

name will be held in kind remembrance by the active educators of this Province.

TEXT BOOKS.

THIS magazine and *The Week* agree so much in their opinion of the indefensible character of the mode adopted for the authorization and publishing of text books by the present Minister of Education that we quote from our contemporary the following timely remarks:

"Nothing in Ontario politics is more surprising than the complacency with which the great majority of the people have accepted the school-book system which has been foisted upon the Province by the present Minister of Education. We refer more particularly to the modes of authorization and of publication which he has adopted—modes which are not only educationally indefensible, but are so completely at variance with the principles of Liberalism, as commonly understood, that it is astonishing they should have been proposed by a so-called Liberal Government, and adopted by a so-called Liberal Legislature. Those modes involve the essential features of the worst kind of monopoly—a monopoly fostered and protected by the Government and Legislature. The healthful principle of competition is, as we have shown on former occasions, almost entirely eliminated. The Minister of Education virtually chooses the books to be used in the schools, and in some cases even employs or appoints the person to edit the books. The absurdity of this arrangement, from the literary and educational point of view, is equalled only by the absurdity, from a business point of view, of the mode of publication, under which the Department holds the copyright, and enters into a contract with some favoured publisher to produce and sell the books at a fixed price. We make

no insinuation against the good faith of the Minister, but it is capable of demonstration, and has in fact been demonstrated, that in the case of different books now in use, the profits made by the publishers are enormous. The single fact that the price of one set of books, of which hundreds of thousands of copies are required annually, was recently cut down from ten to six cents per copy at a stroke, speaks volumes. It is not easy to conceive a system combining a larger number of the worst features. Under it a corrupt Minister would have it in his power to put a small fortune into the pocket of any favourite he might choose to entrust with the compilation of a school-book, or of any publisher with whom he might choose to contract for its publication. All inducement to the production of improved text books by native authors, or to the publication of such by enterprising publishers, is taken away. The public school teachers who ought, in virtue of their profession, to be the best judges of the merits of the text books they use, are utterly without choice or voice in the matter. These are but some of the features and results of this system—a system which is condemned and denounced by leading educationists in other countries. Now, that the Province is on the eve of a general election this matter should be intelligently discussed and clearly set before the people. We hope the Opposition candidates will study the question, and present it in its true light. We say this not because we are desirous that the Government should be weakened or overthrown, for we see no reason for hoping for a better one on the whole, but because we think there is great need of reform in the very important Department referred to, and would like to see whatever Minister or Government may be in power compelled to accomplish such reform."