

excellence in each series of Readers, and say so, or upon the Minister who encourages this huge speculation on the part of the rival publishers, and then when the time for decision has come, finds that he cannot maintain a decision in favour of one alone?

It may be thought by some that the interests of the people will be better served if competition be allowed not only in the publishing, but in the preparation of school books of so general use as the Readers. Yet whatever may be said of the advantages of having competing text-books in large populations, as are in England and in the United States, where the centres of publishing interests are accessible to many different areas, each large enough to have uniformity within its own limits, irrespective of conformity with other areas, it must be remembered that in the present condition of our Dominion, publishing houses in Toronto must be concerned with Ontario text-books almost entirely; and the only way to secure a competition among the publishers of Readers (*i.e.*, where the copyright is not held by the Department, and publishers allowed to use it subject to conditions) is to authorize, as has been done, two or more sets, a proceeding which, in the opinion of many, imposes upon the people of Ontario a troublesome and expensive burden.

If the Minister had wished to avoid this, he ought to have let it be unmistakably understood that only one set could possibly be authorized, and then when he found that the several publishers were determined to enter upon a ruinous competition he ought to have used his influence in getting them to co-operate for the purpose of preparing a joint series of requisite merit and of fixed maximum price. If he had failed in this, then he should have let the terms of the competition be thoroughly well known, and the time at which the decision

should be made, and have adhered to these strictly. In this war of the books it is not the people alone who complain; the publishers too seem to have their grievance.

This dual authorization will, I fear, be strongly censured by the people, because it is something the annoyance, inconvenience and expense of which they will readily feel; but it is not a worse executive mistake than many others which do not come prominently before the public, because they appertain to the intricacies of professional educational work. These need not, however, be specially mentioned. Headmasters, principals, inspectors and trustees, and others interested, will recall them for themselves.

Indeed their recurrence must not infrequently have become painfully evident both to the Minister and to his coadjutors. If there were any need to testify of them, I should not shrink from doing so; but, in common with my fellow-teachers, I am conscious that the system has been administered by the head of the Education Department with an eye single to its good, and if regulations have been sometimes inconsecutive or inconsistent, and the policy of the Department apparently fitfully experimental, I can see ample cause for these things in the fact of the administration being entrusted to a legal parliamentarian instead of to a body of representative practical educationists.

It would be affectation to deny, however, that for one cause or another there is grave dissatisfaction with the present administration of the system; and were it not for the high personal esteem in which the head of the Department is held, and the felt assurance of his good-will to every member of the profession, as well as a conviction that as long as the administration of the system remains in