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## The Printer's Miscellany.

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### The School-Books of New Brunswick.

A correspondent, whose letter we give below, introduces a subject which is of great importance not only to the printers, publishers, and bookbinders, but to the general public of the Province of New Brunswick; and one which seems to have been almost wholly lost sight of by those most particularly interested. We refer to the importation of the books in use in the Public Schools of this Province.

So far as we can understand the matter, it stands thus: Previous to the time the Free School Law came into force nearly all of the school books used in this Province were printed and bound in St. John, which gave employment to a large number of printers, bookbinders, etc., all the year round. In this connection, it should be borne in mind, in regard to the amount of employment furnished by this industry, that there was not the same uniformity in this class of books as at present, owing to the diversity of opinion and interests of the teachers of private schools—the kind predominating in those days. Owing to this difference of opinion many American and English books (dependent, in a great measure, upon the nationality of the teacher) were used in the schools. Hence, there was less employment furnished in their manufacture than would be the case now.

With the Free Schools came the necessity for a uniform series of school books. This was a contingency our publishers had evidently not taken into consideration soon enough; nor did the Government of the day make any efforts to have the deficiency supplied here; but, instead, by some curious coincidence, almost immediately an Edinburgh firm (T. Nelson & Sons) was prepared to furnish the necessary books through

a Halifax bookseller, "by and with the consent and approval of the New Brunswick Board of Education." Mark that. This same Board of Education now withholds their "consent and approval" from our publishers, and are not disposed to accept anything produced by them. This may sound curious, but it is a fact; and, what is more curious still, a fact that cannot be got at or explained without running the risk of having a libel suit threatened.

Representations have repeatedly been made to members of the Local Government concerning this matter, and relief has been promised; still things are going along as usual and there seems to be no remedy forthcoming. The Government (which is the Board of Education) would seem to be bound in this matter, hand and foot, by some invisible power of unquestioned strength, for they cannot but know that in continuing the present mode of supplying school books, they are perpetrating a most gross injustice upon the people of this Province, and one that will most surely be brought up and felt at the next election, if not sooner.

All that is asked is a fair field and no monopoly. Our publishers do not ask to be allowed to publish school books for any of the sister Provinces; but they wish—and will insist upon having their wishes complied with, if we mistake them not—to be allowed the privilege or right of manufacturing the school books for New Brunswick. To do this they are bound; and our advice to obstructionists would be, to "clear the track." No excuses can be given or none taken for non-compliance with these wishes, for "almost" everything is in favor of it, even to the cost of the books. There are publishers here who are willing (but it should not be necessary) to enter into an agreement to the effect that they will manufacture and sell these books *as well and CHEAPER* (from 25 to 30 per cent.) than they are sold at present. We have no hesitation in pronouncing the prices now charged exorbitant beyond all measure, and that is putting it very mildly. So much for the mechanical production. Now, as to the literary matter contained in these books, it does not strike us that it would be a grievous job to get up as good, if not better, in the same way as these were, for they are nothing more than compilations, and some parts of them very poor at that. The amount of money involved in this matter is of vast proportions, but the various ways in