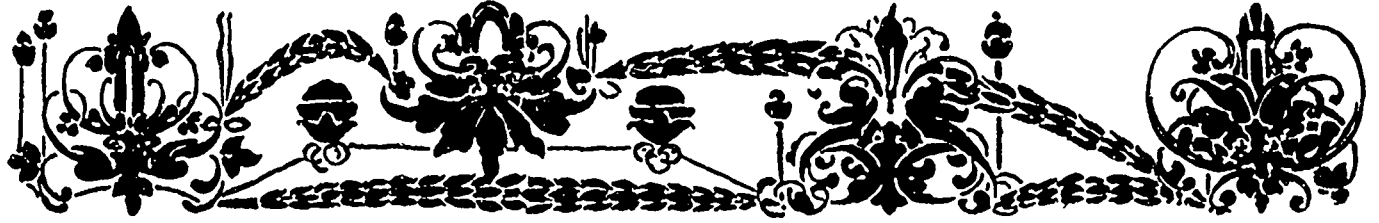


The Bookseller and Stationer



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THE SALE OF SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS.

Suggestions and Comments by Several Ontario Booksellers on the Subject of Changes.

IN the last issue of THE BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER reference was made to the School-Book Question in Ontario, and to the fact that many dealers were not satisfied with the present system. It was also pointed out that a discussion in these columns by the trade might result in some valuable suggestions which would remedy the present grievance, which is, that the dealer is continually suffering loss from dead stock when changes are introduced by the Department.

We have received letters from several leading booksellers throughout Ontario who do a large trade in school books, and these letters will be read by the trade generally with considerable interest.

It will be observed that Mr. Nelles, of Guelph, offers a working plan which would reduce the difficulty to a minimum.

Mr. Hamly, of Picton, also contributes his views on the present situation and announces his willingness to join with others in conferring with the authorities.

Mr. Watson, of Seaforth, also writes a very practical letter which will stimulate the discussion.

Messrs. Stratton & Co., of Peterborough, are among those who have not felt the difficulty as greatly as others, as their letter shows.

We invite further correspondence in order that the trade may thoroughly ventilate their views before a definite conclusion is arrived at. It seems to us that a meeting of the trade, later on, in some central point, say, London, Hamilton or Toronto (perhaps Toronto preferably, since the Department of Education could be seen

at the same time), might be arranged, and every detail of the question should be gone into. No doubt, as one of our correspondents says, it might be hard to find a plan to satisfy publisher, dealer and public alike, but there is no reason to think that an improvement on the present system cannot be arrived at, if the views of all are exchanged beforehand, and a plan carefully thought out.

We give the following letters, therefore, as valuable and practical contributions to this discussion.

MR. NELLES, OF GUELPH.

"In regard to the question of changes in text books for schools it will be found very difficult to find any means that will solve it satisfactorily to three such different classes as publishers, dealers, and the public so that a loss may not be sustained by any one of the three.

"I do not think the six months' notice of a new book would help anyone, as it would occur, say, in the middle of a school term and it is impossible to clear any stock for some months previous to the Summer vacation.

"However, I offer the following plan, which I think could be made feasible and also work as nearly satisfactorily as it is possible to have it.

"When a new book is authorized for use have the Department of Education authorize it for, say, a period of five years, and, at the end of the term, if satisfactory, have it reissued in terms of, say, three years until a new book should be gotten out to replace

it, each book so authorized to have printed on the title page the following :

Authorized by the Department of Education for Ontario, the twenty second day of October, nineteen hundred, to be used as a text book for the period of five years from the above date.

"Under this system the publishers and dealers, for a year ahead of the expiration of any term, could govern their stocks accordingly and have no excuse for a heavy loss should a change occur, as, by glancing at the first page in any book when ordering their stocks, they could make inquiries of the publishers of near the end of a book's term and find out any changes that will likely take place.

"I would also ask your valuable space and time to suggest that the English Literature be not changed yearly but make it good for at least two seasons, and that the French and German be at least three years, as the greatest loss occurs in these books, no dealer being able to carry a proper stock and not sustain a loss of at least one or two copies annually. I should not say no dealers, but outside booksellers, as Toronto dealers and departmentals should never sustain a loss as they have a telephone and the publishers at their doors to order daily only what they need.

"No wonder they offer 20 per cent. discount to the public of Ontario, when they save all loss on freight, boxing and surplus stock, and receive cash with each order, an item to a dealer 50 miles from Toronto of nearly 10 per cent. Again regretting the length of my letter and hoping some benefit may be derived from this discussion,

"I am, yours truly,

"CHAS. N. NELLES,

"Guelph."

"Guelph, October 22, 1900."

MR. HAMLY, OF PICTON.

"Re school book question. I certainly think that some united action might be taken by the trade, and have no doubt but