

a news company. "We sell at the price given to us by the publishing companies," added Mr. Irving, and I can assure you that our profits are very small. I will be happy to go into figures, at my office, with any of you gentlemen who wish to investigate the matter. But one thing I state, and that is that the trade was never better supplied than it is to-day.

Dickenson—In the matter of these magazines, might I ask what are the relations of your company with the American News Co.? Are you independent of them?

Mr. Irving replied that they could go to the publishers direct if they wished.

Mr. Dickenson—Then am I to understand that there is no connection whatever between the Toronto News Co. and the American Co.?

Mr. Irving declined to go into detail. He did not think it fair to expect him to give any information regarding the constitution of his company. The man who wrote the report did not evidently know what he was talking about.

Mr. Dickenson—That is too sweeping an assertion. The report is written from a trade point of view, and there is evidently a legitimate grievance here.

Mr. Day thought 2c. too little profit on a 10c. paper, and he thought they should have a better profit.

Mr. Irving—I agree with you there, and I have always tried to get them cheaper; but, as I said before, the publishers arrange the price, and we are bound to abide by it.

Mr. Dickenson—That is very different from my idea. How about Harper's?

Mr. Irving—We are not agents for Harper, but really, gentlemen, I think that the retailers should combine to keep up their prices, and stand together.

Mr. Dickenson—Combine against whom?

Mr. Irving—Combine in your own interests.

Mr. Dickenson—Against whom?

Mr. Irving—Well, I suppose against the public. You can make your own terms and raise your retail prices.

Mr. Dickenson—I thought it was against the news companies (laughter.)

Mr. Irving proceeded to explain that the American News Co. charged the Toronto Company, but little above the cost of packing and twine, but what made some of the publications dear here was the fact that Custom house duty had to be paid in Toronto.

Mr. Wilson—Why not have them from the publishers direct?

Mr. Irving explained that this would be disadvantageous to the retailer, inasmuch as he would under such arrangement be obliged to incur risks which the news company incurred at present. The company kept a good many of the leading periodicals in stock, and the retailer only ordered as many

as he needed. If he were to order direct from the publisher he might find a lot of magazines on his hands unsold—a risk which the news company under present circumstances incurred. He added that he succeeded in getting the Guelph and Hamilton dealers to conform to Toronto prices.

Mr. Wilson—I know we can't expect to get transient papers at the same figures as we do subscriptions, but I am convinced if the papers be sent direct from the publishers it would be a source of greater profit to us.

Mr. Irving—No.

Mr. Nelles stated his experience. Except for regular subscribers his ordinary sales were fluctuating. One week he might only require five or six copies, while the next he would have a demand for ten or twelve, and although it cost a little more to order through the news agency he invariably found it cheaper than to give the order direct to the publisher. The extra cost was in re-mailing.

Mr. Day—I think the American News Co. and the New York Co. are just squeezing the trade. They are wealthy corporations, and they seem to do just as they please with us. They make about 40 per cent. and they want us to be satisfied with 2c. A 4c. paper we have to sell for 5c. and run our chance of having a lot of them on our hands. I believe the American News Co. is at the bottom of the whole thing, and if they were not making lots of money they would throw up the job.

Mr. Irving denied that the news companies were making large profits, and stated that the meeting would be surprised at the small margin of profit these people were making as shown by an invoice which accidentally fell into his hands some short time ago.

Mr. Wilson—Is it a fact that the American Company controls the stock of the Toronto News Company? That is a point I should like to have cleared.

Mr. Irving—I do not think I am justified in answering any question as to the constitution of our company. It is a private matter with which you have nothing to do.

Mr. Nelles gave it as his experience, that papers could be got cheaper from New York than from Toronto. He thought it would be advisable for the dealers to combine to fight the New York Co.

Mr. Dickinson moved that the report be sent back to the committee with the request that they pursue their labors, and that they be tendered the best thanks of the meeting for the good work inaugurated by them. In doing so he said, "If Mr. Irving will tell us the relationship between the two companies, we will be in a better position to deal with the matter. I think the news company is responsible for a good deal of the grievance of which we complain; and that if the New York Co. and the Toronto News Co. are not

practically the same, than the Toronto Co. can stand on its own bottom."

Mr. Irving again declined to answer the question, which he characterized as a piece of impertinence.

Mr. Day—You'll admit that we'll have to fight you or we'll get nothing.

Mr. Irving—I do not.

Mr. Nelles—We have the catalogues of the two companies and we can judge for ourselves.

Mr. Irving—I think the retail men are responsible for the whole of it. You are cutting one another's throats.

Mr. Irving explained that in January last they had given orders for the Graphic, London Illustrated and other Christmas papers, the publishers undertaking to make certain concessions, provided the company incurred certain risks and expenses, and the result would be that publication would be made simultaneously in New York, England, France, etc., and they had to enter into bond to pay the duty should it be imposed. This was a risk incurred by the company from which the dealers reaped a benefit—in fact, Mr. P. C. Allen had assured him that were it not for the extensive advertising done by the News company not nearly so many would have been sold.

The chairman pointed out that there was more money to be made out of the Graphic than there was in selling the Montreal Star Christmas number.

Mr. Nelles—You say that your risk is large, but you must remember so is ours. Last year I gave an order for a hundred copies of the Graphic and I think I have fifty of them under my counter to-day. We take our risks as well as you take yours.

Mr. Wilson held that the Graphic could be laid down here for 20c. per copy. They retailed in England at 10d. and the retailer had his profit at this figure. Allowing for passage, they ought to sell here at the same price.

Mr. Irving contradicted the statement, and said that Mr. Wilson's figures were misleading.

Mr. Wilson—The only figures which I had disputed were those referring to "tons" of magazines. Why, there are tons of the Young Ladies' Journal alone sent in here to Toronto.

Mr. Irving contended that no retail man was in a position to argue the point.

Mr. Dickinson moved that the name of Mr. Irving be added to the committee.

Mr. Irving, however, declined.

Mr. Dickinson—Since I came to the city I was told that this was a sort of side issue of the Toronto News Co. That statement was made. I repudiate that now, as far as I am concerned, and I'll accord to Mr. Irving every due respect. I won't pry into his private affairs, but I expect to meet him on a square basis. I moved that his name be added to the committee, but he refuses. He is the man who can give more information than