

Correspondence

THE WRECKERS.

EDITOR OF THE PRINTER AND PUBLISHER.

SIR, If any evidence were required of the necessity of a journal specially devoted to the printing and publishing interests of Canada, and of the wisdom of the Canadian Press Association in recognising THE PRINTER AND PUBLISHER as its official organ, it is supplied by your article "In Darkest Toronto." You have done the fraternity a distinct service by boldly exposing a grievance which afflicts, not only Toronto, but the whole country. I am glad to see that your exposure has been followed by action on the part of the Employing Printers' Association. Their action should be followed by the Canadian Press Association. The rotten methods which you so trenchantly expose are not only a menace to legitimate printing interests in the city, but to every newspaper office in the other cities and the large towns of the province. For it is such firms as you refer to that keep their runners on the road and slash prices all over the country. Scores of cases could be given where these runners have taken jobs away from country printers at prices even less than cost, in order to open connections. The result is that the job department of many well-conducted provincial papers has ceased to be a source of profit, through the reckless and insane competition of Toronto printers, kept up by houses that owe their prosperity to the very publishers against whose interests they are thus working, by the foolish extension of credit.

In another direction the same evil is seen. The province is a perfect graveyard of newspaper enterprises—of third papers in two paper towns, of second papers in one paper villages. An examination of the list will show that these have come into existence largely through the policy of the type founders and wholesale paper dealers, who are always ready to extend credit to irresponsible parties willing to embark in reckless newspaper enterprises. Scores of such would-be publishers have lived for years on debts which they were able to incur owing to the credit given them by wholesale firms, and these are the very firms that make their profits out of the honest publisher, against whom they bring competition into existence. Their system of doing business has been rotten, and has resulted in enormous injury to the legitimate printing interests of the country. The newspaper publishers should join the Employing Printers of Toronto, and refuse to deal with any paper house or type foundry that will give credit to the class of men that you have had the courage to expose.

fraternally yours,

A COUNTRY PUBLISHER.

Western Ontario, January 15th, 1894.

EDITOR OF THE PRINTER AND PUBLISHER.

SIR, What I want specially to thank you for, and every printer in the country should do the same, is for your able article on the recent failures in the printing trade in Toronto. You have no idea how often we country printers are met with the statement, "We can get our work done cheaper in Toronto." I'll guarantee you don't, nor Dudley & Burns, nor Copp, Clark, or any decent firm, but it is such firms as those that have gone to the wall that we here have to compete with. We do as good

work, pay our hands, and unfortunately, it appears, also our paper bills. I know Fred Campbell well, and if other dealers had the manliness he has in refusing to compromise, there would soon be a rooting out of the rotten timber now in the trade. Since your article appeared I see Hill & Weir have made an assignment. I lived in Toronto when they started, and they and Hawkins were the originators of "cheap work." I lost a 50,000 card job to a firm recently in Toronto, that I'm looking to be next on the list if they do other work at the same rate. I'm a close buyer and pay my bills promptly, and it completely knocks me out, the prices some men do work at. I know one instance of a difference of \$300 on a job that was done for \$350.

My, my, but this is a queer state of things. May you be successful in your crusade for fair prices and honest printers.

Wishing you all success.

Yours very truly,

PUBLISHER.

EDITOR OF THE PRINTER AND PUBLISHER.

SIR, It is gratifying to notice that the employing printers of the city are determined to rescue that ancient and honorable craft from the slough of despond into which circumstances have for the present crowded it.

The wholesale men appear to be largely blamed for the existing state of affairs, but the root of the evil undoubtedly lies in the supplying by the type-founders and press dealers of plant to entirely irresponsible purchasers. In many cases the buyers pay less than 10 per cent.; even less than 5 per cent. of the cost of the purchase. The vendor trusts to his lien and to an indulgent paper dealer to see him through. If the printer cannot carry the load the lien-holder steps in and takes back his plant, being ahead just the amount of cash paid him, while the other creditors get nothing. If the printer should succeed the type-founder then gets only the value of his goods, so that in many cases he makes more money out of failure than success on the part of his customers.

It is well known that publishers who let out their printing to good offices are constantly tempted to buy plants on which they are asked to pay little or nothing down: this multiplying of offices leading to the cutting of prices and all its attendant evils.

Apparently the only remedy lies in an amendment of the lien law. I do not mean to infer that all plants should be paid for in cash, but if liens were abolished press dealers would see that plants were supplied only to men likely to make a success of their business. A general curtailment of credit would also improve matters, though this might perhaps work more or less hardship as the general terms in the paper trade are at present fairly reasonable.

The wholesale paper trade is also called to task for supplying paper to consumers. So far as I know, however, the only consumers supplied are the publishers of books, catalogues, journals, etc. We have frequently felt a hesitancy in quoting prices to this class of customers, but on referring to the printers interested, have been met with the almost invariable reply, that as the trade is in the habit, for larger jobs, of putting in the paper at cost, the printer would prefer that the paper were sold direct.

Apart from the primary evil, as mentioned above, the present state of the copyright law has caused great hardship in the printing and bookbinding trades, and a heavy loss of business