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CURRENT NOTES.

THE STATE OF TRADE.

THE early part of August is necessarily a quiet time, yet the reports of trade are fairly satisfactory. In one or two of the large cities, United States tourist travel is reported to be less this year on account of the war, but even this is picking up a little with August hot weather. The outlook is fair all round, so far as we hear, and the prospects for autumn and Christmas sales have not been so good for a long time. Some say the prospects in that respect are better than for ten years. With more money in the country and good crops we would not be surprised to see an excellent holiday business. The retail trade, we trust, in all

lines will make the most of it. West of Winnipeg the reports continue favorable, and, on the whole, Canada promises to do well during the next twelve months.

In books, despite the cutting of illegitimate trade, the sales bulk larger. The imports since January indicate expansion, the monthly returns for six months being as follows:

	1898.	1897.
January	\$52,210	\$50,513
February	57,679	40,378
March	71,344	53,277
April	73,793	62,365
May	78,565	55,672
June	59,630	57,628
Totals	\$333,155	\$317,876

THE COPYRIGHT QUESTION.

Mr. John Ross Robertson, M.P., is now in England, and, while there, will doubtless interest himself in copyright matters. Several of the Ministers are there also, and, if they are true to the interests of the Canadian book trade, they will make an arrangement with the Imperial authorities. They may be unable, or unwilling, to push this long-pending controversy to a successful conclusion. We hope the best, and should not pronounce judgment until the result is announced.

Meantime, present arrangements are utterly unsatisfactory. Who in this country benefits from them? Surely the bookseller must see that he gains nothing by a system which renders Canadian publishing uncertain, which affords him no special facilities in handling certain books that would sell well here, if produced in editions that are priced to suit the Canadian market, that are purposely designed to sell here and cannot

be interfered with by foreign or imported editions. The cry raised is that copyright is the publishers' plan to make money. Surely the book trade generally would profit, and not one branch of it alone. That must be clear to anyone who considers the question impartially.

DEPARTMENT STORES.

The old difficulty of department stores looms up as large as ever. In Ontario, where the Legislature was to enquire into the subject, a session has been called during the hot weather, and the two parties are busy fighting each other. The Hamilton man who pushed the matter last year is not in this House. We fear that an immediate enquiry into the mischievous trade methods of these stores is not probable. In England, it is stated that Sir Thomas Lipton, the provision merchant, is contemplating making arrangements to combine the wholesale and retail distribution of newspapers, magazines and books in connection with his network of depots and shops throughout the United Kingdom. The shoemakers will soon go in for selling jewelry and the plumbers will pose as authorities on grave-stones. Where is this tendency to stop?

THE WINDOW DISPLAY.

It is noticeable that the Canadian book trade do not, as a rule, appreciate the benefits of good window and store displays. Few dealers devote sufficient time to dressing their windows, yet there is no more important factor in trade-building than a well decorated store window. The newest books, the latest magazines, and the many