

Printer AND Publisher.

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\$2.00 PER YEAR.

THE WEEKLY SUBSCRIPTION RATE IN CANADA.

OPINIONS OF EXPERIENCED PUBLISHERS.

THE question of going below \$1 for the weekly subscription rate having been raised in *PRINTER AND PUBLISHER* by Mr. Dennis, of New Glasgow, N.S., the following opinions of publishers will be read with interest:

The rise of a few low-priced weekly journals does not set the correct style any more than one swallow makes a Summer. The exception rarely proves the rule; nearly every conspicuous success is due to superiority as a newspaper. Price is only one element, and it will not succeed alone. The paper spoken of as building up an enormous circulation at 60c. a year claims 4,000 subscribers; a number of local \$1 papers in Canada have much greater circulation, and in districts not more favorable for growth. The hundreds of local papers in New York State thriving on a subscription rate of \$1.50 to \$2 a year might, on the other hand, condemn the \$1 paper as freely as do the half-rate champions. The 60c. paper is having a special run at first, just as the semi-weekly had for only a few months; should other papers in the same section come down to 60c., or possibly to 50c., distinction will be lost and it will be a case of "as you were," the best of its class proving the right of the survivor of the fittest.

Ontario weeklies have held great circulations at \$1 a year against rivals offering heavy "cuts" year after year; and some are proof so far against the persistent assaults of the \$1 per year daily issuing from their own towns. The people still want the well-liked weekly for its individuality. One such \$1 daily, bright and sensational, has in a year and a half's campaign captured 600 mail subscribers, one-sixth of the weekly issue of a contemporary.

It is not a fact that, under cheaper newsprint and the typograph, papers can be produced at one-half of former cost. The cheaper mill product is offset by new postal charges, by increased size of the issues, by higher wages in several departments, and higher living generally; what is saved by the type-casting machine is, in nearly every case, devoted to increasing the quantity of reading. One of the most hopeful signs in the press is the steady improvement of local papers; more and better matter constantly. Half-rate subscriptions will not pay cost of production under this condition, and advertising will

have to bear the blunt. It will not do it in more than one case out of five. The Toronto Junction Leader and Recorder thrives because it is on the borders of a great business centre, and city merchants hold out advertising bait freely for a suburban trade. The same paper issued at North Bay or Wallaceburg, at 50c. per year, would be a dismal failure. It could not keep up the editorial pace or the mechanical excellence three months without special city business support. The Montreal Star lives in an uncommonly liberal advertising city; Toronto is not to be compared with it. The counting-house makes the big journal. This is the sole secret of one great Quebec paper being so good as to crowd into Eastern Ontario much more freely than our own \$1 dailies. With The Star the advertiser is the great consideration; the subscriber is but a means to the end, and he is welcome at cost or less. But the rich Montreal home field, it will be noticed, is not cheapened by that paper as outside places are. Papers in smaller cities might turn out a sheet as good as The Star and yet, without a great home population, never advance above 5,000 or 10,000 issue, the latter figure being a rare exception. The advertising rates they could command would be too small to sustain them. They must have the wholesale advertisers of a big city behind them, or rely on a healthy subscription basis.

An assault by the 50c. paper upon the \$1 weekly may be successful in some places—the cheap fad is a destructive one—but it will leave the ruin of many good businesses in its wake. The publishers of Canada are hard-working, enterprising and economical; if they are not making more than a living with \$1 a year weeklies there is very little margin at 50c. Advertising is being worked to its highest limit.

MR. C. W. YOUNG,
CORNWALL
FREEHOLDER.

I have no hesitation in declaring against a further reduction in the price of country weeklies, for the following reasons:

1. The country weekly has one field, the city paper another, and each is essentially different. It is impossible for one to take the place of the other, and this is not a question of price.

2. The country newspaper should, in my opinion, place local news before everything, because that is the only place