

less margin was allowed. The Publishers and the Minister of Education, or the Publishers for the Minister, were evidently prepared all they possibly could be to meet the arguments of the Booksellers.

They had communicated with D. Appleton & Co., A. S. Barnes & Co., of New York, and others, and imagined that they had a strong point, when the Minister informed the deputation that 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ was the best rate of discount on the retail prices. Mr. Bain promptly corrected the Minister, but he still maintained that he was, at least, partially right. He was altogether wrong.

An esteemed New York correspondent, a prominent stationer, interviewed the leading publishers. In one case information was reluctantly given—why, it is not difficult to understand when we know of the correspondence with the publishers. The result of his interview was the information that 5 per cent. to 20 per cent. is given off the list according to quantity purchased, but, says our correspondent, "There is no fixed retail price." "There is a list price, from which a variable discount is allowed," and to illustrate the mode of selling, he says, "Suppose I buy a dictionary from Ivison, Blakeman & Taylor, list price, \$1, 10 per cent. off, making the cost 90 cents, I sell it for \$1.25 (not for \$1)."

A. S. Barnes & Co.'s price list is now before us. In it are two columns headed "Trade" and "Retail." In a great many cases no Retail price is stated notably on "Barnes' New Readers." *The discount to the trade, is invariably on the Trade price.* Is it possible that the Publishers were innocent of this fact?

NO PROFIT! NO PURCHASE!—Some fault has been found with the boycotting resolution passed at the late Booksellers' meeting. It was an extreme measure, but look at the provocation.

Without entering into the question as to its being right or not, we may say it was passed at a time when all hope of getting reasonable terms from the publishers was gone.

It was stated that a compromise was proposed by some of the dealers of an extra 5 per cent. to the general trade, and 5 per cent. to the purchaser of \$1,000 worth.

The unreasonableness of the refusal prompted Mr. H. Fred Sharp, of St. Mary's, himself a publisher of school books, to propose the resolution. Mr. Sharp with enterprise combines a desire to let others live as well as himself, and gives fair discounts to the trade.

With a knowledge of what it would cost to produce a book, knowing that the publishers could afford to give much larger discount, and himself al-

lowing at least one of the publishers a liberal jobbing discount, he asked those present to join with him in refusing to buy from those who would not do for the trade as they are done by.

The sneering remark of a publisher in speaking of this measure and the meeting generally, as "a tempest in a tea pot," was in very bad taste. He should remember, that the tea-pot is Ontario, and contains enough hot water to scald him from head to foot.

THE DISCOUNT QUESTION.—Neither flattery on the one side, nor ridicule on the other, will tempt the Book trade, and we voice the trade to make the question of Discount a political question. It is a matter more particularly of our concern as a trade, not a question of our political faith or fault-finding.

It may be said that in the position we have taken the Minister of Education has been found fault with.

How could it be otherwise? Mr. Ross, on assuming the position of Minister, departed from the time-honoured custom of allowing the Book Trade to arrange its own affairs, and assumed to himself the position of (we call him for the want of a better title), "The Regulator of the Book Trade." Granted that we cannot censure Mr. Ross, we have no right to find fault with the Publishers.

Having taken upon himself this office, he of course must have become fully conversant with the cost of producing school books, else how would he have sanctioned the discount allowable to our Trade.

Such being the case, it becomes necessary to ascertain what the real cost of these books are, and whether or not the publishers would be right, in justice to themselves, in giving a larger discount.

Last month (with the figures before us), we said that larger discount could be given. This is denied, and the denial went so far at the Booksellers' meeting that one publisher gave hints of the possibility of having their affairs placed in the hands of the Assinee, if they granted the request made.

Figures have been given in the daily press varying somewhat, but all shewing our statement to be correct. We have carefully examined estimates, and have no doubt whatever, that the series of readers—five books can be produced for sixty cents. This is not the nett cost, but with a fair profit added for manufacturing. Any leading house in Toronto would be willing to furnish the publishers at this price.

For the set the buyer pays \$1.35. 20 per cent. is the allowance to the trade, and say, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., a high figure, extra to purchasers of \$1,000 lots, and granting that the 60 cents is nett cash, we will allow them 5 per cent. discount for cash, or for