their ability to do better for the Public Schools than the Department itself is faintly put forth for effect, but generally it resolves itself in the end into a complaint. With these ostensible complaints we now propose to deal.

### FIRST OBJECTION—ALLEGED INTERFERENCE OF THE DEPOSITORY WITH THE "BOOK TRADE."

And first, it is objected that the operations of the Depository interfere with the book trade. This objection has been frequently discussed and refuted, and probably by none more effectively than by one of the most experienced members of the book trade itself in Canada, who, in 1858, with other booksellers, addressed a memorial to the Legislature on the subject, from which we make the following extract:—

"Your Memorialists are of the *decided opinion* that the establishment of the Educational Depository has done a great deal in fostering a desire for literature among the people of Canada, and has indirectly added to the wealth of persons in the book trade, inasmuch as the desire for general literature has been supplied through their means; and your Memorialists would respectfully refer for a proof of this to the Customs returns attending this branch of trade in the Province of Canada."

These returns (compiled from the time when the Depository went into operation down to the present), are as follows. They speak conclusively as to the groundlessness of the charge which is in effect that \$15,000 or \$20,000 worth of books imported by the Department, as against \$300,000 to \$350,000 worth imported by the booksellers of Ontario alone, is an interference with "the trade!" The tables are as follows:—