

TEXT-BOOKS.

One of the duties imposed by statute upon my Department is the authorization of text-books for the schools of the Province. The regulations on this subject, which I had the honour to frame, and which were unanimously approved by both sides of the House, require that all Public school text-books shall be published in Canada, that the Department shall hold the copyright of such books, that any publisher may publish them on protecting the rights of the original publishers, subject to the approval of the Department in regard to typography, binding, etc., and that the price shall be a fair market price. In regard to books used in the Public schools, it is the policy of the Department to secure uniformity, not only for the convenience of the teacher in classification, but for the sake of parents, who would otherwise be liable to incur the expense of purchasing new books with every change of residence. I might say that this in effect has been the policy of the Education Department for over 30 years, although not in every instance fully carried out. When I assumed office, as you are no doubt aware, I was confronted with the reader question, so called. My predecessor favoured the authorization of more than one series of text-books in each subject, and had just prior to his illness all but completed his arrangements for placing three series of Readers upon the market. Two had already been authorized, and the third was under consideration. In re-establishing the system, which I then and now believe to be the true one, I had two difficulties to overcome—(1) to get rid of the books authorized either in fact or conditionally, without inflicting a wrong upon the publishers who had invested several thousands of dollars in the undertaking, on the strength of the authority of the Government to publish, and (2) to avoid inflicting a loss upon those who had already purchased the new readers for the use of their children. In dealing with the publishers, I might have ascertained their loss by a commission, and paid them a lump sum, or, what I thought was fairer to the public, give a limited interest in the publication of the new series, which, without enhancing the cost of the readers to the consumers, would enable them out of the ordinary profits of publication to indemnify themselves for their loss. I know you will agree as to the justice of this course to the publishers, and when you ascertain, as I propose to show you, that the books are no dearer on that account, you will admit, I am sure, that the settlement made was a peculiarly satisfactory one from a public standpoint. Again, in order to protect those who were using the old readers from loss, I permitted their use for eighteen months, that being the ordinary life of a school-book. The conditions under which these books are published are certainly exacting enough. 1. The publishers must comply with our regulations as to the quality of the books as a manufactured article. 2. An officer of the Department has the right to examine every book in all its stages of manufacture, from the printing press till it is ready for shipment. 3. No alterations are allowed without the consent of the Department. 4. If it appears that the new readers afford