

FREE SCHOOL BOOKS IN TORONTO.

THE SYSTEM of free books for schools has finally been introduced into Toronto and something done. The retailers were allowed to place their stock in the hands of the public school board, and to receive for these books the wholesale price. Thus they have been properly relieved. At present tenders have been called for and received for supplying text-books necessary for the use of the public schools until June 30th, 1893. Tenders are to specify the discount to be made on the regular retail price of the books.

The system of distribution adopted was the result of the observations of Messrs. W. D. Mcpherson and J. L. Hughes, who visited Boston, Fall River, Brooklyn, New York, and Saratoga. The following is an extract from their report.

The free text book system has been compulsory throughout the state of Massachusetts for seven years, but it has been in voluntary operation in many places for a longer period. It has been in use in Fall River for nineteen years and in New York for over fifty years. We found that very considerable differences existed in the systems in practice in the cities named, each having some special feature peculiar to itself, and after carefully considering all the information and suggestions received, we beg leave to recommend the following regulations, forms and record books as suitable for adoption by the Toronto Public School Board:

Then followed the regulations. The main provisions are as follows:

It will be the duty of each assistant teacher to prepare at the close of each term an estimate of the new books required for use in her class during the ensuing term, and submit it to the principal.

The principal of each school will prepare a requisition on the secretary of the School Board at the close of each term, showing the books required for use in his or her school during the next term.

The requisitions from the various schools must be prepared by one of the inspectors before they are filled by the secretary.

The secretary will, on the opening day of each term, send to each school the books ordered at the close of the preceding term and passed by one of the inspectors.

Each principal will keep an account book showing the books on hand at the close of the year ending in June of each year; the number of books received during the year; books returned during the year; books to be accounted for at the close of the year; books missing, if any; books on hand at the close of the year; number of worn out books returned at the end of the year, books on hand fit for use. Each teacher will keep the same kind of stock account for her own class.

Each principal and teacher will record the names of all pupils in his or her class, and enter opposite to each pupil's name the book supplied to him or her.

All books materially injured, destroyed or lost must be replaced by the pupils to whom they are loaned.

Pupils will be responsible to their

own teachers, teachers to their principals, and principals to the School Board for any loss or destruction of text books loaned to them.

No books should be returned at any time to an assistant teacher, a principal or the secretary of the School Board without a receipt being given by the teacher or officer receiving them.

The secretary will receive returned books from principals only, and the principal from assistant teachers only.

Teachers will label, or cause to be labelled, with the label supplied by the School Board, all text books received in their respective classes. They will also see that all the text books are covered properly with the cover supplied by the School Board.

Teachers may allow pupils to take home the books required for study.

Pupils or teachers who have to restore books lost or destroyed by their neglect will be allowed to purchase them at the secretary's office at the price paid by the School Board.

Text books in homes in which contagious diseases exist must be delivered to the medical health officer, and new books issued by the secretary to the pupils from whom they were taken, on producing a proper receipt from the medical health officer.

During the last week of each term no text books will be allowed out of the school room.

On the day before the close of the term all books loaned to pupils will be collected and each pupil credited with the books returned.

At the close of each term the books in each room will be carefully examined by the principal, and those unfit for use bound in a parcel, which will be returned to the secretary.

The principal of each school will make out at the close of each term a statement showing the number of books unfit for use in each class in his or her school.

The secretary will keep two books in connection with the issue of free text books; one a stock book showing the total number of books purchased, the books delivered to the several schools, the books returned, the books rebound, and the books on hand at the close of the year; and the other a ledger, in which an account will be kept with each school, showing the books issued, the books new and old returned, and the books still on hand in each school.

This shows how the system works, and further developments will be watched with interest, especially by booksellers, whose trade is, to a certain extent, dependent on the result of this experiment by a Canadian city.

Since the above was written the Printing and Supplies Committee of the Public School Board opened the tenders for the supply of text books. As the law fixes the prices at which these books shall be sold, the tenders were all the same, though there was a slight difference in the discounts for cash.

After an animated discussion the contract was awarded to Gage & Co. at the following figures: Hamblin Smith's Algebra, 60c.; Todhunter's Elementary Algebra, 50c.; Smith & MacMurchy's Advanced Arithmetic, 15c.; Public School Grammar, 25c.; High School Grammar, 75c.; Hamblin Smith's Geometry, books 1-3, 40c.; Todhunter's Geometry, books 1-3, 40c.; Todhunter's Geometry, complete, 75c.; Public School History, old work, 85c.; Public School History, new work,

30c.; Ontario readers, part 1, 10c.; part 2, 12c.; part 3, 25c.; second book, 25c.; third book, 35c.; fourth book, 45c.; high school reader, 60c. A discount of 25 per cent. and 10 per cent. net cash 30 days will be allowed in all cases, except on the Ontario readers. On these the discount will be 25 per cent. and 5 per cent. net, unless they are purchased in \$1,000 lots, when 10 per cent. will be given. All books will be delivered at the schools by the contractors.

ILLUSTRATED CHRISTMAS NUMBERS.

Last year the trade in illustrated numbers was immense and surpassed all previous years. The great demand for these papers last year has had a strong effect on the retailers' anxiousness to buy this season's productions. Orders are being placed much earlier and are more numerous and more bulky. Last year most of the numbers were out early, and the trade were thus enabled to dispose of them before the real rush of the holiday trade began, and this was very pleasing and profitable. Orders are generally filled in rotation, according to the date of their receipt, and hence dealers who desire to get these papers early must order early. Prompt attention to this matter may prevent vexatious delay.

It is not known yet what the forthcoming numbers will be like, but the publishers are making good promises, and no doubt they will equal and in most cases surpass the publications for the holiday season of '91. It is reasonable to expect this because the advance in the arts of printing and lithography has been rapid and continuous and the publications should show the advance that has been made. Moreover, the increasing sale should enable the publishers to secure better reading matter and to spend more on the illustrations which are to be embodied in the number. The leading papers will undoubtedly be the Ladies' Pictorial, The London News, The Graphic and The Figaro.

Perhaps nothing is more suitable for canvassing for trade than these illustrated numbers. Every dealer should keep before him a blank form and enter all his orders on it, giving the name of the person ordering, the different papers ordered, and the numbers wanted. Every customer who is a probable purchaser should be asked to place his order so that a sufficient number may be procured. The dealer cannot begin too early at this work, and behind the counter he can do a great deal of canvassing without doing anything that will seem out of the way. Not only will this secure the dealer's lead over his competitors, but it will enable him to gauge the demand in a fairly accurate manner, especially after the sample copies have been received. Every copy left over means a serious loss, and carelessness in ordering may be quite expensive. This may be all avoided by careful canvassing of customers in the store, and outside, also, if convenient. The retailer who does the most canvassing, supposing it to be done judiciously, will reap the largest reward. Very often a customer is pleased when the dealer anticipates his or her wants, and many persons may be bound more closely as customers by such judicious treatment.