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MR. LAURIER AND TEXT BOOKS.

LAST month BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER mentioned some of the peculiarities of the regulations governing the importation of books on a college curriculum. It is now learned that the ventilation given the subject has had a definite result, and that there is some prospect of a remedy. BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER learns that several of the leading booksellers in Montreal made representations to Hon. Mr. Laurier during the recent Liberal conference in that city. It was pointed out to the new Premier that the law as it stood was a constant temptation to fraud. In addition to regular, admitted text books, it was pointed out to him that the popular "Globe" edition of the classical English authors was a regular text book at McGill and other colleges. This edition was always kept on a bookseller's shelves, and, as by making the necessary affidavit an unscrupulous trader could evade the duty, the honest members of the trade were handicapped. The suggestion was also made to Mr. Laurier that a general duty of 4c., a reduction of one-third, be imposed in place of the present duty of 6c., and that no exemptions be allowed. It was held that by this course the Government would suffer no loss of revenue, but that, on the contrary, there would be an increase. Mr. Laurier promised to give the matter serious consideration.

A BOOK WINDOW.

IN the bookselling trade, as in almost all other lines of business, competition has become so keen that every device for attracting and retaining new business must be "worked" if success is to be attained. Among the best methods of drawing trade is that of attractive display in the windows. Such striking effects cannot be attained in this line as, for instance, in dry goods, but it is questionable if the very striking effects do more than merely excite wonder without selling any goods. It is possible to have the display take away entirely the attention from the goods displayed.

To dress a window so as to catch the eye of the thoughtless passer-by is no easy matter, especially where books only are used. The colors of books may often be used to break the monotony, as can also sets of popular authors uniform in binding. Grading, of course, according to size, has also a good effect if not carried to such an extent as to give the window an appearance of extreme regularity.

The most common arrangement is to have a pyramid, on which the books are displayed. This does very well occasionally, but the mistake is often made of keeping the same form all the time and merely changing the books. Both should be changed, and frequently too.

A very attractive window was to be seen in Toronto when "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush" first appeared. A large number of these books were piled to resemble a screw, the white edges of the book being used to represent the thread of the screw. The whole was about four feet high and two in diameter. On top was a book showing the title, and a neat card announced the price. Judging by the crowds that stopped to look at it, such a display would assist materially

in selling a much less popular book than the one mentioned.

TORONTO AS A BOOK CENTRE.

WE Torontonians are wont to vaunt our city as the "intellectual centre" of the Dominion, the hub of intelligence, as it were; but if this were to be determined by the reading habits of its people—a fair criterion—it is doubtful if the claim could be supported. A comparison of our book stores, in number and size, with those of Montreal or Ottawa is tremendously in favor of the latter cities. Toronto is the centre of the wholesale book business of the Dominion, but our wholesale book houses find the trade with local book stores very inconsiderable as compared with that with Ottawa or Montreal. The book counters in the large departmental stores undoubtedly do a good business, but the books sold are as a rule the lighter class of novels. There are very few homes in Toronto that have libraries of any considerable size? What is the reason of all this? The conclusion we have formed is that Torontonians are so engrossed with business, or with the pursuit of pleasure, that little time is given to literary culture. The yacht or rowboat, the bicycle, the enticements of tennis, cricket or golf in summer, the fascinations of the euchre party, the whirl of dancing parties, and the round of concerts in winter, absorb the time and leave little or no leisure for the cultivation of the mind. Lectures, as a rule, are a failure; literary clubs or circles might almost be counted on one's limited array of fingers. It is not creditable to our city that this is so, but that it is so one could scarcely deny. We hope for a better condition of things, but cannot feel hopeful that it will come except with slow progress. Perhaps some of our readers may suggest means of hastening on the day.