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Report of DES MOINES, IOWA

## Legislative Committee

...of...

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# Iowa State Teachers' Association

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December, 1898

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DES MOINES:  
CONAWAY & SHAW, PRINTERS.  
1898.

REPORT

OF THE

Legislative Committee

OF THE

Iowa State

Teachers' Association

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REPORT  
OF  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
IOWA STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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December, 1898.

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Your committee has to report that the larger part of its work was centered in opposition to the bill introduced to provide for **uniformity of text-books** in all the public schools of the state, generally known as the Ray bill. This bill, introduced early in the session by Hon. W. G. Ray, representative from Poweshiek county, was modeled very closely after similar laws now in active force in Indiana and Kansas. It provided **a maximum price** at which books could be sold to the pupils, and made it a misdemeanor for a teacher to use, or allow to be used, any books not designated on the state list. The **school book commission** was to consist of five members—the state superintendent as chairman, the commissioner of labor as secretary, and three others to be named by the governor – to be in session not to exceed six days, the proceedings to be published for the information of the general public. The maximum price was fixed at such **a low rate** as to preclude in many cases the introduction of any but the **cheapest and poorest** books. It became evident early in the session that the bill was destined to find favor in some unexpected quarters, and that it was going to require careful and painstaking work to defeat it.

Your committee did not hesitate to call to its aid the president of the state association, and the chairman of the executive

committee. The first step seemed to be to enlist the **educational forces** of the state. To this end a very wide correspondence was opened in every county, and thus the **most influential teachers** were thoroughly informed of the nature of the bill and of its probable effect upon the public schools.

The response was most gratifying. With scarcely one exception the educational forces of Iowa **came into line** with a solid front in opposition to the bill. This did not embrace public school teachers alone. Educational men and women of every grade gave us their earnest support. The **newspaper press** of the state also proved a very valuable ally, especially in informing the people concerning the true nature of the bill, and in creating a **public sentiment** against it. A very large number of petitions and remonstrances were circulated and forwarded to members of the legislature, coming from nearly every county in the state.

To make our position sure, efforts were made to obtain **accurate information** from the schools of Indiana and Kansas as to the working of a similar law in those states. While it is fair to say that the correspondence did not develop an absolute unanimity of sentiment, by far the larger portion of the letters received in response to those sent out committed the writers to the opinion that the law, in its results, was working against the true interests of the schools.

The **situation** was all the more **critical** because the committee on schools in the house, to which the bill was referred, was so nearly equally divided that it was impossible to forecast their report. At one time they reported the bill back without recommendation. It was again referred to the committee, and then, by a bare majority, its passage was recommended. A minority report, signed by eight members of the committee, was also filed at the same time, recommending that the bill be indefinitely postponed. By a large majority, the minority report was substituted for the majority, and thus the bill was finally disposed of. Your committee had one full meeting during the winter, at which the president of the association and the chairman of the executive committee were present. There was **no difference of opinion** among the members, but all worked heartily and earnestly to defeat the bill.

The committee desires to express its appreciation of the work done by the chairman of the executive committee. He was untiring in his efforts to gather such a mass of **reliable**

**information** as enabled us to put the subject of state uniformity in its true light before the members of the legislature, and the people at large. At all times there prevailed between him and the committee, a oneness of purpose which it is pleasant to recall.

Your committee has not deemed it necessary to refer to other **schemes** which were **invented and pressed** by some members of the legislature, because there was not at any time danger of their passage, such as the demand that all schoolbooks should be printed and bound by Iowa workmen, and others proposing that our schoolbooks should be printed and bound by the inmates of the penitentiary.

The **arguments** used by the advocates of the bill in whatever form they came up resolved themselves at once in this one,—the books are cheaper. No pretense even was made that better books were obtained or that the school interests were to be advanced, but the only point to be considered was that **of cost**; the dollars and cents involved in a business transaction. To this your committee replied, that under the present law, any county or district can obtain and use the same book, at the same prices, now in use in Kansas or Indiana; that our **present law** is giving almost universal satisfaction, and that there is **no demand for a change**. Besides the point was very strongly urged that the books in use under state uniformity as provided for by the proposed act have invariably proved unsatisfactory from every standpoint worthy of consideration in selecting text-books for use in the public schools; that in **mechanical execution**, and in the matter compiled, they are **inferior** and consequently the schools using them must suffer in many ways. We were able to show conclusively that the difference in price is comparatively small, while the **difference** in the character and usefulness of the books used under the two systems of state uniformity and of local option is **very striking** and apparent.

Your committee cannot forecast the future, but it is well for us to be on our guard, for the contest is liable to be resumed at no very distant day. The **teachers** of the state are to be **congratulated** upon the success which they achieved through their united efforts. Mention has already been made of the very efficient aid given us by various interests which had the good of the schools at heart, and they deserve our thanks.

Respectfully submitted for the committee,

HENRY SABIN, *Chairman.*

## TEXT-BOOK LEGISLATION IN IOWA.

From 1849 for many years the laws of Iowa required the superintendent of public instruction,—or under the board of education, the secretary of that board,—to **select and recommend** for the entire state the **text-books that might be used** in the public schools. But this policy was not in close agreement with the principle of self-government in local matters. It was but a natural result that when the provision in question became more and more obnoxious, the general assembly repealed it, ever afterward **leaving the choice** of text-books **with the boards** of the several school districts, and also since 1890, with county boards of education, when county uniformity is desired by the people of a county.

In 1872 boards were by law prevented from making a change in text-books regularly chosen, oftener than once in every period of three years, except by a permissive vote of the electors. This enactment remained a part of the law until the present code of 1897 came into effect, which provides in section 2829 that **no change** may be made **before** the expiration of **five years** from the time of adoption, except by a vote of the electors at their annual meeting, a statement that the proposition to change text-books would be voted upon having been included in the notice for such meeting.

In 1890 a distinct advance was made by allowing the purchase of text-books by districts and counties, and providing for the **sale to patrons** from depositories, the money to be returned to the fund to which it originally belonged. This admirable system of district and county adoption, and the purchase and sale of the books at uniform prices, **has given excellent satisfaction**, and as improved by slight changes, found by experience to be desirable, is the present law.

In 1894 boards were given the right with the funds of the district to **furnish the necessary books** for indigent children, when likely to be deprived of the proper benefits of school unless thus supplied with books. In 1896 the electors were given power,—at the annual meeting of any district, when the matter was submitted in the manner provided for,—to instruct the board to procure such text-books as might be needed and **to loan them** to the children **free of cost**.

At the extra session of the general assembly in 1897, the house of representatives requested the superintendent of public instruction to **report** to the Twenty-seventh General Assembly upon the subject of the **supply of text-books** for use in the public schools of the state. Superintendent Sabin gave the matter a very complete examination, making extensive investigations upon every phase of the question. His report is a summary of the latest and most reliable information now available.

It is the purpose of the **new code** of 1897 to eliminate from the law all that is unnecessary, burdensome, or questionable. The intention is to provide uniform and desirable statutes that will aid in protecting all the people in the enjoyment of their natural and vested rights. The provisions regarding the schools are in general agreement with the law governing other subjects. The leading features of the present complete and extensive law relating to text-books, found in sections 2824 to 2837 inclusive, of the code, and many of which **provisions apply** alike to district adoption and to county uniformity, may be summarized as follows:

The county superintendent, the county auditor, and the board of supervisors, constitute the **county board of education**, the county superintendent being chairman, and the county auditor the secretary.

**County uniformity** may be **voted** by the electors. School districts including cities and towns are exempted, but the electors of such cities and towns may vote to adopt and purchase the same books. If county uniformity does not apply, and an adoption is not in force, the **board** of any district **may adopt** text-books, purchasing them at contract prices and selling them at cost.

In selecting books those at the time in use shall be taken into consideration by the county board of education or a board of directors, and **books in use** may be **exchanged** for new books adopted. County and city superintendents and other competent persons may be consulted as to the desirability of text-books under examination. It is unlawful for any school director, teacher, or member of the county board of education, to act as agent for text-books or school supplies.

In **no** case may a **purchase** of text-books be made **except by bid**, nor until after advertisement for three weeks, inviting bids. At the time of filing a bid, samples of books offered,

with lists giving the lowest prices, must be in the office of the county superintendent and must remain there for inspection by any school officer, patron or teacher.

In contracting, **bonds** must be **taken** from persons or firms agreeing to furnish the books, and the bonds of authorized surety companies shall be accepted. Failure to supply any book at the lowest price at which the same is furnished elsewhere, compels suit to be brought upon the bond.

The time for which a contract is to be made is not fixed by the law, but the **adoption** or readoption **holds** for **five years**, unless permission to change or displace books is given by a majority of those electors voting at the annual school meeting in March, previous notice having been given that the question would be voted upon.

To more readily supply the patrons, **persons** within the county may be selected to **keep the books for sale**, and to insure the safety of the books and moneys a bond must be taken from each depository for a school district, and may be required of each county depository. Under county uniformity the money from sales shall be returned monthly to the county funds.

**Free text-books** may be secured for any district by a majority vote of the electors voting at the annual meeting, when all the requirements as to the submission of the matter have been followed. The books will be purchased in the usual manner, and if county uniformity governs a district it is obvious that such books for free use will be secured through the county board of education. The board of the district may be directed to discontinue the loaning of books, by a vote of the electors taken in the same manner that free books are ordered.

At this date about forty-five out of the ninety-nine counties are under county uniformity, while in very many of the others **uniformity** is **practically in operation** by the use of the same kind of books in all or nearly all the schools of the county. So far as known **not a county** is **dissatisfied** with the working of the law providing for county uniformity. And **uniformity** by district adoption, when county uniformity is not desired, is **universally accepted** in Iowa as the most liberal provision possible to be made by law.

## HISTORY.

In co-sympathy with this brief history of school legislation in the state, and as data that should possibly be appended thereto, we publish the following as illustrative of the **senti-ment of not only the educational people** of the state, but of the body politic, as reflected in the messages of governors of the past and present, and also in resolutions of earlier state teachers' associations and in extracts from the report of Hon. Henry Sabin, superintendent of public instruction.

At the annual meeting of the state teachers' association, held at Cedar Rapids, December, 1887, the following report of the committee on resolutions was passed with one dissenting vote:

*Resolved*, That this association favors **district uniformity** of text-books and the enactment of such laws as may be necessary to authorize the boards of directors, subject to instructions of the electors, to **purchase** text books at wholesale rates and to **sell** the same to pupils at cost.

The Iowa state teachers, in Des Moines, January 4, 1890, adopted the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this association, that the best interests of our public schools demand the enactment of a law permitting **free text-books** of the highest literary and mechanical excellence.

Gov. William Larrabee, in his message to the general assembly, January, 1888, speaks as follows:

In reference to this subject I would say, **keep the state from engaging in commercial enterprises** like the publishing of schoolbooks, etc. **Leave to the people of school districts great freedom** to determine such questions, and to govern their own affairs.

In Governor Larrabee's message of February, 1890, the following is an extract:

The experience of other states has demonstrated that **free text-books** are productive of good results in securing attendance at school. I recommend that you pass an act making it the duty of boards of directors to furnish free text-books to all children attending public schools.

Governor Boies, in his inaugural of February, 1890, said, on the Iowa school system:

There is much in the common school system of our state of which to **boast**, and little perhaps that can be done in the way of legislation to **improve its condition**.

At nearly every state teachers' association and county superintendents' convention held in the state for years, these questions have been discussed, and **never in a single instance** has a resolution been passed **favoring state uniformity**. Nor has a resolution favoring local option failed to receive an almost practically unanimous vote, and if the question were submitted to the educators of Iowa to-day, no one will dispute that 90 per cent of them would vote for a law of this kind. Why is it that these men and women who have devoted their whole lives to the cause of educational affairs are so pronouncedly in favor of this law? It will not do to say that they are influenced by sinister motives, for so far as character is concerned, they compare favorably with any class of people on the face of the earth. If any one doubts this, let him compare the teachers of his own city, town or district with the rest of the community, and it is safe to wager that 90 per cent of the members would vote in favor of the teachers.

Not a single board of education in the state has passed a resolution favoring state uniformity, while many have condemned it and favored **district purchase**. The following resolutions have been selected from many of a similar nature.

*Boone county.*—Resolutions adopted at the Boone County Teachers' association, February 12, 1890:

That we recommend to our senator and representative in the legislature, the adoption of a law favoring **free text-books** on the district purchase plan, and the option of the taxpayer.

That we are opposed to a state uniformity, state publication scheme, or state board of purchase and control.

*Poweshiek county.*—Brooklyn school board, March, 1890:

That we look with serious apprehension on any law which takes the control of school affairs away from the district, and that we regard with disfavor the plans of **state uniformity**.

*Cerro Gordo county.*—County Teachers' association, March 8, 1890:

That we favor the enactment of a law authorizing school boards to purchase **books** such as are needed in their schools, to be furnished to pupils free as all other school apparatus.

*The blue grass country.*—Teachers' Round Table, Council Bluffs, February 14, 1890:

We favor a law that shall give school boards the power to go into the open market and contract for the best books they can get at the lowest prices, said **contract** to continue for a period of years; and such a law shall



allow the directors to decide whether books shall be owned by the district and furnished to pupils at cost, or whether they shall be owned by the district and rented to the pupils or whether they shall be owned by the district and loaned to the pupils free.

*Woodbury county.*—

The board of education of Sioux City, realizing that any legislation that contemplates taking the control of the public schools of Iowa, from the people and vesting it in any state board or bureau would be detrimental to the best interests of the schools; *Resolved*, That we urge upon our senator and representative to use all efforts on their part to prevent the passage of such an enactment, and to oppose all and any legislation looking toward the establishing of a state board of publication, or what is known as **state uniformity** of text-books.

*Muscatine county.*—Muscatine school board, March 17, 1890:

WHEREAS, The question of text-books is now being agitated before the legislature of this state, and,

WHEREAS, We have the interests and welfare of the schools at heart, therefore be it

*Resolved*, That our senator and representative be requested to use their utmost endeavors and influence to oppose **state uniformity**; that it would be **unwise and injurious** to the public schools of Iowa; that a greater monopoly would be forced upon us than does now exist if such becomes the law.

*Story county.*—Story County Teachers' association, March 22, 1890: After a thorough discussion of the text-book question, the following resolution was offered and unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, We believe some legislation should be had on the subject of our public school system, and particularly as regards text-books; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That we are emphatically opposed to any state uniformity, state contract or **state publication** scheme.

That we would heartily favor a law giving the directors of each district the power to go into the open market and contract for the best book at the lowest prices, and a law that would permit the electors to decide whether these books should be furnished free or at actual cost.

*Marion county.*—Marion County Teachers' association, March 22, 1890:

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the teachers assembled in Marion county, Iowa, that **state uniformity** of text-books would be detrimental to the best interest of our schools. But we do favor free books.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to Representative Hendershot, in Des Moines.

*Jasper county.*—Knights of Labor of Newton, March 1, 1890:

That we are in favor of the district boards of directors purchasing the school text-books, of the best quality as to make up and matter, and in the **open market** and loaning them free of cost to the pupils.

*Mills, Fremont, Montgomery and Page counties.*—Inter-County Teachers' association, Shenandoah, March 7 and 8, 1890:

To the honorable senators and representatives of the general assembly of the state of Iowa: Having a deep and abiding interest in the welfare of our public schools, we, the undersigned citizens, would make the following request, to give relief and to best protect the people on the subject of school books.

We are opposed to any legalized monopoly that shall undertake to control Iowa's schools, in the way of a state publication or state contract scheme.

We favor a law that shall give school boards the power to go into the open market and contract for the best books that they can get at the lowest prices; said contract to continue for a period of years, and the books to be owned by the district and loaned to pupils.

*Dallas county.*—Teachers' association, DeSoto, March 8, 1890:

*Resolved*, That we look with serious apprehension on any law that takes the control of school affairs away from the district and that we regard with disfavor any plans of state uniformity and state contract.

*Resolved*, That we favor a local option, free text-book law.

*Black Hawk county.*—

To the honorable senators of the twenty-third general assembly of the state of Iowa:

The school officers of Cedar Falls, hereby state and declare:

1. That it is our opinion that the proposed plan of establishing in this state a uniformity of school text-books is unwise, and inconsistent with the best interests of our schools.

2. We believe the school board of each district should be left entirely free in the selection and adoption of text-books, with only the restriction as to the frequency of change imposed by the present law.

At the time of the agitation of the schoolbook question in 1890, which resulted in the passage of the law under which we are now operating, a well known state paper had the following to say on the subject:

State uniformity is state absurdity. It baffles enterprise in schoolbook making and in school teaching. It is a craze—a disease. It is unfitted to this country. It will do for China—was adopted there some centuries since, along with uniformity in clothing, hair dressing, houses and boats. It is stagnation—repression. It is the plan of the Arab schools—a blank sameness in books and teaching methods. In other days no scholar was more aggressive than the Saracen, but he fell into the fateful state uniformity rut and stagnates there. He has uniformity in plows and mills for grinding meal, uniformity in prayers and physic, and in cut of hair. The urchin from the Theban school will find the same books in Cairo and in Bagdad; the same books for reading, mathematics, law and medicine. This is the blessing sought for Iowa. Iowa does not want it. It is a retrogression—inimical to our thought, our genius and our spirit. It has no

strength, no push, no progress. Let us make a stranger of it—shut and bolt our doors against it, and welcome every animated step of progress. Admit, for the argument, that it might cost less. So it does in China, where every book and every pair of pants, and every coat and queue is pattern unto pattern, different only as to size, but at what a cost in human progress.

Let the uniformity question alone. Let it go with the Mexican plow and zerape, with Nepaul prayer-wheels and the Hindoo caste marks; let us continue, year by year, to invite the best to encourage enterprise—the evolution of the fittest and of the best in everything—in schoolbooks surely. Books cost too much, we hear. Perhaps, and yet the best schoolbook is the cheapest thing we buy. It is cheaper than tea and coffee—why not cry for uniformity and state supply in those articles. The farmer would get them at less cost. The schoolbook is cheaper than tobacco and cigars—cost the farmer less—why not demand uniformity in what we smoke and snuff and chew? There are more dollars and cents going into the weed than into schoolbooks—let's have cigars made uniform and regulate the price of plug. It costs more than schoolbooks. Schoolbooks are cheaper than rum or beer—let's make that uniform; cheaper than clothing, boots and shoes—let's go into the uniformity business all over or not at all. But why assail schoolbook prices when properly restricted, as they might be, and pass by greater things? Leave the local authorities some option. Let the state superintendent and his aids attend to books and prices—reporting their character and cost, and abandon the uniformity and state publishing idea. It is a sort of trust that leads to sure stagnation.

All of this contest and agitation in 1890 resulted in the adoption of the present school text-book law, which is known as the **district purchase plan**, and since the adoption of this law, several states, namely Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota, have passed similar laws and said laws are now in satisfactory operation in all of these states.

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## THE BEST TEXT-BOOKS DEMANDED.

*From the State Superintendent's Report of 1888-89.*

In selecting a text-book, reference should be had, in the first place, to its **mechanical construction**. It may be perfect in all other respects, but if it is defective in this, it is a dear book at any price.

Schoolbook publishers have taken great pains to find the strongest and most durable **binding** possible for books to put into the hands of children, and they have succeeded to a

remarkable degree. Any **effort to cheapen** a book by using an inferior style of binding is **not** in the line of **true economy**. The life of a schoolbook, under the ordinary wear and tear of daily use, is from three to four years. The more this average can be increased by the care taken in putting the book together, the cheaper relatively, the book becomes. The binding that will answer for the ordinary book which is read in the family, or used by the student in his library, will not by any means answer for a schoolbook. Just as soon as the cover falls off, or the leaves become loose, the book begins to go to pieces and is of little worth to the pupil. In this, as in other particulars, a schoolbook, to be cheap, and at the same time serviceable, must be made with special reference to school use. This point is apparent to everyone who has had an extensive experience in selecting the text-books for a system of schools.

Again, in the preparation of text-books great care should be taken to relieve from undue exertion the eyes of those using them. It is said by those who have investigated the subject, that **defective eyesight** is on the increase among our youth. It is unquestionably true that poor paper, bad impressions, broken and worn out type, and fine print in our books, have had much to do with injuring the sight of school children. The **paper used** in our schoolbooks should be thick and firm in its texture, so as not to be transparent; it should be white, forming a sharp contrast with the black letters, and without any gloss to dazzle the eyes. The **ink** is a matter of importance, the **type** should be of a proper size and form so as to give a perfect impression, and the general arrangement of the page should be such as to render each letter and word legible without any conscious effort of the eye. The **eyesight** of the child is his most **precious** heritage; more precious even to the children of the poor than to those of the wealthy, as its use is one of the means by which they are to obtain a livelihood. A text-book which is not made in accordance with the latest scientific discoveries, calculated to preserve and strengthen this sense, should not be allowed in the schoolroom. Such mechanical **perfection** is not the result of accident. To produce it **requires expenditure** of money, scientific research, and the employment of skilled labor.

The **selection and arrangement** of material for a text-book is often a matter of considerable difficulty. Not everyone with

a correct literary taste, or possessed of an accurate knowledge of authors, can be trusted to compile a system of school readers.

Something more than an acquaintance with the facts of history or geography is necessary to enable one to write a book suitable for instruction in these branches. A **successful compiler** of a schoolbook must be thoroughly familiar with the workings of the child's mind; he **must be an adept** in modern ways and methods of teaching, and he must have an extensive acquaintance with teachers in order that he may adapt his books to their wants and capacities, as well as to those of the pupils. In a word he **must know all the conditions** of school life, or his work will prove a failure in some important particulars.

The same **spirit of enterprise** which has wrought a great change in all kinds of machinery, in farm implements, and has invaded every department of social as well as business life, has brought the American schoolbook to a high degree of perfection. The schoolbook of to-day bears the same relation to the schoolbook of twenty-five years ago that the reaper or mower of to-day bears to the rude implements which were used in the fields at that time. The farmer teaches his son the use of these improved implements on the farm in order that he may thereby lessen the cost of production. No mechanic would forbid his apprentice to avail himself of the latest improved machinery in the shop; he rather requires him to become skillful in its use. Upon the same principle we ought to provide the **latest and best books** for the use of our schools, and require the teachers to understand how to use them with the greatest possible benefit to the pupils. The money which is saved by the use of an old, worn out text-book is often more than counterbalanced by the time and opportunities lost, and which might be saved to the child by the substitution of one better adapted to his present wants.

How shall we provide text-books for the schools has been very widely discussed, and several plans have been proposed. It is taken for granted that no one wishes, or would be willing, to do anything which would injure the efficiency of the schools. We wish in the first place to have **suitable books**, and afterward to obtain them at reasonable rates. Some have thought that the state could enter into the manufacture of schoolbooks with profit, but the experiment as tried in California has not

been so successful, in any sense, as to warrant its repetition elsewhere. Allusion has been made to some of the things required in making a good text-book. Additional light is thrown upon the question by the fact that of the large number of manuscripts submitted to publishers, comparatively few are deemed worthy of publication; and that of the series of school-books published from time to time, a majority are not of such merit as ever to come into anything like general use. The reason for the failure is that these manuscripts and books are made by men not accustomed to this special form of authorship. It is an acknowledged fact that it **requires the highest degree of skill to make the books** used in the common schools; that it is more difficult to make a good third or fourth reader than it is to make an accurate and well arranged chemistry. How, then, can the state, contemplating only the cost of a book, enter into competition with a firm ambitious to make the best book, and therefore employing, in every department, men trained in the business of book-making, whose services command the highest compensation? When we consider also that the best features of every series of **books are covered by a copyright**; that the selections are largely those copyrighted by American authors, and that the state is just as liable to prosecution for infringement as an individual, we can see at once how hazardous it would be for the state to enter upon the purely commercial business of making text-books.

A proposed plan is that the state should enter directly into a contract with some book firm to furnish the books for the schools at certain fixed prices. Let us see what this plan involves. Such a law, to be effective, must be compulsory upon every school in the state. One of the strongest arguments in its favor is that the poor man, who occasionally moves from one place to another, will no longer be forced to provide a new set of books for his children when they change schools. It is a fact that this necessity of **providing new books is a hardship** from which the citizen of small means ought to be relieved in some way, but unless the law is universal in its application he will obtain no benefit from it. The law then must apply to the largest city as well as to the smallest subdistrict. This would necessitate a complete and thorough revision of every course of study in use in our graded schools; for while it is true that these courses are based upon general principles, the details are worked out in accordance with the series of

text-books in use in the schools under consideration. The text books have been selected with special reference to desired results in each grade of work, and the courses of study have been arranged with a view to the same points, by experienced men, who are thoroughly versed in their calling. Is it not a reasonable proposition that **to compel a violent change** in these vital points **would work** an incalculable **injury** to the schools?

It is also worth while to consider that an ungraded school of fifteen or twenty pupils, needs a very different series of books from the large city school. It demands, it is true, books just as perfect in every respect, but the pupils are in school a shorter time, they are not as regular in attendance, and consequently do not accomplish as much. If the city schools were compelled to use the same books as the country schools, they would of necessity be forced to supplement their work by using **additional books**, the purchase of which would entail **extra expense** upon the pupils. The total expense for books in these schools would probably be increased rather than diminished.

There is not space in this report to consider all the objections to this plan of state uniformity. It would undoubtedly tend to increase the inflexibility, the machine-like teaching which already characterizes too many of our schools. The compact once made would be enforced for a series of years, and the state would have no remedy, no matter how much the schools were suffering under its restrictions. Experience has proved that the difficulty of administering such a law is very great. In the first place, no body of men is wise enough to select a series of books suited to the wants of every section of the state. No educator of experience in Iowa would be willing to attempt to select a series of books for some large system of schools, until he had studied long and carefully the wants of those schools, what progress they have already made, and what they are capable of doing in the future. In every case where a selection has been made for the use of the entire state, the result has been to take the lowest priced book, with little reference to other features. In the second place, the pecuniary loss on the books thus displaced, and the inferiority of the ones introduced occasion distrust and dissatisfaction among the patrons of the schools. It is possible that a firm might be found willing to **take** all the **books** at present in use in the

schools, and **replace them** without expense to the pupils; but the very fact that they propose to do this is sufficient to awaken the suspicion that they know the worth of a monopoly when they see it and are willing to pay a price for it. Moreover this **plan** has **nowhere** been a **success**. Wherever it has been tried the result has proved detrimental to the schools. The best known educational men in the country, men who have studied this question from every standpoint, are unanimously opposed to it. These men are known in every part of the educational world; their character is above reproach; their judgment is respected, and no man who knows them would think of imputing to them unworthy motives. In purchasing and distributing the books, in collecting and returning the purchase money, and in the amounts carried over, by the 4,650 secretaries or agents who must account for the books, there would arise a need of complicated machinery, which it would be hazardous for the state to create.

I cannot close this part of this discussion better than in the words of the honored governor of Iowa, in his message to the Twenty-second General Assembly, in which he shows that wise statesmanship so characteristic of his administration. "Keep the state from engaging in commercial enterprises like the publishing of schoolbooks, etc. Leave to the people of the school districts great freedom to determine such questions and to govern their own affairs."

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### CHAIRMAN SESSIONS' LETTER.

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WATERLOO, Iowa, February 7, 1898

*Prof. A. N. Currier, Iowa City; Prof. Kate E. Corkhill, Indianola; Supt. W. F. Chevalier, Red Oak; Members Executive Com. State Teachers' Association:*

DEAR FRIENDS—I have had numerous letters from prominent school people asking me as chairman of the executive committee of the association to circulate that part of Mr. Sabin's late report which deals with state uniformity and state publication of text-books. It seems quite necessary for something to be done along this line or else we run the chance of having the educational work of Iowa seriously impaired by an unfortunate text-book bill, a copy of which you will find in the last issue of the "Midland Schools." Now, there is no reason in the world why we can not buy the inferior and cheap books of Kansas and Indiana, if want them, under our present text-book law. I think we have the best law that has yet been made on the text-book question.



What I wish to ask is, will I be authorized in standing the expense for the circulating of these pamphlets. It has been the custom of the executive committee to help the legislative committee in this way, and I think we certainly ought to do it this year.

I am also asked to authorize the calling of the legislative committee of this state for the purpose of considering the situation. This is strongly advised by prominent men.

Please express your opinion of these matters very promptly, as the action must be taken very promptly, if at all.

Yours truly,

F. J. SESSIONS,  
*Chairman Executive Committee*

The **replies** received by Mr. Sessions as a result of the foregoing being **unanimously in the affirmative**, the committee was immediately called. As a result of this meeting, the following resolution was adopted:

We, the members of the legislative committee for the State Teachers' association of Iowa, have carefully examined the bill known as the Ray bill, providing for the state uniformity of text-books, and are unanimously of the opinion that the **enactment** of the principles of the bill into a law would prove detrimental to the best interests of the schools of the state, for the following reasons:

*First.*—We believe that the power of selecting the commission to perform so important a work should not be entrusted to one man.

*Second.*—We believe that the **compensation** provided for in this bill is entirely **inadequate** to secure the services of men competent to perform such duties as the bill imposes.

*Third.*—While we are decidedly in favor of encouraging Iowa authors, at the same time we are **opposed** to any legislation that will restrict us from selecting the best books in use.

*Fourth.*—We believe that the **prices** for books fixed in the bill as maximum are **too low** to secure the best books.

*Fifth.*—We are decidedly **opposed** to state **uniformity** of text-books, because we believe that any such law would not meet the varied wants of the schools so well as the laws now in force, which permits cities and counties to make selections of books adapted to their individual requirements.

*Sixth.*—From information in our possession we are satisfied that we **represent** the views of **nine-tenths** of the leading school men of the state.

HENRY SABIN,

*Chairman;*

J. B. KNOEFFLER,

GEO. CHANDLER,

FLORABEL PATTERSON,

J. T. MERRILL,

A. N. CURRIER,

*President State Teachers' Association;*

F. J. SESSIONS,

*Chairman Executive Committee, State Teachers' Association.*

Following close upon this resolution was issued this letter to boards of directors and parents of children in Iowa schools:

DES MOINES, Iowa, February 18, 1898.

It is undoubtedly known to you that there is now under consideration in the legislature a bill known as the Ray bill, proposing a uniform series of books for use in all the schools of the state.

At first the scheme looks feasible, especially as it proposes to furnish books at a very low price. But can we afford to sacrifice the welfare of the children for the sake of saving a few cents on the price of a schoolbook? To be sure when we figure up the aggregate saving of a little on each book used by 500,000 children in school, the sum is large; but when we stop to think of the aggregate loss in advancement and in knowledge of 500,000 children, doomed all their school life to use only inferior books, the result is actually appalling.

We must also figure in the cost of this experiment, the loss sustained in changing out all the text-books in our common schools. The proposed law provides that every child thus forced to change his books, no matter how good they may be, or how recently they may have been purchased, shall pay fifty per cent of the price fixed by the act for that book. The loss would figure up many thousands of dollars, at the outset, without any immediate or prospective returns. Nor is this all. The passage of the proposed bill would result in disorganizing the graded school system throughout the state. In many cases the course of study would have to be revised and fitted to a new order of books. What this means in time, and in retarding the progress of the children, those of us who are in the school work know better than other persons possibly can.

Now, our schoolbooks represent the best methods and most careful thought of men and women who have devoted their lives to their calling. Under the proposed act the price for each book is so low as to preclude the introduction of the best books. We have examined the books used in states having uniformity—under a bill similar to the Ray bill—and in our judgment they are not of a character which would recommend them to any progressive school board in our state.

In everything which is good, the children in the schools of Iowa deserve the best.

There is one additional thought. It is reported that the books now in use in one state having uniformity are really printed by a large eastern firm and sent to that state. The geography in use in one such state has not been remodeled or revised for over ten years. It is also said that the books in use in another state are printed from plates of books discarded years ago, because there was no sale for them in this market. We do not know that these things are true, but they are matters of common report. There is, however, in the proposed bill, nothing to prevent any large firm which has been in the book business for years from revamping the plates of old books and offering them to the commission at prices which would defy competition and compel their adoption. Thus in our endeavors to obtain books at more reasonable rates, we are in danger of handing over our schools to a trust or combination, or syndicate, whatever you may choose to call it, from which we cannot free them for five long years.

Do you believe it is wise to make the experiment?

If you do not, then we earnestly appeal to you to use your influence with those who represent you in the Twenty-seventh General Assembly, that the Ray bill may not be enacted into a law. In all this we acknowledge that the author of this bill and those who support it are honest in their convictions, and are conscientious in their attempts to obtain books at a lower price. We, however, who are teachers in your schools, claim our rights as citizens as well as teachers, and having at heart the welfare of the schools, and the honor of the state, we urge the defeat of this bill.

HENRY SABIN,  
*Chairman Legislative Committee Iowa Teachers' Association;*  
A. N. CURRIER,  
*President State Teachers' Association;*  
F. J. SESSIONS,  
*Chairman Executive Committee State Teachers' Association.*

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## IOWA STATE REPORTS ON TEXT-BOOKS.

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[Extracts from the biennial report of the Hon. Henry Sabin, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, made November 1, 1897.]

The house of representatives at the extra session of the Twenty-sixth General Assembly, passed a resolution requesting the superintendent of public instruction to report upon the subject of the supply of text-books for use in the public schools of the state. As amended the resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, The people of the state of Iowa have, for many years, been compelled to pay unreasonably high, and often extortionate, prices for the text-books necessary to educate their children in the public schools of the commonwealth, and

WHEREAS, The publishers of text-books have continued to charge the high prices, notwithstanding the business and industry of the country have never suffered such severe and prolonged depression, the prices of all commodities and products of labor and the prices paid for labor being now greatly reduced below the normal rate; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the superintendent of public instruction be directed to give this matter his most careful attention and investigate the various methods of obtaining and furnishing our public schools with text-books and supplies, and to report to the Twenty-seventh General Assembly the most practicable system for supplying the people of Iowa with suitable text-books at the lowest possible cost price to the taxpayers. And also to secure from not less than three reputable and responsible publishing houses, which are not in any way engaged in the publication or sale of school books, estimates showing the cost of the material, presswork and binding, per volume, of each of the various kinds of text-books necessarily used in

the public schools of the state, such estimates to be based upon books similar in size and quality of workmanship to those now in general use, furnished in lots of not less than 10,000 of each kind at a time, from electro plates provided by the state.

It has been found impracticable to comply with the latter part of this resolution, which directs the superintendent of public instruction to obtain from three responsible houses not engaged in the sale or manufacture of schoolbooks, estimates showing cost of material, presswork, per volume, etc. Had a reasonable appropriation accompanied the resolution, it would have given me pleasure to comply with its requirements, as the **information** thus obtained **would be valuable** in settling some disputed points. No reputable or responsible firm, however, not engaged in the sale or manufacture of text-books, would undertake such an extensive and careful investigation as would be necessary in order to make the results of any value, without a reasonable compensation. **So many items** enter into the compilation and manufacture of text-books, each of which has a direct bearing upon the ultimate price at which books can be sold to pupils at cost, that none but a careful expert can make such estimates as would be a safe guide in considering this question.

I have endeavored to comply with the original resolution in its spirit as well as in its letter. If the people of Iowa are paying **extortionate prices** for schoolbooks, or if other states are obtaining those of equal grade in all respects for less than we are, it is a **wrong** which ought to be remedied at once.

In order that this matter may be placed before you fairly, and without prejudice, I have made a **brief summary of the laws** in each of several states, and have appended to each the prices at which books are sold to the pupils in the public schools. I have also copied from the reports made to this office by the county superintendents, the prices at which books are sold under the Iowa law for county uniformity. For this purpose I have selected five fairly representative counties. There are also added, for public information, the **prices at which books are sold** in certain towns and cities. In making selections of towns and cities, as well as of counties, reference has been had solely to difference of location, population, and character of the schools. In every case the prices published are those furnished this department by school authorities.

MISSOURI TEXT-BOOK LAW.

SECTION 1. The commission is constituted as follows: The state auditor, the attorney-general, the superintendent of public instruction, the president of the state normal school, and one practical public school teacher to be appointed by the governor. They each receive five dollars per day and actual traveling expenses for the time in session, not to exceed thirty days.

SEC. 3. The commission is directed, immediately after organization, to advertise for the lowest and best bids for standard school text-books to be used for a period of five years; each bid must be accompanied with a sample copy and a deposit of five hundred dollars to cover cost and damages for failure to comply with terms of contract.

SEC. 5. If any bid is satisfactory the commission shall select the cheapest and best course of text-books, taking into consideration the quality of material, illustrations, binding, and all things entering into the publication of a desirable school text-book.

SEC. 6. The commission shall require all publishers to specify and guarantee three prices, first, the contract price; second, the retail price, which shall not be more than fifteen per cent above the contract price; and third, the mailing price; and upon what terms, for the purpose of introduction, they will exchange other books offered for use, for those now in actual use. The law also provides upon what terms pupils about to be promoted may exchange their books for those of the next higher grade. The commission shall then, with the aid of the attorney-general, enter into a contract in the name of the state of Missouri for a period of five years with any house whose bid has been accepted, clearly setting out the terms of agreement as noted above. The publishers must enter into a bond of ten thousand dollars for the faithful performance of the contract.

SEC. 8. The commission may employ one clerk at a salary of \$3.50 a day.

SEC. 11. After the first day of September, 1897, no other text-books except those contracted for by said commission shall be sold for use in any of the public schools, and after the first day of September, 1898, no other text-books shall be used.

SEC. 12. Any school director or board of school directors violating this act shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and become liable to a fine of not less than five nor more than twenty-five dollars for each offense. Nothing in this act, however, prevents the employment of other books, works of literature, and so on, for supplementary reading.

SEC. 15. For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act the sum of two thousand dollars is appropriated out of the general fund of the state.

TEXT-BOOKS.	RETAIL PRICE.
White's Oral Arithmetic.....	\$ .30
Milne's Elementary Arithmetic.....	.25
Milne's Standard Arithmetic.....	.56
Rand-McNally Elementary Geography .....	.42
Rand-McNally Complete Geography.....	.81
Patrick's Lessons in Grammar .....	.25
Morris' Elementary History.....	.51
Shinn's American People .....	.86

De Garmo First Book in Language .....	\$ .25
De Garmo Second Book in Language .....	.35
Vertical Writing (natural system).....	.05
Baldwin's Essential Lessons in Physiology .....	.45
New Franklin Primer and First Reader Combined.....	.12
New Franklin Second Reader.....	.17
New Franklin Third Reader .....	.23
New Franklin Fourth Reader .....	.35
New Franklin Fifth Reader.....	.45
Taylor's Primer.....	.26
Sever's Progressive Speller .....	.16

THE CALIFORNIA TEXT-BOOK LAW.

California furnishes us the **only example** we have of **state publication** of school books. Under the law as adopted in 1885, the sum of \$20,000 was appropriated for the purpose of compiling a series of text-books for the common schools. An additional sum of \$150,000 was set aside for the purpose of establishing a plant, purchasing of material, and payment of salaries. In 1887 the further sum of \$165,000 was appropriated for the same purpose. Other and additional appropriations have been found necessary from time to time to carry on the work and provide suitable books. The **state**, of course, **owns** the **copyrights** and the **plants** for binding and printing. California, according to figures compiled by the secretary of state, has appropriated \$405,000 in all for printing text-books. There seems to be other items not included in the sum amounting to \$73,669. Very much of this large sum has been refunded to the treasury from the sale of books. The theory of the state board fixes eight years as the time in which the estimated sales of books would pay for themselves and also for the plant. As against this theory are the facts that the books, as **all school books** must, **need** frequent **revision**, that the plant will wear out, and that the number sold does not reach the estimate. The following is the official list of books made by the state and the prices at which they are furnished pupils. It is very easy to determine whether there is any economy in state publication:

TEXT-BOOKS.	RETAIL PRICE.
Revised First Reader .....	\$ .20
Revised Second Reader .....	.35
Revised Third Reader .....	.50
Revised Fourth Reader .....	.60
Speller.....	.30
Primary Number Lessons.....	.25

Advanced Arithmetic.....	\$ .50
Lessons in Language.....	.30
Revised English Grammar.....	.55
U. S. History.....	.80
Elementary Geography.....	.60
Advanced Geography.....	1.20
Physiology.....	.60
Civil Government.....	.55
English Grammar (old edition).....	.50

INDIANA TEXT-BOOK LAW.

SECTION 1. The state board of education constitutes the board of commissioners for making a selection or procuring the compilation of books for use in the common schools. Said board shall advertise for twenty-one consecutive days in two daily papers in Indiana, and one in New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis. First for sealed proposals from publishers of school text-books, stating the price at which each book will be furnished. Second, from authors who have manuscripts of books not published, for price at which they will sell the same with a copyright of such book. Third, from persons who are willing to undertake the compilation of books as provided for in this act. Provided that all bids must be accompanied by a bond in the sum of fifty thousand dollars, and provided further that bids shall be accompanied by an affidavit of the bidder that he is not connected with any scheme whereby the benefits of competition are denied to the people of the state.

SEC. 4. The board at the time of meeting shall open all bids and shall make a thorough investigation and ascertain under which of said proposals schoolbooks can be furnished the people of the state at the lowest price, considering the size, quality and matter. The price at which each book shall be furnished corresponds with the price as published in this report.

SEC. 5. Relates to the procuring of manuscripts.

SEC. 6. The state is not held liable to any contractors but all such contractors shall be paid from the proceeds of the sale of books.

The remaining sections of the law, which is quite lengthy, refer to the manner of distributing the books, the compensation to be paid for handling the books, reports to be made, and bonds to be given. One thousand dollars is appropriated out of the general fund in the state treasury to pay the expenses of the commission. The name and price of the book shall appear plainly upon the cover.

I quote a sentence from a letter from a private correspondent in Indiana, who is in a position to render his judgment valuable:

“There is **another side** to this question which you should not overlook. All of the school officers of the state, except the superintendent of public instruction, are paid salaries from local funds for looking after the books. This adds quite a good deal to the expense of the books during the five years' contract.”

TEXT-BOOKS.	RETAIL PRICE.
First Reader.....	\$ .10
Second Reader.....	.15
Third Reader.....	.25
Fourth Reader.....	.30
Fifth Reader.....	.40
Elementary Arithmetic.....	.35
Complete Arithmetic.....	.45
Elementary Geography.....	.30
Complete Geography.....	.75
Spelling Book.....	.10
Primary Physiology.....	.30
Advanced Physiology.....	.60
Intermediate Grammar.....	.20
Complete Grammar.....	.40
Copy Books, each.....	.05
Practical Lessons in the use of English.....	.25
Practical English Grammar.....	.40
Montgomery's American History.....	.65

#### OHIO TEXT-BOOK LAW.

SECTION 1. Any publisher desiring to offer schoolbooks for use in Ohio shall file in the office of the state commissioner of common schools a copy of each book with the published list of the wholesale price thereof. A commission, consisting of the governor, the secretary of state, and the state commissioner of common schools, shall fix the maximum price at which such books may be sold to or purchased by boards of education, which maximum price shall not exceed 75 per cent of the published list wholesale price thereof. If the publisher shall notify the commissioner that he accepts the price so fixed such written acceptance shall entitle him to offer books for sale to said boards of education for use under the terms of this act.

SEC. 3. It is not lawful for any board of education to adopt or cause to be used in the common schools any book whose publishers have not complied with the provisions of this act.

SEC. 4. If any publisher fails or refuses to furnish such books, having agreed to do the same, he shall be liable to a fine of \$500.

Each board of education shall determine, by a majority vote of all members elect, which of said books so filed shall be used in the schools under its control. But no text-book once adopted shall be changed within a term of five years from its adoption. Each board has power to make necessary provisions and arrangements to place the books within easy reach of the pupils; 10 per cent may be added to the cost price to pay for handling the books. Under this law the board pays for all the books and the proceeds of the sale of the books are repaid into the contingent fund. This law also provides for free text-books if the electors so direct.



**Thirty-eight** leading companies have complied with the provisions of the law and are **selling** their books to the schools in **Ohio**. As far as I can ascertain they are selling their books at the **same prices** at which they are furnishing them to schools in **Iowa** under county or district contract.

KANSAS TEXT-BOOK LAW.

SECTION 1. The text-book commission consists of eight members to be appointed by the governor by and with the consent of the senate, not more than three of whom shall be selected from any one political party. They receive as compensation the sum of five dollars a day and actual expenses in going to and returning from any meeting. The state superintendent of public instruction is chairman of the commission, with the right to vote upon any and all propositions.

SEC. 9. The text-book commission is empowered and authorized to select and adopt a uniform series of text-books for use in the public schools of the state of Kansas.

SEC. 10. The superintendent of public instruction is authorized to advertise in the official state paper for four consecutive weeks for bids and proposals.

SEC. 11. Any person or company desiring to make bids as provided in this act shall submit them in writing with a certified check for \$1,000, to be forfeited to the state in case such party fails to enter into bond and make the contract if awarded to him.

SEC. 12. All bids and proposals must be on the following matters:

*First.*—From the publishers of school text-books for furnishing for use in the public schools of Kansas, for a term of five years, each bid to state the price at which each book is to be furnished.

*Second.*—From any authors of schoolbooks who have manuscripts not published, for the price at which they will sell their manuscript.

*Third.*—From persons who are willing to undertake the compilation of books, the prices at which they are willing to undertake such work. All bids by publishers must be accompanied by a bond in the sum of \$50,000 for the faithful performance of the contract. The bidder is required to make an affidavit to the effect that he is in no way connected with any other firm and that he is not a party to any contract or scheme whereby the benefits of competition are denied to the people of the state.

SEC. 15. All books shall be at a price not above or in excess of the price named in the law, which price includes all costs and charges for packing, transportation, and delivery to the proper place. It also provides for exchanging the books now in use for new at not more than 50 per cent of the maximum price fixed by the provisions of the law.

SEC. 17. The state is not held liable to any contractors for any sum of money, but all such contractors shall receive pay from the proceeds of the sale of the book or books.

SEC. 19. The company having contracted for furnishing text-books shall arrange with one dealer at the county seat in each county for handling said books. Such dealer is allowed to charge the people of the state a commission not exceeding 10 per cent on the contract price. The remainder of

the act provides means for ordering the books direct from the school superintendent. It also provides penalties for the violation of contract, the term of duration of contract, which is not to be less than five years, and penalties for violating the act. Twenty-five hundred dollars is appropriated for the purpose of paying mileage and per diem of the commission and the expenses of the same. The further sum of \$10,000 is appropriated for the purchase of such manuscripts as are provided for in this act.

The **Kansas law** has not been in operation long enough to judge of its effects upon the schools. In many respects it **resembles** the **law of Indiana**, after which it is evidently modeled.

TEXT-BOOKS.	RETAIL PRICE.
Student's Speller.....	\$ .11
Student's First Reader.....	.11
Student's Second Reader.....	.18
Student's Third Reader.....	.25
Excelsior Fourth Reader.....	.33
Excelsior Fifth Reader.....	.44
Tillotson's Elementary Grammar.....	.22
Hoenshel's Complete Grammar.....	.37
Rand-McNally's Introductory Geography.....	.33
Rand-McNally's Grammar-School Geography.....	.82
Tarr's Physical Geography.....	.88
Wright's Civil Government.....	.44
Seymour's Mental Arithmetic.....	.22
New Model Elementary Arithmetic.....	.27
New Model Advanced Arithmetic.....	.38
Collin's Algebra.....	.55
Model School History.....	.55
Stevenson's Bookkeeping.....	.44
Hotze's Physics.....	.55
Hotze's Physiology.....	.55
Roudebush Vertical Writing.....	.05

Table of prices at which books are furnished pupils in Appanoose, Winneshiek, Warren, Monona and Polk counties, as returned to this office by the county superintendent.

APPANOOSE COUNTY, IOWA.

TEXT-BOOKS.	CONTRACT PRICE.
McGuffey's Primer (per doz.).....	\$1.14
McGuffey's First Reader.....	.13
McGuffey's Second Reader.....	.23
McGuffey's Third Reader.....	.32
McGuffey's Fourth Reader.....	.38
McGuffey's Fifth Reader.....	.54
Patterson's Speller.....	.14
Ray's New Elementary Arithmetic.....	.26
Ray's New Practical Arithmetic.....	.38

Ray's New Higher Arithmetic.....	\$ .64
Barnes' Elementary Geography.....	.44
Barnes' Complete Geography.....	1.00
Eclectic Physical Geography.....	.75
Reister's Copy Books.....	.07
Conklin's English Grammar.....	.48
Reed's Language.....	.35
House I Live In.....	.23
Eclectic Guide to Health.....	.45
Steele's Hygiene.....	.75
Barnes' Primary History.....	.45
Barnes' Brief History.....	.75

WINNESHIEK COUNTY, IOWA.

Barnes' First Reader.....	.16
Barnes' Second Reader.....	.28
Barnes' Third Reader.....	.40
Normal Fourth Reader.....	.50
Normal Fifth Reader.....	.70
White's First Arithmetic.....	.23
White's Complete Arithmetic.....	.49
Swinton's Introductory Geography.....	.44
Rand-McNally's Grammar School Geography.....	.67
Patterson's Common School Speller.....	.14
Normal Copy Books (per doz.).....	.77
Sheldon's Primary Language.....	.30
Sheldon's Advanced Language.....	.50
Stowell's Healthy Body.....	.42
Hutchison's Physiology.....	.88
Barnes' Primary History.....	.45
Barnes' Brief History.....	.75
White's Outlines of History.....	.24

WARREN COUNTY, IOWA.

McGuffey's Revised First Reader.....	.13
McGuffey's Revised Second Reader.....	.23
McGuffey's Revised Third Reader.....	.32
McGuffey's Revised Fourth Reader.....	.38
McGuffey's Revised Fifth Reader.....	.54
McGuffey's Revised Sixth Reader.....	.64
McGuffey's Revised Speller.....	.13
White's First Arithmetic.....	.23
White's Complete Arithmetic.....	.49
Barnes' Brief History.....	.75
Pathfinder No. 2.....	.38
Steele's Hygienic Physiology.....	.75
Reed & Kellogg's Higher Lessons in English.....	.50
Reed & Kellogg's Introductory Language Work.....	.32
Butler's Elementary Geography.....	.44
Butler's Complete Geography.....	.96

Butler's Physical Geography .....	\$ .87
Burton's Story of Our Country.....	.45
Ellsworth's New Reversible Writing Books (per doz.).....	.75

MONONA COUNTY, IOWA.

Franklin First Reader.....	.16
Franklin Second Reader.....	.25
Franklin Third Reader.....	.35
Franklin Fourth Reader.....	.45
Franklin Fifth Reader.....	.60
Modern Speller.....	.16
Stoddard's Intermediate Arithmetic.....	.28
White's First Arithmetic.....	.23
White's Complete Arithmetic .....	.49
Barnes' Elementary Geography.....	.44
Barnes' Complete Geography.....	1.00
Barnes' Copy Books (per doz.).....	.75
Maxwell's Intermediate Grammar.....	.30
Whitney-Lockwood Grammar.....	.53
Maxwell's Language.....	.23
Tarbell's Language.....	.45
Steele's Physiology.....	.75
Pathfinder No. 1. ....	.23
Pathfinder No. 2.....	.38
Barnes' Primary History.....	.45
Barnes' Brief History.....	.75

POLK COUNTY, IOWA.

Barnes' First Reader.....	.16
Barnes' Second Reader.....	.28
Barnes' Third Reader.....	.40
Barnes' Fourth Reader.....	.56
Barnes' Fifth Reader.....	.72
Swinton's Primer.....	.10
Ray's Elementary Arithmetic.....	.26
Ray's Practical Arithmetic.....	.38
Barnes' Elementary Geography.....	.44
Barnes' Complete Geography... ..	1.00
McGuffey's Revised Spelling Book.. ..	.13
Spencerian Copy Books (per doz.).....	.72
Conklin's Grammar.....	.45
Long's Language.....	.15
Long's Language No. 2.....	.19
Child's Health Primer.....	.23
Young People's Physiology.....	.38
Hygienic Physiology.....	.75
Barnes' Primary History.....	.45
Barnes' Brief History.....	.75

Tables of prices at which books are furnished to pupils in the schools of Hamburg, Davenport, Waukon, Burlington, Rock Rapids, Red Oak, Algona and Boone, as furnished by the city superintendent of schools, upon request of this department:

**HAMBURG, IOWA.**

TEXT-BOOKS.	CONTRACT PRICE.
Franklin First Reader.....	\$ .16
Franklin Advanced First Reader.....	.16
Franklin Second Reader.....	.25
Franklin Advanced Second Reader.....	.25
Franklin Third Reader.....	.35
Franklin Advanced Third Reader.....	.35
Franklin Fourth Reader.....	.45
Franklin Fifth Reader.....	.60
Barnes' Fifth Reader.....	.72
Hunt's Modern Spelling Book.....	.16
Model Copy Books .....	.10
Fisk's Arithmetic No. 1 .....	.24
Fisk's Arithmetic No. 2 .....	.48
Hyde's Language No. 1.....	.35
Metcalf & Bright's Language.....	.32
Conklin's Grammar and Composition.....	.48
Butler's Elementary Geography.....	.44
Butler's Complete Geography .....	.96
Barnes' Brief History .....	.75
Smith's Physiology Primer.....	.24
Smith's Elementary Physiology .....	.40
Tracy's Physiology.....	.75

**DAVENPORT, IOWA.**

Pollard's Primer.....	.12
Pollard's First Reader.....	.19
Harper's First Reader.....	.18
Harper's Second Reader.....	.27
Pollard's Second Reader.....	.28
Harper's Third Reader.....	.36
Appleton's Introductory Fourth Reader .....	.38
Appleton's Fourth Reader.....	.38
Appleton's Fifth Reader.....	.68
Modern Third Reader.....	.42
Modern Spelling Book.....	.16
Reed & Kellogg's Graded Lessons in English .....	.32
Reed & Kellogg's Higher Lessons in English.....	.50
White's First Arithmetic.....	.23
White's Complete Arithmetic.....	.49
Barnes' Brief History .....	.75
Rand-McNally's Elementary Geography.....	.48
Rand-McNally's Grammar School Geography.....	.67
Smith's Physiology Primer.....	.24

Smith's Elementary Physiology .....	\$ .40
Normal Copy Books, Nos. 1-4, small size.....	.06
Normal Copy Books, Nos. 5-10, large size.....	.07

WAUKON, IOWA.

Barnes' First Reader .....	.16
Barnes' Second Reader.....	.28
Barnes' Third Reader.....	.40
Barnes' Fourth Reader.....	.56
Barnes' Fifth reader.....	.72
Swinton's Fifth Reader.....	.72
Cook's Primary Arithmetic .....	.15
White's Elementary Arithmetic .....	.38
White's Complete Arithmetic .....	.49
Frye's Primary Geography.....	.48
Frye's Complete Geography.....	.96
Reed's Word Lessons.....	.20
Reed's Lessons in English.....	.35
Reed's Advanced Grammar.....	.55
Eclectic United States History .....	.75
All Writing Books .....	.10

BURLINGTON, IOWA.

Pollard's Speller.....	.15
Pollard's Primer .....	.12
Pollard's First Reader.....	.19
Pollard's Second Reader .....	.28
Pollard's Third Reader .....	.40
Harper's Fourth Reader .....	.45
Frye's Primary Geography.....	.48
Frye's Complete Geography.....	.96
Southworth's Essentials of Arithmetic .....	.40
Walsh's Grammar School of Arithmetic .....	.65
Eggleston's First Book of American History.....	.45
Eggleston's United States History.....	.79
Blaisdell's Our Bodies and How We Live.....	.65
Conklin's Grammar .....	.48

ROCK RAPIDS, IOWA.

Pollard's Speller.....	15
Pollard's First Reader .....	.19
Pollard's Second Reader.....	.28
Metcalf & Bright's Language Lessons .....	.32
Maine's First Lessons in Arithmetic .....	.17
Pathfinder No. 1—Child's Health Primer.....	.23
Pathfinder No. 2—Young People's Physiology.....	.38
Pathfinder No. 3—Steele's Hygienic Physiology.....	.75
Swinton's Word Primer.....	.12
Bright & Metcalf's Language Book.....	.40
Swinton's Word Book.....	.14
Milne's Elements of Arithmetic.....	.24
Reed & Kellogg's Graded Lessons in English.....	.32
Harvey's English Grammar .....	.49
Milne's Standard Arithmetic.....	.52

Frye's Primary Geography.....	\$ .48
Frye's Complete Geography.....	.96
Barnes' Brief History.....	.75
Barnes' First Reader.....	.16
Barnes' Second Reader.....	.28
Barnes' Third Reader.....	.40
Barnes' Fourth Reader.....	.56
Barnes' Fifth Reader.....	.72
Watson's Complete Speller.....	.16
Spencerian Copy Books (per doz.).....	.72

RED OAK, IOWA.

Pollard's First Reader.....	.19
Appleton's Second Reader.....	.23
Appleton's Third Reader.....	.29
Appleton's Introductory Fourth Reader.....	.38
Appleton's Fourth Reader.....	.38
Pollard's Speller.....	.15
Swinton's Word Book.....	.14
Montgomery's United States History.....	1.00
Thomas' United States History.....	1.00
Barnes' Brief History.....	.75
Fiske's United States History.....	1.00
Goodrich's Child's History.....	.60
Milne's Standard Arithmetic.....	.52
Milne's Elements of Arithmetic.....	.24
Wentworth's First Steps in Algebra.....	.60
Houston's Physical Geography.....	1.25
Swinton's Grammar School Geography.....	1.00
Swinton's Introductory Geography.....	.44
Maxwell's English Grammar.....	.45
Hyde's Lessons in English—Part I.....	.35
Hyde's Lessons in English—Part II.....	.60
Johonnot's Lessons in Hygiene.....	.36
Writing Books—1 to 4.....	.08
Writing Books—5 to 10.....	.10

ALGONA, IOWA.

Harper's First Reader.....	.18
Harper's Second Reader.....	.27
Harper's Third Reader.....	.36
Harper's Fourth Reader.....	.45
Harper's Fifth Reader.....	.68
Harrington's Speller.....	.15
First Lessons in Language.....	.30
Elements of Composition and Grammar.....	.50
Frye's Primary Geography.....	.48
Frye's Complete Geography.....	.96
Essentials of Arithmetic—Part I.....	.35
Essentials of Arithmetic—Part II.....	.50
Fiske's United States History.....	1 00
Pathfinder No. 2.....	.38
Steele's Physiology.....	.75

BOONE, IOWA.

McGuffey's Fourth Reader.....	\$ .58
Barnes' Fifth Reader.....	.72
Hazen's Primer and First Reader.....	.22
Swinton's Word Primer.....	.12
White's Elementary Arithmetic.....	.38
White's Complete Arithmetic.....	.49
Long's Home Geography.....	.20
Eclectic Elementary Geography.....	.41
Eclectic Complete Geography.....	.90
Smith's Primer Physiology.....	.24
Smith's Elementary Physiology.....	.40
Conklin's Grammar.....	.48
Metcalf's Language Exercises.....	.32
Swinton's Word Analysis.....	.28
Eggleston's First Book American History.....	.45

The following tables are arranged to show the **cost** of text-books in **Iowa** as compared with other states. In the tables are included the retail prices of one fourth reader, one arithmetic, an elementary geography, grammar, physiology, writing book, speller and history, as comprising all the books actually needed by a pupil in this grade. These books are not all purchased, however, at one time, and some of them are in use by the pupil until he is well advanced in the fifth reader. The **average cost** of this set of books, under state adoption, is \$3.18; under county uniformity, \$3.19; as sold in eight towns or cities, \$3.38. If I had taken other states having state adoption the averages would have shown slightly different results. Thus these books in Oregon would cost \$4.78; in Virginia, \$3.78; in Minnesota, \$3.39.

RETAIL PRICE OF TEXT-BOOKS.

TEXT-BOOK.	California.	Ohio.	Missouri.	Kansas.	Indiana.	Average cost of each book.
Fourth Reader.....	\$ .60	\$ .45	\$ .38	\$ .33	\$ .30	\$ .41
Arithmetic.....	.50	.49	.56	.39	.45	.48
Elementary Geography.....	.60	.36	.42	.33	.30	.40
Grammar.....	.55	.45	.40	.38	.40	.44
Physiology.....	.60	.45	.45	.55	.60	.53
Writing Book.....	.05	.05	.05	.06	.05	.05
Speller.....	.30	.14	.19	.11	.10	.17
History.....	.80	.75	.75	.55	.65	.70
Totals.....	\$4.00	\$3.14	\$3.20	\$2.70	\$2.85	\$3.18



TEXT-BOOK.	COUNTIES IN IOWA.					Average cost of each book.
	Polk.	Monona.	Warren.	Winneshiek.	Appanoose.	
Fourth Reader.....	\$ .56	\$ .45	\$ .38	\$ .50	\$ .38	\$ .45
Arithmetic.....	.38	.49	.49	.49	.38	.45
Elementary Geography.....	.44	.44	.44	.44	.44	.43
Grammar.....	.45	.53	.50	.50	.48	.50
Physiology.....	.38	.38	.38	.42	.45	.40
Writing Book.....	.06	.06	.07	.08	.07	.07
Speller.....	.13	.16	.13	.14	.14	.14
History.....	.75	.75	.75	.75	.75	.75
Totals.....	\$3.15	\$3.26	\$3.14	\$3.32	\$3.09	\$3.19

TEXT-BOOK.	Hamburg.	Davenport.	Red Oak.	Rock Rapids.	Burlington.	Waukon.	Boone.	Algona.	Average.
Fourth Reader.	\$ .45	\$ .38	\$ .38	\$ .56	\$ .45	\$ .56	\$ .38	\$ .45	\$ .44
Arithmetic.....	.48	.49	.52	.52	.65	.49	.49	.50	.52
Element. Geog..	.44	.48	.44	.48	.48	.48	.41	.48	.46
Grammar.....	.48	.50	.45	.49	.48	.55	.48	.50	.49
Physiology.....	.40	.40	.36	.38	.65	.45	.40	.38	.43
Writing Book..	.10	.07	.08	.06	.10	.10	.08	.08	.08
Speller.....	.16	.16	.15	.15	.15	.20	.12	.15	.16
History.....	.75	.75	.75	.75	.79	.75	.80	1.00	.80
Totals....	\$3.26	\$3.23	\$3.13	\$3.39	\$3.75	\$3.58	\$3.16	\$3.54	\$ 3.38

The prices in some of the above cities doubtless include a small amount charged by local dealers for handling the books and for carrying them in stock.

AVERAGE PRICES.

TEXT-BOOK.	State printing or adoption.	Five Iowa counties.	Eight Iowa cities.
Fourth Reader.....	\$ .41	\$ .45	\$ .44
Arithmetic.....	.48	.45	.52
Elementary Geography.....	.40	.43	.46
Grammar.....	.44	.50	.49
Physiology.....	.53	.40	.43
Writing Book.....	.05	.07	.08
Speller.....	.17	.14	.16
History.....	.70	.75	.80

It should be noted here that the difference in cost is owing mainly to the kind and character of the book in use. One fourth reader may contain fifty more pages than another. There is great difference in the type used and in the mechanical part of the book, which may render it superior in every respect to some other book with which it is brought in direct competition. **An inferior text-book**, like a cheap piece of machinery, or an incompetent teacher, **is dear** at any price.

I have, also, for purposes of comparison, a fourth reader such as is authorized in the public schools of the province of Ontario. It is well bound, the matter is good, the type plain and unbroken. The book contains 336 pages, but is entirely without illustrations. The selling price is forty-five cents.

Up to this point I have discussed the subject simply from an economic standpoint. No other question has been considered than the cost of the text-books, in cash, to each individual pupil. Much thought and attention has been given to the subject. After investigating the laws in a number of states, I am fully satisfied that the text-book **law of Iowa**, as it stands upon our statute books, is **one of the best** yet devised. It is free from cumbersome machinery, it invites competition, and counties acting under it are obtaining books at as reasonable rates as those of equal grade can be supplied in any state which has state printing or state adoption. I have examined the price lists of books used in other states, and in none of them can I find that publishers are providing the same books at any less price than they are providing them under their contracts in Iowa. Davenport furnishes a notable instance of a city in which the board of directors is taking advantage of the provision in the law which allows them to contract with the publishers, and sell the books to the pupils at cost, the proceeds being returned to the contingent fund, from which the purchase money was originally taken.

The resolution does not call for an extended discussion of the feasibility of state printing or state contract as a means of supplying text-books. The truth is, that the **price of text-books**, like that of any other commodity, is **governed by the laws of trade**. The book publisher takes about the same means and methods to advertise his trade that the merchant or manufacturer does to advertise his. An unscrupulous agent takes dishonest means sometimes to accomplish his ends, but the same is true in every business which employs traveling

salesmen to sell its goods. The **directors** of our schools are usually chosen from the **best and most upright persons** in the community. As a body of men no charge of corruption can justly be brought against them.

There are several things which enter into the manufacture of text-books. In these days, when our school curriculum is crowded so full of subjects, and when the public demand is to afford the most education in the least time, the arrangement and selection of material is of the greatest consequence. To include everything necessary for information or discipline, and to exclude everything which is unnecessary, and to arrange points in their logical order so as to present the subject, as a whole, in an instructive and entertaining manner, requires the services of one who is peculiarly well fitted for that work. The **maker** of an acceptable **text-book** must be a **specialist**; a thinker and not a mere compiler. Again, the character of the **type** used and the texture of the **paper** cannot be overlooked, as they **affect** the **eyesight** of the pupils. Old, indistinct, broken type, glossy paper, poor press work, are the very best reasons sometimes why **a cheap book should be discarded**. The engravings with which our modern text-book is illustrated are very important adjuncts in the hands of a modern teacher. They should be clearly cut, accurate, truthful representations. Such is sometimes the effect of these specimens of art with which some of our books are adorned, that rather than to cheapen them it would be better to exclude them altogether. While I should be glad to see text-books of the highest grade sold at lower prices, I am forced by my convictions to say that in my opinion we **cannot afford** to put **inferior books** into the hands of our children, even though they were furnished without money and without price. I cannot do better than to quote from the report I had the honor to make November 1, 1889:

The nearer we can get to the manufacturers, and the fewer middlemen there are to handle the goods, the less is the expense to the consumer. The cost of books would be reduced  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent, probably more than that, if the boards of directors had power to purchase the text-books in the open market at the lowest wholesale rates. The money with which to do this should be drawn from the contingent fund and replaced from the cash sales of the books. This power could safely be lodged in the directors' hands at all times and should be made imperative whenever the electors of the district order it done. It should also be made their duty to adopt a series of text-books and to permit no others to be used in the schools of that township. When the order to adopt any given series has been passed by a

majority vote of those constituting the quorum, such action should be considered final, and no other series should be adopted for three years. The list of such books with the prices attached, should be kept posted in every schoolroom, together with the place where the books may be obtained. It is urged in favor of this plan that it puts up no bar to competition in price or quality, and leaves the interests of the schools entirely in the hands of the people.

As the law stands in the code of 1897, all this is now possible. **Any school corporation**, through its directors, **may** deal directly with the publishers and **supply** its school with **books at the lowest prices** granted anywhere. An additional safeguard is found in the requirement that every firm furnishing books under a contract is bound to furnish them at as low a rate as they are sold for in any other district or state. Two amendments would improve the law. There is a great activity in educational lines to-day looking to improved methods of teaching. For instance, the best geography now in use is totally unlike those in use ten years ago. The change has been brought about by the most careful study and research on the part of eminent scholars. The same in a large degree is true of history, arithmetic and other studies. The law should be so amended that if a new and improved edition of any textbook in use under the existing contract is issued during the life of that contract, the old books should be taken up and the new edition furnished without extra expense to pupils in the school. Again, if any family is about to move into an adjacent district, using different books, so that the books they now have would become useless, the board of directors should purchase such books at a fair valuation, and resell them in the same manner as they sell other books.

One great **objection to state uniformity** is that such a law is always accompanied by a restrictive clause, naming a maximum price for each book adopted. Thus if a speller is offered for 10 cents per copy, the commission must adopt it, even though a much superior book in every respect is offered for 12 cents. In such a case the firm offering the cheapest book has the commission in its grip, from which the law allows no way of escape. If, as in Ohio, the commission were authorized to select the best books at not more than 75 per cent of the wholesale price, and then if the books could be furnished to the pupils free of cost, state uniformity would be shorn of half its terrors.

## FROM KANSAS AND INDIANA.

The reports, results of which are tabulated, were secured by addressing the "Superintendent of Schools" in each of 120 towns in Kansas and Indiana, in which states laws similar to the one proposed in the Ray bill, are in operation. The names of the towns were taken at random from Cram's Commercial Atlas. The questions were as follows:

1. How much cheaper are the books you now use than those you had under the general method of supply?
2. Are the state books as good in subject matter, binding, material used, print, illustrations, etc., as were the books used before the law went into effect?
3. Do the people who handle the books get any pay for their work?
4. Do the books have to be greatly supplemented to get results such as you got with other books?
5. State any facts that you may think will be of value to us in Iowa in settling this question.

The answers to question one all agree that there has been a material reduction in the first cost of books, but it is nearly as unanimously agreed that the money cost has been secured at the expense of nearly everything else to be desired in textbooks, though three Indiana and seven Kansas correspondents maintain that the law is good in every particular; that the results have been all that could be asked for and that the people would not go back to the old method of supplying textbooks.

All answers received are herein tabulated. Some answers to question two were so given that the results could not be tabulated. These replies will be found in the column headed "Remarks." Some of the suggestions offered under No. 5, are printed at the end of the tables.

It is only fair to say here that a similar law enacted in Iowa would not secure the material reductions secured in Kansas and Indiana, for neither of these states had the excellent textbook law we now have, whereby districts can make very advantageous contracts if they so choose.

KANSAS.

NAME.	ARE THE STATE BOOKS AS GOOD IN—					Do the people who handle books get any pay for it?	Do books have to be greatly supplemented?	REMARKS REFERRING TO SUB-QUESTIONS A, B, C, D AND E, UNDER QUESTION TWO.
	Subject matter.	Binding.	Material.	Print.	Illustrations.			
	A	B	C	D	E			
Supt. T. C. Conklin, Mulvane.....						10 per cent	Yes	Some fair, the most miserably poor
Supt. A. Ludlum, Salina.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	With rare exceptions we pay for all we get and more, too.
Co. Supt. A. J. Freeborn, Washington Co.	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Prin. Geo. E. Rose, Kansas City.....	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Much cheaper in every sense of the word.
Supt. Calvin Morn.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	More than enough to make up in price.
Supt. Geo. W. Witt, Nortonville.....	No	No	No	No	No	.....	Yes	And dear at that.
Supt. Frank R. Dyer, Wichita.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Supt. Geo. D. Knipe.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	.....	
Supt. E. A. Farrington, Paola.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Supt. L. L. L. Hanks, Kansas City.....						.....	.....	They say not.
Supt. J. H. Sawtell, Wamego.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Supt. S. W. McGarroh, Olathe.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Supt. F. P. Smith, Lawrence.....						Yes	Yes	The state books are inferior in every item.
Supt. H. Winsor, McPhearson.....						10 per cent	.....	Some think they are good and some bad.
Supt. A. L. Edwards, Scranton.....						10 per cent	.....	Probably a little inferior.
Supt. Wm. M. Sinclair, Ottawa.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
J. S. O'Connor, Ottawa.....	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 per cent	Yes	
Supt. E. L. Fuloa, Columbus.....						10 per cent	.....	
Co. Supt. Milton Todd, Seneca.....						10 per cent	.....	
Supt. Geo. B. Deem.....	No	No	No			10 per cent	No	
Sec. B'd of Ed., G. B. Kenyon, Leavenworth						10 per cent	Yes	On the whole not satisfactory.
Supt. R. H. Crich, Pratt.....						10 per cent	No	Some better, some about, and others not so good.
Supt. N. McDonald, Orange City.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 per cent	.....	
Supt. G. A. Deardorf, Quenemo.....						10 per cent	No	Some are and some are not.
Co. Supt. J. M. Tadlock, Phillipsburg.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 per cent	No	
Co. Supt. E. A. Convis, Jewell.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 per cent	No	
Co. Supt. Lucy Ellis, Yates Center.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 per cent	No	
Co. Supt. F. M. Shell, Barber Co.....						10 per cent	No	About the same.
Supt. ———, South Haven, Kan.....						10 per cent	Yes	Very much inferior in every respect.

INDIANA.

NAME.	ARE THE STATE BOOKS AS GOOD IN—					Do the people who handle books get any pay for it?	Do books have to be greatly supplemented?	REMARKS REFERRING TO SUB-QUESTIONS A, B, C, D AND E, UNDER QUESTION TWO.
	Subject matter.	Binding.	Material.	Print.	Illustrations.			
	A	B	C	D	E			
Supt. T. F. Fitzgibbons, Elwood.....						10 per cent	Yes	Probably as good in binding and material.
Supt. W. W. Harrison, Wabash.....						10 per cent	Yes	Inferior in every respect.
Supt. O. C. Seelye, La Porte City.....						10 per cent	Yes	Geography, reader and speller decidedly inferior.
Supt. H. H. Keep, Waterloo.....	No	No	No	No	No	5 per cent	Yes	
Supt. G. F. Kenaston, Crawfordsville.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	Some are not worth more than one-half as much.
Supt. J. R. Houston, Aurora.....						No	Yes	Not as good as the books now on the market.
Co. Supt. S. L. Scott, Charleston.....						No	Yes	
Supt. A. E. Malsbary, Thorntown.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Supt. F. K. Mower, Warren.....	No	Yes	Fair	Yes	No	10 per cent	Yes	Not as good as texts published now.
Supt. F. S. Morgenthaler, Rockport.....						Yes	Yes	
Supt. C. W. Kimmel, Butler.....	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
Supt. J. H. Fondin, Shelbyville.....	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	
Supt. Edward Ayres.....	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	
Supt. W. H. Hister, Evansville.....						10 per cent	.....	Cannot give just comparison.
Supt. W. A. Millis, Attica.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 per cent	.....	Outlay for salaries for officials brings up the expense to [same amount as formerly.]
Supt. J. C. Comstock, Andrews, Ind.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 per cent	No	Equal to, with exception of geographies
Supt. W. F. Britton, Decatur.....						Yes	.....	As good after five years of experimenting.
Supt. Stuart, Sheridan.....						10 per cent	No	
Supt. Chas. F. Pattison, Edinburg.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Supt. H. P. Leavinworth, Clinton.....						10 per cent	Some	
Co. Supt. J. H. Reddick, Winomac.....	Yes					10 per cent	No	
Supt. W. S. Almond, Delphi.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Prin. J. D. French.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	.....	No	
Prin. E. W. Rust.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	.....	No	
H. Walter, Husky.....						10 per cent	No	All as good excepting physics and geographies
Homer Elworth, Angola.....	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	10 per cent	No	
Supt. Philip E. Rausch, New Haven.....						No	Few	I think they are.
Supt. Horace Ellis, West LaFayette.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	No	

INDIANA—CONTINUED.

NAME.	ARE THE STATE BOOKS AS GOOD IN—					Do the people who handle books get any pay for it?	Do books have to be greatly supplemented?	REMARKS REFERRING TO SUB-QUESTIONS A, B, C, D AND E, UNDER QUESTION TWO.
	Subject matter.	Binding.	Material.	Print.	Illustrations.			
	A	B	C	D	E			
Prin. Chas. Manch, Charlottesville.....	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	In most cases. I think they are.
Supt. O. P. Robinson.....	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Co. Supt. H. E. Coe, De Kalb Co.....						Yes	No	
Supt. T. A. Mott, Richmond.....						No	Yes	
Supt. W. F. Axtell, Washington.....	No	No	No	No	No	10 per cent	Yes	
Supt. W. F. Brown, Bloomfield.....	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	



## KANSAS REPLIES.

The state books were put into the schools at the opening of the present school year. They are already falling to pieces. The paper is thin and of a poor quality. One or two are fair in all points.

No committee appointed by any governor can be so constituted as to select text-books for an entire state. The conditions governing a locality in the selection of books must necessarily vary. The only safe plan is to leave the selection of books to the districts, severally under one superintendent, county or city.

If we consider only binding, paper, etc., our state books are comparatively high in price.

GEO. D. KNIPE, Manhattan, Kan.

Care should be taken that the law does not tie the hands of the committee selecting books, compelling them to take the cheapest books, regardless of educational value.

E. A. FARRINGTON, Paola, Kan.

The spirit of the law in this state may be correct, but the price of books was first fixed by the state legislature, and at such a small price that firms having the best books would not come in with their books; and as a result we have some very inferior books, both in subject matter and material used. It is better to pay more and get better books. Our work will be crippled very materially by the use of the present books unless they are supplemented in most cases.

J. H. SAWTELL, Wamego, Kan.

In my opinion, Kansas made a fatal mistake in limiting the price. Good publishers would not bid. Specify quality and let the price adjust itself. I consider it a problem as yet unsettled in Kansas, as the present system is not at all satisfactory.

G. B. KENYON, Sec'y Board of Education,  
Leavenworth, Kan.

My first objection to our law is that it is too radical in its reduction. When the legislature fixed a pauper price on text-books, it resulted in shutting out nearly all the great publishers of standard text books. This handicapped the text-book commissioners and gave them no choice. They were compelled to choose from just such trash as was offered them. In examining the list of publishers who submitted books I find no such names as Ginn & Co., American Book company, Henry Holt & Co., Sheldon & Co., Lippincott & Co., but we find the names of Crane & Co., Scott, Forseman & Co., Foley Railway Printing Co., Central School Supply Co., and Beckett & Co. With the exception of Crane & Co., these are all comparative strangers to the educational public in our state.

To show the limitations placed upon this committee in its selection of books, I find from its printed report that there were submitted to it but two sets of readers, one geography, two book-keeping, one philosophy, one

physiology, two systems of penmanship, two civil governments, one algebra, two arithmetics, one grammar, two mental arithmetics, and one speller. Imagine the humiliation of the great state of Kansas in being limited to the above meager list when there are hundreds of standard texts on the market of the country—all because the legislature in its enthusiastic economy placed a niggardly price on the products of brain and press.

Extract from address of Superintendent Massey, Belleplaine, Kan., November 25, 1897.

Arithmetic—**Inferior** in subject matter, classification and binding.

Speller—Fair, elementary, much inferior to Reed.

El. Grammar—Almost worthless.

Advanced Grammar is good.

Geographies are good.

History—A fair book, not up to Eggleston or Montgomery.

Algebra—A good book.

Civil Government—Not equal to Townsend in any respect.

Writing—Very good.

Physiology and El. Physics—Very inferior books in subject matter and mechanical execution.

FRANK R. DYER, Superintendent Schools, Wichita, Kan.

1. The law fixed the price of the books and left the board **no discretion** as to quality, hence an inferior book.

2. It cost about \$1 per capita in this school to make the exchange.

The **new book higher** in price (quality and durability considered) than the old.

4. Any law that takes from school children the **best book** that can be made is a crime and not a blessing.

Superintendent, South Haven, Kan.

I consider the Kansas state uniformity **worse than a failure**, and consider the schools fortunate where by contract they are not compelled to use the new books.

T. C. CONKLIN, Superintendent of Schools, Sumner county, Kan.

1. With rare exceptions we pay for all we get, and more, too.

2. Except the geographies, in subject matter, binding, material, etc., the state adoptions are **inferior**.

3. Dealers get 10 per cent.

4. We supplement greatly. We could get no results otherwise.

Procure copies of the physics and physiology, and think of being compelled to use them as high school texts. Spend an hour with some of the readers, the history, and Felloson's primary grammar.

So far as I am able to judge the books are not well received in the better class of schools. A. LUDLUM, Superintendent City Schools, Salina, Kan.

Some of the books do very well, but most of them are inferior to old books.

There was **much complaint** about the exchange and **much loss** to the people.

A. J. FRUBON, County Superintendent.

I think it is the opinion of the teachers, generally, over the state that the present book law is a step backwards.

GEO. E. ROSE, Principal Kansas City High School.

As a whole, the estimate I make of them is that they (the state books) are bad and cheap.

GEO. W. WITT, City Superintendent, Nortonville.

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### INDIANA REPLIES.

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Replying to your letter of inquiry just at hand, I would say in answer to your questions, in the order in which they are given, as follows:

As I have been in the state less than two years I am unable to make the comparison you ask for in your second question. -I can only say that, with the exception of the U. S. history, language books and physiology, I never have used so poor series of text-books anywhere; and I find that superintendents with whom I have talked have the same feeling in regard to the series now in use.

Dealers receive 10 per cent for introducing the books, one-half of which amount is paid by the contractors of the books and one-half by the school corporation where the books are used.

I think that it is very generally the case throughout the state. We find it very desirable, if not absolutely necessary, to use many supplemental books in order to do first class work. In fact, in some lines the work is very largely done by means of supplementary books.

I do not now remember to have conversed with a superintendent or teacher in Indiana who has not deplored the practical outcome of our state law, so far as the character of most of the books of our list is concerned; and many of the superintendents, I have been told, evade the law as far as possible. One superintendent is said to have purchased a set of state books, placed them on the shelves of the school library and supplied his teachers with texts and aids by mimeograph and printing press.

High school texts are not prescribed. In this we have our choice, but it is a serious matter to be obliged to do the greater share of our work with the masses of our pupils by the aid of exceedingly poor tools.

Regretting that I am not in a position to answer your questions more definitely and satisfactorily, I remain, very truly yours for free competition in text-books. O. C. SEELYE, Supt. of Schools, La Porte, Ind.

Taken as a whole, I think that the series of books we are now using is the poorest set of books, in subject matter and illustrations, now published. Extract from letter of

T. F. FITZGIBBONS, Superintendent Schools, Elwood, Ind.

I do not favor the system. You get cheaper books, inferior quality, and the host of officers must be paid for handling, and thus, in the end, it costs just as much. F. S. MORGENTHALER, Superintendent, Rockport, Ind

To me the act is unsatisfactory in many ways. The books are very inferior in subject matter and in mechanical make-up. The company having a monopoly of the business is very careless in supplying books and oftentimes it takes many weeks to secure books at a time when school is just opening and books are needed badly. Those two reasons in themselves are conclusive. Of course the price is less and the books are uniform throughout the state; both good features.

C. W. KIMMEL, Superintendent, Butler, Ind.

1. You will save no money in the end.
2. You will get an inferior set of books.
3. Politics and school affairs should be kept separate.
4. Political boodle will be made out of your efforts.

J. H. TOMLIN, Superintendent, Shelbyville, Ind.

Our grammars now in use do not afford anything like a sufficient and continuous course.

We have had one complete change and one new book added since their adoption.

Our best books are those we get from the regular publishing houses, as Montgomery's history.

Our advanced physiology is too difficult for successful teaching in ordinary grades.

H. H. KEEFE, Superintendent, Waterloo, Ind.

The worst feature of the matter is that we are compelled to use inferior books in many cases, where otherwise we could get much better.

The question of cheapness seems to be predominant in the selection of books.

I do not think any teacher can afford to use any book but the best.

J. R. HOUSTON, Superintendent, Aurora, Ind.

The extra cost made by supplying blanks, etc., for keeping records for the company and the additional expense made by the trustees' time used in selling books, makes the books cost the taxpayers more than the old law and we do not get the highest grade of books. If you do pass such a law, by all means have the books pass through merchants at their own expense. It is a book trust in Indiana and a curse to the people.

S. L. SCOTT, Superintendent Clark County Schools, Ind.

Your favor asking about our school law and its workings just received and in reply would say that many features of the law are very unsatisfactory—cheapness, which was one of the desired aims, was secured. The readers are not good; geographies, fair; arithmetics, ditto, and history poor.

W. S. ALMOND, Superintendent, Delphi, Ind.

## CIRCULAR LETTERS AND REPLIES.

The following are extracts from replies to a circular letter printed herein and which was sent to the principals in all graded schools of Iowa, by Hon. J. H. Trewin, chairman of the senate committee on schools:

THURSDAY, February 10, 1898.

DEAR SIR —I send you under separate cover a copy of House file No. 122, now pending before the legislature. I should like to have your opinion upon the following points:

*First.*—What do you think of the proposed plan in general?

*Second.*—What would be, in your judgment, the effect of the adoption of state uniformity of text-books in the schools of the state?

*Third.*—What, in your judgment, would be the effect of state publication of schoolbooks upon the literary quality of the books?

*Fourth.*—Is the present school book law in operation in your county? If so, how is it working?

*Fifth.*—What would be the cost, or loss, approximately, of displacing the books now in use, and putting in books published by the state?

*Sixth.*—What has been the experience of other states, if you know, in regard to state uniformity and state publication?

*Seventh.*—What is your judgment as to whether the provisions of the present law are satisfactory?

*Eighth.*—What, if any, demand is there among the people for a change in the law?

This is a subject of the utmost importance to the educational interests of the state, and an early and complete reply will be greatly appreciated.

Yours respectfully,

J. H. TREWIN, Chairman.

GUTHRIE CENTER, Iowa, February 15, 1898.

Your note of the 10th inst. in regard to House file No. 122 now pending before the legislature received.

*First.*—The plan as proposed, if adopted, might save the child a few cents annually.

*Second.*—Our children are not all prepared to do the same kind of work. Our teachers have not all had the same preparation. Children are human beings endowed with various degrees of intelligence, **not machines.**

*Third.*—If we may judge the future, the effect of state publication would be to give us books of a poorer literary quality.

*Fourth.*—The present schoolbook law is not in operation in Guthrie county.

*Fifth.*—I am unable to say as to the loss.

*Sixth.*—As far as I have been able to learn, state uniformity has not proved successful wherever it has been tried.

*Seventh.*—I think the present law, where people have taken advantage of it, is very satisfactory.

*Eighth.*—I believe there is no demand for a change in the present law. It would be well if school boards in towns and cities and all others were compelled to take advantage of the present law.

ADAM PICKETT City Superintendent.

CRESO, Iowa, February 14, 1898

Your circular concerning the Ray bill is at hand.

*First.*—I think the proposed plan is a foolish one, because, in all states where the scheme has been tried, the results have been financially disastrous and educationally mischievous.

*Second.*—State uniformity in text-books would be opposed to the best interests of Iowa schools. No body of men is qualified to select a series of texts suited to all the schools of the state. Different localities need different texts. The selection of texts is best done by local authority.

*Third.*—State publication would result in foisting upon the schools, texts of inferior literary quality. This, as I understand it, has been the experience of those states that have tried it, without exception.

*Fourth.*—The present schoolbook law is in operation in this county (Howard), and it is working satisfactorily so far as I know.

*Fifth.*—It would be some years before Iowa could put forth a series of books in any way approximating those she now has in her schools either in mechanical make-up or literary quality, if ever she could do so. The loss to the state would practically be the books now in the hands of the pupils in the state, added to the loss in educative value resulting from the introduction of inferior texts, together with the loss of the cost of the publishing plant; for if the scheme is tried, it will ultimately be abandoned.

*Sixth.*—State uniformity and state publication in other states has been educationally mischievous and financially disastrous. The experience of California in this line has been a notable one.

*Seventh.*—In my opinion, the present schoolbook law is as good as can be devised. The state superintendent, in his biennial report for 1897, sets forth my views better than I could do so myself.

*Eighth.*—I do not know of any demand among the people for a change in the present law. The present law is a good one; it is very doubtful if it can be improved upon.

L. E. A. LING City Superintendent.

MARENGO, Iowa, February 12, 1898.

Yours of the 10th inst. at hand and contents carefully noted. In reply will say:

*First.*—That to our mind House file No. 122 is one of the most nonsensical measures ever presented on the schoolbook question, and exceedingly dangerous to the best interests of Iowa schools. It is a leap in the dark.

*Second.*—We would not have as good books if there were no competition; it would give no freedom to the different communities in the choice of books, and the tendency would be toward narrowness. It would not be progressive. It would foster political rings. Without competition,

monopolistic tendencies would grow, and the schools would be furnished with books from authors who had little fitness for such work.

*Third.*—There is no question that the literary quality of the books would be inferior. Think of Iowa children studying geography, for instance, the manuscripts, maps, etc., of which were prepared in thirty days, or so many weeks, for that matter. There is **no market too wide nor books too good** for the children of grand old Iowa.

*Fourth.*—The present schoolbook law is not fully in operation in this county.

*Fifth.*—It would cost at least \$16,000 to displace the books of this county by those published by the state.

*Sixth.*—State uniformity in other states, so far as I have been able to find, has been a failure.

*Seventh.*—In regard to the provisions of the present law, I think it is quite satisfactory.

*Eighth.*—None whatever, or at least, I have heard of none. Several teachers have been in my office to-day, and I have asked them about it and *all* are opposed to the Ray bill.

T. M. CLEVINGER, County Superintendent.

IOWA CITY, Iowa, February 17, 1898.

Your letter and copy of Ray text-book bill at hand. Replying to your question:

*First.*—Take it all in all, I do not believe the proposed plan is wise, or that it would give as good results from our schools as we are getting under the present law.

*Second.*—State uniformity has many points in its favor when viewed solely from the standpoint of economy. But it seems to me there is great danger in removing the management of the schools too far from the people and making them feel that they have no personal responsibility or duty to the school. This is liable to happen if a commission of five men at Des Moines select the books to be used. And when this personal interest in the school on the part of patrons waxes low then the schools will not and cannot do the work in educating our youth that they ought and can do.

*Third.*—Its effect would, in my judgment, be very bad. Forced writing and forced book-making have always proved unsatisfactory.

*Fourth.*—It is. The county uniformity law has been in operation in Johnson county for seven years, and has given excellent results and the people are very well pleased with it.

*Fifth.*—To make the change in Johnson county, it would cost at a very low estimate \$20,000. It would meet with the opposition of 90 per cent of the school patrons, and would seriously injure school work for several years.

*Sixth.*—Personally I only know of the experience of one state,—Indiana, that has tried this plan. And in Indiana they do not get books any cheaper than we do now in Iowa,—in fact not as cheap.

*Seventh.*—During the four years I was county superintendent of Johnson county, I mingled pretty closely with school patrons and officers, and I found that they were well satisfied with the present law. And so far as I

can see, I believe that we have an excellent law. And I believe the best thing our senators and representatives at Des Moines can do for the schools is to leave the present law stand.

*Eighth.*—There is no demand whatever among our people for a change. In fact there is a deep-seated and general feeling among our people that things should not be changed. I make this statement from sentiments I have heard expressed in the educational meetings, which I held last year in every township in Johnson county, and from sentiments I have heard in the parents' meetings which we have held in the last few weeks in each ward and school building in Iowa City.

S. K. STEVENSON, City Superintendent.

CRESTON, Iowa, February 14, 1898.

Replying to yours of the 10th inst. I answer:

*First.*—I have no confidence in the success of the general plan proposed by House file No. 122, known as the Ray bill.

*Second.*—The effect produced by the adoption of state uniformity would, in my judgment, be to create very general dissatisfaction among school men and patrons of the schools, inasmuch as no commission can select, even from the best, such series of books as will please all; and because of the sweeping change which will require the exchange, no matter at what rates, of all books now in use.

*Third.*—The effect of state publication would be far worse. State publication means the building and equipment of publishing houses whose work for years will be in an experimental stage. It means state authorship, of which we are but sparingly supplied, and for the perfection of which it will require years of preparation; or it means untried authorship outside the state to the exclusion of the eminent authors whose present works cannot be reached.

*Fourth.*—The present law relating to county uniformity is in operation in Union county, exclusive of the cities, and I believe it is giving general satisfaction.

*Fifth.*—It would be difficult to estimate the cost of the change in this county, or in the city of Creston. In this city we do not contract for books, but purchase at best wholesale rates and furnish pupils at cost, the board of education paying all bills for transportation. This means that fifteen hundred pupils below the high school must change all text-books within one year after the commission has secured the contracts.

The schedule of prices is about 33 per cent lower in the bill than the wholesale rates we obtain, which leads me to the conclusion that well-made books by approved authorship cannot be selected by the commission.

*Sixth.*—In Minnesota, where state publication was tried, old plates discarded by publishers were purchased at nominal prices, a few paragraphs or chapters added to bring the books to date, and the state was loaded down with wornout texts in new but cheap paper and binding, and the attempt was an utter failure, and so acknowledged. Minnesota has long since repealed the law and substituted one for free text-books, under which she is now prospering.

California has tried the state uniformity and state publication of text-books, and the plan is there condemned. Indiana and Kansas are now



working under such a law with the result that the difference in price is acknowledged to be more than met by the inferior quality and workmanship secured. I know of no state where the plan is an acknowledged success.

*Seventh.*—I believe the provisions of the present law are very generally satisfactory, and I think the last report of Superintendent Sabin on this matter voices the sentiment of the school men of the state.

*Eighth.*—There is no crying demand in this section for any change in the present law, but many are desirous of the passage of an amendment to the present law making the free text-book provision mandatory, and this, I think, is the next step in educational progress of Iowa as relates to the supply of books.

I cannot be persuaded that the intelligent body of men composing the Iowa legislature will pass such a measure as proposed by House file No. 122.

O. E. FRENCH, City Superintendent.

EMMETSBURG, February 14, 1898.

We, the undersigned school officers and teachers of Palo Alto county, respectfully petition you to use your efforts to delay action on House file No. 122, until the people can be heard from. We feel that this is a measure of great importance to the educational interests of the state and believe that there is danger in hasty action.

Allow people time to learn the provisions of the bill and report their wishes before it becomes a law. The interests of all the people of the state are at stake.

ANNA DONOVAN, County Superintendent.

With seventeen names of officers and members of boards, and the names of fifteen teachers.

DES MOINES, IOWA,  
GRANT PARK, FAIR GROUND STATION, }  
February 17, 1898.

In my judgment the effect of the adoption of state uniformity of text-books, as proposed by House file No. 122, would be to stifle talent, create a state-wide monopoly of the worst form and stop progress in the line of education. Fixing a price at a minimum figure and placing the adoptions for each section of the state in the hands of a commission, only one member of which could be considered an educational man, would have a tendency, to say the least, of impairing the literary quality of the books to be used.

The present school law is in operation in the county. We have county uniformity in all the schools outside of the city. I have heard no complaints as to the prices of books.

In several of the districts we have, under the present law, absolutely free text-books. In such districts the sentiment is overwhelmingly in favor of the present law.

I can only form a rough estimate of the cost or loss of displacing the books now in use in this county. I can say authoritatively that one district, East Des Moines, has on hand under the free text-book system, \$3,000 worth of books. The number of pupils in this district number about 15 per cent of the pupils of the county. Where uniformity, state-wide, has been tried,

viz: Minnesota, California, Kansas, Missouri, and Indiana, many are dissatisfied, alleging as their reason that it is undemocratic, uneducational and, in California, especially, expensive.

I am inclined to agree with the statements made by Hon. Henry Sabin in his last biennial report, that the present law regarding text-books is equal, or superior, to that in any other state in the union. I know of no demand among my people for a change in this portion of the school law.

I see that the senate committee has rejected the Wilson bill, and you have my permission to file this letter with any committee where it will do the most good. I am unqualifiedly against any state publication or state uniformity scheme.

G. A. TURNER, Prin. Grant Park School.

The following circular was sent out by J. F. Lavender, chairman of house committee on schools, and an abstract of fifty replies received and selected at random follows this. Anyone desirous of knowing the sentiment on the Ray bill, by a careful study of the abstracts may have that desire gratified to its fullest extent. It is submitted as an honest effort to get into black and white the replies:

THURSDAY, February 10, 1898.

DEAR SIR—I send you under separate cover a copy of House file No. 122, now pending before the legislature. I should like to have your opinion upon the following points:

*First.*—What do you think of the proposed plan in general?

*Second.*—What would be, in your judgment, the effect of the adoption of state uniformity of text-books in the schools of the state?

*Third.*—What, in your judgment, would be the effect of state publication of schoolbooks upon the literary quality of the books?

*Fourth.*—Is the present schoolbook law in operation in your county? If so, how is it working?

*Fifth.*—What would be the cost, or loss, approximately, of displacing the books now in use, and putting in books published by the state?

*Sixth.*—What has been the experience of other states, if you know, in regard to state uniformity and state publication?

*Seventh.*—What is your judgment as to whether the provisions of the present law are satisfactory?

*Eighth.*—What, if any, demand is there among the people for a change in the law?

This is a subject of the utmost importance to the educational interests of the state, and an early and complete reply will be greatly appreciated.

Yours respectfully,

J. F. LAVENDER, Chairman.

FIRST.	SECOND.	THIRD.	FOURTH.
1. Do not favor it.	Do not favor it in high school; favor it in rural schools and grammar grades when properly secured.	Disastrous results.	Yes. Ask county superintendent.
2. Disastrous to educational interests.	Books adopted by graded, city or village schools cannot be adapted to rural schools.	Lower the standard.	Yes. Satisfactory.
3. Present law has fewer exceptional features. Bill is narrow—restricts competition.	No good effect.	Great burden to taxpayer—no compensation.	In operation in country schools. Satisfactory.
4. Dangerous experiment.	If books are honestly selected could not injure schools. Uniformity would lessen expense of frequent change.	Lower standard.	No.
5. State publication a calamity.	No great effect anyway.	Inferior books.	Yes. Satisfactory.
6. Not be beneficial.	Lower present standard.	Result in inferior quality of books.	Township contracts. Well enough.
7. Don't like it.	Retard progress.	Lower standard.	Satisfactory, except as to cost of books.
8. Disgrace to schools.	Disastrous.	Retard progress.	No.
9. Dangerous to schools.	Retgression.	Stagnation.	Township uniformity
10.			
11. Do not favor it.	Would not oppose state uniformity.	Deplorable.	Uniformity just expired. Waiting.
12.			
13. Do not like it.	Retard progress.	Inferior books.	
14. Do not favor it.	Same books not equally suited to all schools.	Lower standard.	No.
15. Not desirable,	Neither cheaper or better books.	Inferior books.	Yes.
16. Good.	Good.	Better books—less cost.	No.
17.	Against it.		No.

FIFTH.	SIXTH.	SEVENTH.	EIGHTH.
ould not be less than 50 per cent of value of books now in use.		Members of the commission should be the most capable educators of the state; secured by law; in this respect unsatisfactory.	Great demand among educators for uniformity; ought to be secured in some way which will not sacrifice the best interests of the people and the country,
ased on conservative estimate of Newton schools; cost, \$1,000,000.	Concurrent opinion of leading educators residing in states; similar laws; disastrous effect upon schools and more expensive in the end than buying books in the open market.	Thinks satisfactory. Thinks the whole bill represents un-mixed evil.	No demand for change that he knows of.
o not know.	Notorious failure in California.	Satisfactory wherever tried, to his knowledge.	No demand for change
		Unsatisfactory.	Cheaper books; fewer changes; less experimenting.
Madison county a change six years ago cost about \$8,000. Again, not less.	State uniformity not bad. State publication failure in Indiana.	Satisfactory.	No change.
arge sum.	State publication unsatisfactory in Indiana and Minnesota. Not get a gain in fifty years.	Satisfactory.	No change.
x thousand dollars.	Failure.	Not satisfactory.	
ot less than \$1.50 per pupil.	Failure.	Satisfactory.	No change.
eachers and pupils unanimous almost in disapproval of Ray bill.	Unsatisfactory.	Satisfactory.	No change.
	Not successful.	Satisfactory.	No change.
ot less than \$3,383,000.	Failure in California and Minnesota.	Satisfactory.	No change.
ormous expense.	Failure in California and Minnesota.	Provisions excellent. Cover ground.	No change.
	County uniformity—believes.	Satisfactory.	

FIRST.	SECOND.	THIRD.	FOURTH.
18. Not practical or economical.	We would "get left."	Inferior quality.	Yes. Satisfactory.
19.	Flat failure.	Not affect quality.	Don't know.
20.			
21. Opposed to it.	Bad effect.	Too deplorable to contemplate.	Yes. Satisfactory.
22. Disapprove it	Undesirable.	Good books—doubtful if we would get them.	
23. Seems to be free from objectionable features to a novice.	Experience in California and elsewhere shows that price is necessarily higher.	Lower standard.	Yes. Satisfactory—a few exceptions.
24. Bad bill.	Long step backward.	Lower standard.	
25.			
26. Do not like it.	Wrong thing to do.	Cheapen and monopolize.	No.
27. Detrimental to educational interests.	Result in inferior books. Retard progress.	Same as No. 2.	Yes. Satisfactory.
28. Detrimental to the best interests of the school.	Injurious.	Lower standard.	Yes.
29. Not sanction all of bill, especially section 7.	Good effect.	Would not improve them.	Township uniformity not satisfactory.
30. Decidedly oppose the plan.	Detrimental.	Inferior books.	No.
31. Do not like it.	Poor books.	Poor books.	Yes. Satisfactory.
32. Great step forward in the advancement of education in Iowa.	Both teacher and child will benefit by it.	No reason why literary quality of the books should suffer by it.	Not without reproach.
33. Detrimental.	Inferior books.	Inferior books.	Yes. General satisfaction—some opposition.
34. Most dangerous and uncalled for legislation proposed in years.	Hindrance to good work.	Lower standard.	No.
35. Better than what we now have.	Thousands of dollars saved the people.	Liable to degenerate.	Yes. Pretty well.

FIFTH.	SIXTH.	SEVENTH.	EIGHTH.
	Failure in California.	Satisfactory.	No change.
Necessarily large.	Don't know.	Could suggest some changes for that town.	Books cheaper in price, not quality.
Ten thousand dollars: worth of books placed in Johnson county schools in last five years.	Do not know any place where it is successful.	Satisfactory.	No change.
Ten thousand dollars to displace those in Marshall county.	Discussed bill with twelve of the most intelligent citizens—condemn unanimously.	Satisfactory.	
Probably from \$3,000 to \$5,000.	Failure in California, Nebraska and Tennessee.	Object to state uniformity and state publication.	No change—except many are for free text-books.
About \$1.30 per pupil.	State uniformity unsatisfactory in every case.	Satisfactory.	No change.
About \$520 in one district.	Not satisfactory.		None.
	Most satisfactory.	Satisfactory.	Very little demand for change.
About \$10,000 for Scott county.	Have frequently heard that California is very expensive, and books in Indiana and Kansas are not equal in any respect to ours.	Satisfactory.	No change.
Have not time to estimate.	California, failure.—Indiana, better satisfaction.	Unsatisfactory in one respect.	Cost decreased. Best books placed in the schools.
Don't know.	A failure in Indiana and Minnesota.	Satisfactory.	No change.
Don't know.	Don't know.	Satisfactory.	No change.
An average of \$1 per pupil.		In several respects unsatisfactory.	Don't know.
Many thousands of dollars.		Generally satisfactory.	No change.
Considerable.		No objection.	No change.
	Not entirely satisfactory on account of local diversities.	Unsatisfactory.	

FIRST.	SECOND.	THIRD.	FOURTH.
36. Not in sympathy— very little gained —great deal lost.	Seriously hamper work in best schools. Would not be so ob- jectionable could it be secured without destroying existing progressive competi- tion, resulting in well made books, containing very best subject matter.	Lower standard.	No.
37.			
38.			
39. Plan is good.	Improve majority of texts—no harm to others.	Depend on men on the commission.	Satisfactory.
40. Do not like it.	Derogatory to best school interests. Nothing so bad.	Lower the standard.	No.
41. Against the plan.	Nothing gained by it.	Lower the standard.	Yes. Satisfactory.
42. Opposed to it.	Detrimental. Lower standard.	Detrimental.	Yes. Satisfactory.
43.	Unfavorable.	Uncertain. Probably disastrous.	
44. Do not favor it.	Render schools non- progressive.	Not affect it, provided copyright of good books could be ob- tained. A lower standard.	No.
45.			
46. Not satisfactory.	Expensive in start and will not meet wants of different localities.	Lower standard.	Yes. Not entirely.
47. Do not like plan.	Committees lose val- uable privilege that of fitting books to local needs. Detri- mental.	Lower standard.	Satisfactory.
48. Do not like it.	Injurious to county.	Disastrous.	Yes.
49. Opposed.	Lower standard. Hamper teachers in their work.	Lower standard.	Yes. Satisfactory.
50. Opposed.	Opposed.	All to be desired.	Yes. Satisfactory.

FIFTH.	SIXTH.	SEVENTH.	EIGHTH.
Cost or loss in efficiency of schools not to be measured by dollars and cents, is irreparable.	Very little personal knowledge. What I hear is adverse to the plan.	Satisfactory.	No considerable demand for change.
About 50 cts. per pupil.			Good texts at reduced prices.
	Adverse in Indiana and California.	Satisfactory.	
About \$8,000.	Failure in Kansas.	Satisfactory.	Very little demand for change.
Small price more than offset by expense of change and running machinery of so great a scheme.	Unpopular and unsatisfactory in California, Kansas, Indiana and Minnesota.	Satisfactory.	No change.
	No personal knowledge. Know of none that have given it up after adopting it.	Free text-book law is satisfactory. If given time will solve text-book problem.	No change.
About \$2 per pupil.	Unsatisfactory in Minnesota, Indiana and California.	Aimed in right direction; weighed down with too many preliminaries.	Give authority to boards without petition to do so.
About \$275,000.			
Two-thirds of present investment.	It is not successful.	Satisfactory.	No change.
From \$800 to \$1,000.	Failure in California.	Satisfactory.	No change.
About \$200,000.	Judging from effects on schools, disappointing.	Reasonably satisfactory.	Very little.
About \$300,000		Satisfactory.	No change.



## PETITIONS.

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The following are samples of petitions, aggregating many hundred names, received from various sections of the state, by J. F. Lavender, chairman of the house committee on schools:

OSCEOLA, Iowa, February 21, 1898.

*To Hon. A. A. Nowers, Representative from Clarke County:*

We, the undersigned taxpayers, business men and farmers of Clarke county, hereby petition you to use your influence against the measure known as the Ray text-book bill. We believe, if this measure be passed, it would create a state-wide monopoly in the interest of certain text-book houses that could secure the contract; that the entire change of text-books would be expensive, and that the people should be left to settle their own affairs instead of placing them in the hands of a commission of five men located in Des Moines.

*To Hon. J. T. P. Power and Hon. J. B. Hazen:*

We, the undersigned citizens of Lee county, do most respectfully request you to use your influence to prevent the passage of House file No. 122, a bill now pending before the general assembly of the state.

We would respectfully call your attention to the fact that there has been no call from the people of the state of Iowa for a law providing for state uniformity of text-books, and that it would cost the people of Lee county more than ten thousand dollars to make the proposed change. We believe there is no benefit to be obtained from the passage of this bill, and do protest against this additional burden being imposed on us against our wishes. We believe that we have the right as a county to direct locally what system of text-books are most adapted to use in our schools, in their various forms throughout the county. We hope that you will not only vote against this bill, but use your influence and voice against the same on the floor of the house.

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## RESOLUTIONS FROM SCHOOL BOARDS.

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Among the many resolutions passed by school boards in Iowa against the passage of the Ray bill, we submit a few that were received by the chairman of the house committee on schools, and all are illustrative of the sentiment throughout the state:

HOPKINTON, Iowa, February 22, 1898.

*Hon. F. F. Merriam, Des Moines, Iowa:*

DEAR SIR—We, the undersigned members of the school board of Hopkinton, representing the people of this community, after carefully considering the Ray bill, now pending in the legislature of this state, believe that the aggregate loss in advancement and in knowledge of the 500,000 children, doomed all their school lives to use inferior books, is much greater and more appalling than the aggregate sum of money saved by saving a little on each book used by these 500,000 children in school.

The cost of the experiment in throwing out all the books now in use and paying 50 per cent of the price fixed by the act for the new books would figure the loss of many thousands of dollars. Nor is this all. The passage of the proposed bill will result in disorganizing the graded school system in our community and throughout the independent school districts of the state. What this means in time, and in retarding the progress of the children now actually in school, will figure up a loss that can never be recovered in any manner. Persons in school work will know better what this means than other persons possibly can.

The best school books represent the best methods and the most careful thought of the men and women who have devoted their lives to their calling, and they are none too good for your children or ours. We believe there should be no law preventing the citizens and taxpayers in this community and in others from procuring the best books possible for the proper education of their children.

Under the proposed act the price fixed for each book is so low as to preclude the introduction of the best books.

In everything that is good our children and the children in the schools of Iowa deserve the best. We believe it is a true saying that you cannot buy something for nothing.

Believing the above statements to be true, we ask that you use your influence and urge that you work diligently and vote for the defeat of said bill.

F. B. TIBBITTS,  
President of School Board;  
F. A. WILLIAMSON,  
E. F. MAIN,  
J. S. WILSON,  
J. J. KIRKWOOD,  
Members of School Board.

WHEREAS, There is now pending in our legislature a bill known as House file No. 122, which provides for uniformity of school text-books in Iowa, and

WHEREAS, In view of the character of our population, we regard such an enactment as wholly unnecessary and detrimental to the best interests of our schools, and

WHEREAS, We believe in inviting competition rather than shutting the doors against it, because in an open market a higher grade of books could be had, and

WHEREAS, The proposed law would lodge in the state superintendent of schools a power which no state officer should possess, therefore

*Resolved*, By the directors of the independent school district of the city of Independence, Iowa, that we are unalterably opposed to such an enactment and we hereby request our senator and representative in general assembly to vote against and use all the influence they can command to defeat such a law.

FRANK JENNINGS,  
President School Board;  
GEO. S. WOODRUFF,  
Secretary;

R. D. BACKUS,  
R. G. SWAN,  
P. A. SUTKAMP,  
M. W. HARMON,  
J. L. BUECHELE,  
Superintendent.

The adoption of state uniformity would necessitate an entire change of school text-books, thus entailing a great expense upon the people without any compensation.

It would also necessitate a reorganization of courses of study and methods of instruction. This would interfere seriously with the efficiency and progressive development of many school systems.

We believe that the spirit of our institutions demands for each community the right to direct its local affairs, and make use of such books as its conditions require. The texts that are best for one school may not be adapted to another. Progress requires reasonable freedom. Rural schools, city schools, schools in the different parts of the state can all attain their greatest efficiency only under such conditions.

Marshalltown School Board,  
A. L. GETZ,  
President;  
J. G. TROTTER,  
Secretary;  
F. E. WILLARD,  
Superintendent;  
GEO. A. TURNER,  
J. F. ATKINSON,  
A. E. WILBUR,  
G. W. HARRIS.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, BLANCHARD, IOWA, {  
Resolution adopted February 21, 1898. }

*Resolved*, That as there is now before the legislature of Iowa, a bill known as the Ray bill which proposes state uniformity of text-books for the state, we believe that it would be detrimental to the interests of our schools in many ways if this bill should become a law. We, therefore earnestly request you as our representative to use every possible effort to defeat this bill, believing that by so doing better results will be obtained, not only in our district, but in all districts in the state.

(Signed) U. N. DEWHURST, President;  
E. L. KENNAN, Secretary.

*Resolved*, By the board of directors of the independent district of Monona, Iowa, that our senator and representative in the Twenty-seventh General Assembly, be and are hereby requested to use their influence in opposition to the Ray bill, proposing a uniform series of books for use in all the schools of the state.

We believe that the best interests of the schools of the state will be subserved by the defeat of this bill.

*Resolved*, That the secretary send to our senator and representative a copy of this resolution.

Dated at Monona, Iowa, this 24th day of February, 1898.

MASON CITY, February 21, 1898.

We, the board of education of Mason City, are opposed to any changes in our text-book law that look toward depriving the various communities of the right to buy the best books in the open market; and believe that the principles involved in the Ray bill, providing for state uniformity and state printing would work great injury to the schools of Iowa.

A. H. CUMMINGS.

C. H. MCNIDER.

D. M. TIFFANY.

V. B. POOL.

A. J. EDMONDS.

February 15, 1898.

We, the undersigned principals of schools in the independent school district, city of Clinton, are opposed to any changes in our text-book law that will deprive any school district of the right to buy the best books in the open market; and believe that the principles involved in the Ray bill, providing for state uniformity and state printing, would work great injury to the schools of Iowa.

E. L. MASON, Principal of High School.

(And names of nine other principals.)

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## RESOLUTIONS FROM LABOR UNIONS.

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A very few petitions were received from labor unions in the state. In order that they may have representation, we have selected three from the five or six received, which read as follows:

### RESOLUTIONS.

MUSCATINE, Iowa.

WHEREAS, The typographical union has requested the co-operation of all labor unions to secure the appointment of a text-book commission to ascertain the advisability of having all schoolbooks published in the state; and believing that the large sum annually spent outside the state should be expended in building up home industries, be it

*Resolved*, By Button Workers' union No. 6861, that we request our representative, Hon. J. L. Giesler, to vote for the appointment of a text-book commission; and be it further

*Resolved*, That we are **opposed to letting out the publication of school-books by contract.**

FRED WALTON,  
FREDRICH WEINMAN,  
Committee.

MUSCATINE, Iowa, February 7, 1898.

*Hon. J. L. Giesler, Des Moines, Iowa:*

The House file No. 122, or the Ray schoolbook bill, was read and carefully considered by this body at its regular session held on the 6th inst., and was unanimously indorsed, the entire features of the bill, except the **publication** by the contract system, the assembly feeling that it **should be done by the state.**

H. H. SHARRAR, Secretary M. T. & L. A.

*Hon. W. B. Hunt and Hon. Louis Jaeger, Des Moines, Iowa:*

The undersigned laboring men of Des Moines county, do hereby respectfully protest against the passage of House file No. 122, by Ray, for the following reasons, and do request that you vote against the bill: First, because the **expense** of the change in the system of schoolbooks would be more than half a million dollars to the taxpayers of the state, which amount we believe would be expended unnecessarily and **without adequate return.** Second, it would force upon the people of the state a system of text-books which they have no part in selecting, and which may be unsuited to the particular needs of the different schools. Third, there is **no complaint** being made, and we have **none to make** against the books now in use

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## EDITORIAL IN MIDLAND SCHOOLS.

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[Under the charge of Supt. Frank B. Cooper, of West Des Moines.]

*State Uniformity of Schoolbooks.*—Every few years Iowa passes through the throes of an agitation on the schoolbook question, and a recurrence of that experience is upon us now. The cost of text-books, the annoyance caused by changes of books, the inconvenience and waste arising from removal from one locality to another where different books are used, and abuses springing out of sharp competition, all conspire to provoke a periodical discussion of means of relief. State uniformity by commission or uniformity by state publication offer a ready resort for reform, and at first sight appear to furnish an easy and adequate solution of the vexed question.

*State uniformity has a pleasing sound*, and is rather an attractive phrase, but when analyzed carefully it presents some very objectionable features. It is open to grave criticism, because it violates the principle of local self-government, and does away with the right of the immediate representatives of a community to select an educational means which affects in no

small way the interests of the community. No matter how competent the commission appointed to select the books for the whole state, only one of the questions involved in the selection could be consulted by it, and that would relate to the character of the text-books themselves. It could not, in the very nature of the case, enter upon an investigation of the fitness of books for varying conditions. It would also be prevented from taking into account the merit of the books in matter and make up, provided there was a limitation as to cost, as in the Ray bill.

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*It is true that some* very expensive items necessarily attaching to the book business, such as advertising, donations of sample copies, and the employment of traveling agents, would be eliminated to a large extent, should the state compel by law the exclusive use of certain books, or engage in making them; but **the economical question**, while an important one, is **not a vital one**. If there were reasonable hope that by striking out the element of competition in book-making, which necessarily follows the enactment of a state uniformity law, good books, suitable and up to date, would be obtained, then it would be proper to consult the economical side. But 5 to 15 cents per year for each pupil is insignificant when compared with the difference between the effect in instruction of a poor and a good text-book.

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*The policy of prescribing by law* the maximum price to be paid for school-books is open to very grave objections. Such a plan is liable to exclude from competition all those books whose preparation has involved the employment of expert labor. The investigation required in collecting the subject matter, the time spent in studying educational practice and tendencies, the judgment involved in rightly presenting the material so that it shall be properly graded and conform at the same time to the best pedagogic thought, and the skill necessary for fit and artistic illustration must all be employed and paid for, and unless they are, something short of the best will be secured. **Schoolbook making is an art**. Many successful educators have tried the experiment of educational authorship and signally failed. The number of manuscripts that have been rejected must be countless, the number that have been accepted, published and put upon the market is legion, but the **number of really successful schoolbooks** is comparatively small. If copies of all the books now appearing upon the lists of all the schoolbook publishers were to be submitted to a competent second-hand dealer he would reject as unmarketable at least half the books submitted. This goes to show that "almost any prominent educator" cannot write text-books. A good schoolbook is **not a compilation**. It is rather the product of extensive investigation and study, and one cannot be written off-hand by anyone, no matter how skillful he may be.

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*The Ray bill fixes a standard* of quality for text-books, but what a standard! "They shall be equal in size and quality, in matter, material, style of binding and mechanical execution" to certain books now in use, nearly all of which are out of date and some of which have been practically repudiated by the publishers of the very books named, who have put upon the market books in every way superior. It would be easy for this company to submit to the commission the manuscript of the obsolescent books,

or to sell or rent the plates to some firm who would put in a bid and the state would then have the doubtful privilege of furnishing for its youth for a period of years a list of state books, some of which have already been consigned by educational sentiment to the refuse dump. Just such a result as that indicated as liable to occur has happened in the text-book history of Indiana. The legislature passed a law similar to the Ray bill and they now have in use there some *ancient books with new covers*.

The writer was surprised a few days ago to find that the cost of text-books in 1890, before the present law went into effect, was about 42 per cent higher than they now cost in many Iowa communities. At the session of the Iowa State Teachers' association in December, 1889, Mr. J. J. McConnell, then superintendent of the Atlantic schools, made an elaborate report, the result of investigations carried on by a committee appointed for the purpose of giving the association information on the text-book question, in which was given, among other interesting data, a report of the cost of text-books in thirteen representative Iowa towns. The report says:

"What do we pay for books in Iowa" (1889)? The committee secured retail prices of schoolbooks from thirteen towns in Iowa, as follows: Boone, Council Bluffs, Griswold, Newton, Mt. Pleasant, Harlan, Glenwood, Ft. Dodge, Anita, Independence, Red Oak, Hampton and Atlantic. These prices relate to ordinary text-books to the exclusion of stationery, writing books and drawing books.

The following table shows average price and highest price of certain books for the towns named:

BRANCHES.	Highest.	Average.
Reading .....	\$ 3.84	\$ 2.85
Geography .....	2.50	1.92
Arithmetic.....	1.82	1.26
History, United States.....	1.35	1.16
Grammar and Language .....	2.10	1.44
Physiology .....	2.18	1.59
Speller.....	.45	.25
Cost for eight grades.....	\$14.24	\$ 10.47

The school board of West Des Moines, acting under the present law, supplies the same books covering the same subjects for a total of \$7.35, or \$3 12 less than the average price paid by the towns named in 1889, and it is about 50 per cent of the highest price paid in 1889. This reduction has come about in two ways—first, by the elimination of the extravagant profits of the dealer and by a lowering of the publisher's prices. Every school district in Iowa may avail itself of the benefits of the present law and sell books at the same price as they are sold in Des Moines. It would be still better, however, both from an educational and economical standpoint, for every school district to take advantage of the law enacted two years ago, enabling boards of directors to purchase and loan books to pupils without cost, thus removing many objections and abuses incident to the present

plan. Changes in books could then be effected without expense or annoyance, and the removal of a family from one district to another would be attended by no outlay for new books.

Iowa should have a chance at the best books for Iowa youth, and the people should also have a fair chance to give the present law a thorough test before embarking upon so doubtful an experiment as state uniformity.

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FROM THE ROUND TABLE, IN MIDLAND SCHOOLS.

What school legislation do we need? Very little, and that little should be along conservative lines and involve only well-trying policies.

The demagogue never tires of riding the text-book hobby. Cheapness is his desideratum, but he shuts his eyes to successful experience and invents some fantastic scheme. Our present text-book law is not very bad. To be sure, it is remarkable statesmanship to leave the selection of text-books for a county to the supervisors, auditor and county superintendent, only one of whom is likely to have any special knowledge of the subject, and to make believe that books are cheap by selling them at wholesale prices, and paying freight and cost of hauling from the county funds. The optional free text-book law, if let alone, will grow in popular favor. It is the simple, economical, logical and tested solution of the whole question. Wholesale prices of text-books are very low, considering the superior quality of modern books. There is no manner of sense in the demand for uniformity. On the other hand, any scheme for uniformity, even in a single city, with adoptions and term contracts, will prevent the use of the best books, the taking advantage of improvements and inventions, of the products of philosophy and genius. Free text-books would destroy the last argument for any sort of uniformity; make the schools free, indeed; enable each district to buy the best books on the market, at the best rates, whenever purchases were made; simplify the problems of classification, and cut the aggregate text-book bills of the state in two in the middle. This last result would not be brought about by lowering the wholesale prices of books, but from the fact that all books purchased would be used all the time, and used until worn out. All these results have been thoroughly demonstrated. \* \* \*

There are, no doubt, many points at which our school laws could be improved, but any change should have for its object the improvement of our school system, a decided educational advance, and not be based on the caprice of non-experts or a desire to weaken and cheapen. Iowa is rich and strong, with a future whose greatness is limited only by the courage and wisdom of the leaders of to-day. The state needs larger revenues, and should have them. Our institutions should be thoroughly and permanently established on broad and liberal foundations. Money wisely spent in education will come back to us multiplied many fold.

A. B. WARNER.

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The following communications were received by Midland Schools in answer to these questions:

1. What do you think of the legislation proposed in the Ray bill?



2. Do you deem it desirable to make the present free text-book law mandatory upon the districts, instead of optional?

These are all the answers received, except three. The writers of these asked us not to quote them.

It will be noticed that there is only one opinion on state uniformity. That is against. On the question of mandatory free text-books opinions differ.

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Our books are all right, if the pupils can be brought to them. More normal schools, which means better teachers, and compulsory attendance laws, is our need now. Our board here uses the present text-book system with satisfaction.

WALTER S. ATHEARN, Principal Public Schools, Delta, Iowa.

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DEAR SIR—The passage of the Ray bill might give us state uniformity of text-books, but it would be a uniformity of retardation. The best books are none too good, and the best cannot be had at the prices named. The exclusion of the best books now in use would be inevitable, and the immediate authorship and publication of a new series would be impossible if merit is required.

The passage of a bill to make the present free text-book law mandatory would be in the line of progress, and this should be the next step taken.

O. E. FRENCH, City Superintendent, Creston.

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1. I am not in favor of the legislation proposed in the Ray bill?
  2. I surely do not deem it desirable to make the present free text-book law mandatory upon the district. No, not at all.

GEO. H. MULLIN, City Superintendent, Washington

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In answer to yours of February 7th, permit me to say I am very much opposed to the proposed legislation looking toward state uniformity of text-books. It seems to me to be nonsensical to suppose for a minute that one set of books, however good, should be equally satisfactory and suitable for the conditions in all parts of the state. I think also that the quality of text-books would be very much lowered if competition in the open market were removed. In the second place I do think it highly desirable that the free-text book law should be made *mandatory* upon the district instead of *optional*. The free text-book system is certainly greatly to be desired in connection with the free school system, and we cannot expect to have its full benefits unless the law makes obligatory upon the district the purchase.

CHAS. ELDRED SHELTON, City Superintendent, Burlington.

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I am not in favor of state-wide uniformity of text-books for the public schools. We want local government in our public school affairs as well as in townships and county government. The text-books suitable for the rural schools are not always the ones best adapted for the city schools, especially in writing, drawing, and primary reading. The difference in conditions between rural and city schools seems to me to make a difference in text-books very necessary, if the interests of both are to be well served.

I do not favor making the present free text-book law mandatory upon the districts, but I do favor a change in the law, so as to put the question to a vote with less labor than is now required. Instead of requiring a petition of one-third or more of the voters to be submitted to the board, I would require a much smaller part of the voters to petition in order to bring the matter to a vote of the people. In my judgment **district ownership** of the text-books is the **best solution** of the problem. I believe the books will cost the community less money, and that free books will increase the attendance of pupils and add to the efficiency of the school work.

O. W. WEYER, City Superintendent, Keokuk.

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I comply with your request for comments on the Ray bill. The provision which restricts the use of text-books to those to be contracted for is decidedly unwise. The improvement in texts which has recently taken place will doubtless continue. As soon as superior tools are on the market, teachers should be allowed to use them. To make it a criminal offense to use the best helps is a **step in the wrong direction**.

State manufacture of texts is bad. The present active competition among book companies will continue to produce better books. This improvement would not take place under state manufacture. The state should not do anything to hinder the improvement nor to prevent the use of the best texts that can be had.

N. SPENCER, City Superintendent, Algona.

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I have read the Ray bill and am free to express my opinion of it as you request. It would take too much time, trouble and space to carefully note and give reasons for all the objections to it. The whole bill seems objectionable and made up either for effect or under a misunderstanding of the whole subject. The only purposes of the bill seem to be to provide cheap books and uniformity, neither of which at present are desirable to this extent. **The first thing of importance in schoolbooks is quality.** The best are none too good. The best are the cheapest. We certainly would not be likely to get the best under this bill. The present law is good, and I verily believe our schoolbooks are as low in price as they should be. Under the present law pupils can buy books at a reasonable rate and with care be able to sell them after finishing them, at fully one-half the first cost. They do this here. Surely no one can claim better terms are needed.

The matter of **uniformity is a bugbear**, as the only advantage in uniformity is the saving of expense to pupils moving from one part of the state to another, and no other part of the loss in moving is so insignificant as the necessary loss in the children's schoolbooks.

HORACE T. BUSHNELL,  
Principal of Graded School No. 8, Davenport.

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The mechanic reports his own judgment in the matter of the selection of tools he intends using. The farmer trusts his own mind to select seed and implements. The instructor in the laboratory chooses his own machines and instruments.

If my constituency make demands on me for definite results in my classroom, it is my right to make choice of the books I am to use. A general

committee, having nothing in common except in a general way, is not supposed to consult the interests of my locality when dictating to me the books I am to use. Again, one class of schools will be hindered to satisfy another, as there are few communities but make demands upon the school peculiar to themselves.

The theory of uniformity reads well. It is an open question whether upon so large a scale it is an advisable innovation.

WM. WILCOX, City Superintendent, Atlantic.

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The Ray bill, No. 122, is not good. To attempt to carry into effect such a bill would be detrimental to the public schools of this state and a very expensive experiment. Fairfield has an excellent set of text-books and holds the right to change when it is advantageous to the schools to do so. Such a law would compel us to lay aside these books and buy some most likely to be inferior. If the bill were to affect the rural districts only, where boards are often imposed upon, there might be some virtue in it. But our present law relating to county uniformity is sufficient to protect the rural districts when the counties are willing to make use of it.

J. E. WILLIAMSON, City Superintendent, Fairfield.

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In reply to yours of the 7th inst. I would say that I am very strongly opposed to any law which provides free text-books in our common schools. Such legislation would inevitably cultivate a spirit of dependence upon the government. Just the opposite disposition needs to be developed at this time in this country. In the very few cases where families are too poor to buy the necessary books, the city or county authorities could make provision to supply the need in the same way in which other necessities are relieved. But no free lunches nor free books, etc., for self-respecting, enterprising American citizens.

H. L. STETSON, President Des Moines College, Des Moines.

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The Ray bill should, I believe, be opposed by all the influence that can be brought to bear against it. Educational sentiment, both within and without the state, is solidly against such legislation. There is no evidence of a desire for such a revolution on the part of the patrons of the schools. It has not yet been demonstrated that different cities and different counties having diverse local interests are less capable of guarding those interests than the state would be. The free text-book law meets every argument that can be urged in favor of state uniformity and against the present method of supplying text-books in most districts. If a change is desired the law already provides the way.

The free text-book law should remain optional with each district as it is now. The plan is being tested in several parts of the state. The reports come to us that the free text-book system has come into Iowa to stay, but it can afford to wait until the sentiment of a community demands its adoption.

F. E. WILLARD, City Superintendent, Marshalltown.

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In response to your request for an opinion on the **Ray** bill now pending, I wish to say that an impartial reading of it compels me to regard it with disfavor. I believe that its effects upon the common schools of Iowa would

be harmful in a measure exceeding any advantages likely to result from it. County uniformity where there is a direct knowledge and supervision of local conditions, may be desirable, but the whole educational system of the state can not be well adjusted to fit the corners of a framework of this kind without loss of efficient power, and of vital and responsive touch with current educational forces.

To me the bill seems to propose an extreme formalism. I regard it as a step in the wrong direction and contrary to the spirit of the newer education.

F. C. EASTMAN, Upper Iowa University, Fayette.

In reply to yours of the 7th inst. I desire to say in answer to your questions—

*First.*—“What do you think of the legislation proposed in the Ray bill?”—

1. It does not meet the needs.
2. It has too many weak points.
3. It will permit too much “job-work” by unprincipled agents or men seeking their own and not the public good.
4. It imposes burdens instead of removing hindrances in the way of public education.
5. It is unwise, as well as unnecessary.

*Second.*—“Do you deem it desirable to make the present free text-book law mandatory upon the districts instead of optional?”

Yes! My reasons for this answer are:

1. It places all pupils on an equality, in the *republic of the school*, and does not recognize good clothes as a badge of intelligence.
2. It gives pupils equal advantages; lets the poor boy begin to study the first day of school alongside of his rich neighbor.
3. It recognizes no such thing as caste; that “I am better than you, because my papa has more money and lands than your papa, and I have my own books.”
4. It permits no unjust comparisons and brands no pupil as an indigent pupil—receiving charity, instead of what the state owes him, when he is given free books. As the law now reads, many worthy and highly intelligent, though sensitive, pupils are mortified and humiliated instead of ennobled by the manner of giving books to so-called indigent pupils.
5. It makes the public schools free schools, in fact, and not in name, as now. As well should the state provide free books as free apparatus, free desks, maps and charts, and free schoolrooms and free instructors.
6. If mandatory, it would place all districts on an equality. The over-conservative communities, whose schools are kept back till they are far behind the times and the growing generation is deprived of the advantages of new and improved methods and appliances in teaching, would be forced to take a forward step.
7. It is in the interests of the children, the hope of the nation. “Too much cannot be done to educate and save the children, especially if they are my children,” said a wise parent. What is good for one man’s children is good for all children. O. C. SCOTT, City Superintendent, Oskaloosa.

Your question, concerning the legislation proposed in the Ray bill, is such a broad one, and the time which I have at command so limited, that I can only give a very brief statement in reply.

State uniformity, viewed superficially, may have some points in its favor, but all experience in this direction demonstrates that the evils which it entails are greater than the advantages which it brings.

I believe that thoughtful educators everywhere do not regard state uniformity of text-books as desirable. Of course, educators are largely governed in reaching this conclusion by the fact that state uniformity does not secure the best books for the use of the schools. No matter how carefully the commission selecting the books has been constituted, some second rate books find their way into the series adopted, and thus seriously handicap the teachers in their work.

The education of the children is of such paramount importance that any plan which does not furnish the best tools for carrying forward the work should be condemned.

Even from the lower standpoint of economy, the figures given by State Superintendent Sabin show that state uniformity does not materially lessen the cost of books to the pupils, as compared to the cost of our present system.

Under our present laws, cities or counties can enter into contract with any book companies they may wish, and secure as far as economy is concerned all the advantages of state uniformity, and still have the choice from the best books published in the country.

While it is true that Iowa school laws can be improved in some directions, yet, as far as the supply of text-books is concerned, there is but little additional to be desired. It is certainly the part of wisdom, at this juncture, to let well enough alone. I sincerely hope that our legislators will not disturb that legislation on text-books which has already accomplished so much for the schools of Iowa.

In regard to your second question, whether it be desirable or not to make the present free text-book law mandatory upon the districts instead of optional, I think that it will be wise to leave matters as they are at present—optional.

I can understand how, in some localities, this matter might be made mandatory with good results, but it would work great hardship in some localities to force it upon the state as a whole.

I would say, in regard to legislation along both these lines, "let well enough alone." Iowa is prospering under her present school legislation in this direction.

H. E. KRATZ, City Superintendent, Sioux City.

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#### OPINIONS OF IOWA EDUCATORS.

No commission can meet the requirements of all parts of the state, city, village and rural communities, so well as the school authorities of sections can do under the present law of local option.

J. L. PICKARD, ex-President of State University.

The attempt to secure uniformity of text-books for the state, the printing of these books within the state, and the possible preparation of these

books under contract, will find few advocates among the intelligent educators.

We now have county uniformity where it is desired, and optional free text-books.

The best books can only be secured by competition among publishers, who avail themselves of the best talent the country affords, and will furnish the books at as low rates for like qualities of books as any state has or ever will furnish them.

C. W. VON COELLEN, ex-Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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I trust that the measure known as the Ray bill, introduced into the lower house of the legislature, will be defeated. The needs of the graded and city schools are often different from each other, and certainly different from those of the rural schools. The attempts to cut garments of the same size, pattern and goods, for all schools, must result in many awkward misfits and hamper them in their work. Whatever may be said for uniformity, it certainly has evils. China has uniformity. Cheap books—one of the principal aims in this and similar measures—may be purchased at too dear a price.

J. B. KNOEPFLER, ex-Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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I had some experience with the operation of the Indiana law and trust that that experience may not be repeated in Iowa.

The best place to secure the best books is in the open market. The strong competition of rival book-makers, the keen criticism of each others' products, and the demands of school boards, teachers and parents all combined ought to be a sufficient guarantee of prices, quality and adaptability of our schoolbooks. J. T. MERRILL, City Superintendent, Cedar Rapids.

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It will work injury alike to the schools and to the taxpayers. Scratch a "demand" for state uniformity and you will find a job. It means not lower priced books, but cheaper books—books of cheap authorship and cheap mechanical results. If, in any community, prices of schoolbooks are relatively higher than of other similar communities, it results from non-conformity to the present law. I am opposed to the book trust, but the way to kill the trust is to buy good books not made by the trust, an abundance of which are available, not foist upon the state the kind of material that politicians and their friends engaged in book-making have unloaded in another state. O. J. LAYLANDER, City Superintendent, Cedar Falls.

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To enforce a law such as the Ray bill proposes, would practically paralyze our educational work in this city.

Under the present text-book law, our school board buys the best books on the market, sells them to the children at actual cost, and at a figure lower than the same books can be bought by any dealer in the county. I think we pay more than we should for some of our best books, but that is better than being compelled to buy, at any price, such books as are usually contracted for in states acting under laws similar to the Ray bill.

The entire cost for all text-books used in the graded schools of this city is less than 50 cents per pupil per year. We buy "up to date" books in the

best bindings. This enables the younger children in a family to use the books of the older ones, where the parents wish to economize.

The actual cost of our ward schoolbooks last year was less than 41 cents per pupil, and we have music books, drawing books and copy books in all grades above the first.

J. C. HISEY, City Superintendent, Council Bluffs.

I am decidedly opposed to the Ray bill.

*First.*—State uniformity for a fixed period of time, under any circumstances, I think would be detrimental to the best interests of the schools.

*Second.*—The proposed manner of selecting the commission places too much power in the hands of one man

*Third.*—Under the proposed plan, the state superintendent is the only man one could feel certain would be an educational man, and he is already over-burdened with work, on a small salary. So that to expect him to devote the time and thought necessary to a matter of so much importance as this, without extra compensation, is asking more than we should from a state officer.

*Fourth.*—The compensation of members is not at all in proportion to what the services of men capable of doing such work is worth.

*Fifth.*—We do not have such books, from Iowa authors, published in Iowa; hence, it would be necessary to make new books, and the making of a text-book is always a matter of experiment.

*Sixth.*—The bill proposes to do the work more rapidly than it can well be done.

*Seventh.*—No book can be satisfactory after a better one has been made, consequently the penalty clause in the bill would be frequently violated, and the lesson of disregard for law brought into the schools.

*Eighth.*—I am not satisfied with the books proposed as a standard to measure the texts from which our children must be taught.

*Ninth.*—I do not believe good books could be furnished at the prices proposed.

*Tenth.*—I see nothing to recommend the bill but cheapness, which is a matter of minor importance compared with other things, when we are arranging for the education of our children.

J. S. SHOUP, Acting County Superintendent, Plymouth county.

## BINDER'S AND PRINTER'S REPORT.

On March 2d, Mr. Bird, of the house, offered the following resolution, which was finally adopted:

*Resolved,* That the state printer and binder be requested to furnish for the information of this house, the cost per copy, according to the schedule of rates established by the code of 1897, of a series of school readers from the first to the fifth inclusive, equal in point of illustration, binding and material, to the Barnes' series of readers now in use in this state. All material to be furnished by the state.

As a result, we are enabled to publish these reports to the house as furnished by Hon. Lafayette Young, state binder, and Hon. Freeman R. Conaway, state printer, of the state of Iowa.

ESTIMATE FOR PUBLISHING TEXT-BOOKS.

[From House Journal, March 4, 1898.]

Mr. Bird presented the following estimates from the state printer and state binder on cost of publishing school text-books, in response to house resolution:

STATE OF IOWA,  
LAFAYETTE YOUNG, STATE BINDER, }  
DES MOINES, February 24, 1898.

*To the Honorable House of the Twenty-seventh General Assembly:*

In response to your resolution of inquiry addressed to me as state binder, in relation to the cost of binding schoolbooks corresponding with Barnes' First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Readers, I respectfully reply as follows:

The law fixing the price for state binding does not fix the price for any binding similar to the binding of the readers in question, but I have made an estimate of books to be bound in that style in editions of 50,000 copies each. That estimate is submitted below:

Binding Barnes' First Reader.....	\$ .08
Binding Barnes' Second Reader.....	.12
Binding Barnes' Third Reader.....	.15
Binding Barnes' Fourth Reader.....	.20
Binding Barnes' Fifth Reader.....	.25

All of which is respectfully submitted,

LAFAYETTE YOUNG, State Binder.

STATE OF IOWA,  
FREEMAN R. CONAWAY, STATE PRINTER, }  
DES MOINES, February 28, 1898.

*To the Honorable House of Representatives, Twenty-seventh General Assembly:*

In response to your resolution requesting me to make an estimate of the cost of printing, with illustrations, a series of readers in every way equal to the Barnes readers, the composition and press work to be figured according to the rates inaugurated by the code of 1897, I have to say:

I have made careful estimates on the basis of 50,000 copies. Total cost of type-setting, press work and paper, 50,000 copies for:

First Reader.....	\$ 1,137.60
Or 2½ cents per copy.	
Second Reader .....	2,085.00
Or 4½ cents per copy.	
Third Reader .....	2,844.00
Or 5½ cents per copy.	
Fourth Reader .....	4,555.00
Or 9 1-10 cents per copy.	
Fifth Reader .....	5,680.00
Or 11½ cents per copy.	



It has been difficult to secure estimates on the illustrations, as but little of this class of work is done in the west. I requested a friend of mine in New York to procure a set of the Barnes readers and secure an estimate from one first-class artist and one first-class wood engraver, both of recognized ability. I also requested Mr. C. W. Stiles, secretary and manager of the Star Engraving company of Des Moines, to investigate the matter and give an opinion with estimates of the work. There are a large number of special character letters which it is necessary to have made for this work and an estimate of this is furnished by Barnhart Bros & Spindler of the Great Western Type Foundry, Chicago. These estimates, with a summary table of the total cost, are appended for your information. I have two estimates from the best Chicago engraving houses which will, if given the entire work of making the drawings and wood cuts, reduce the cost on the item of illustrations from 12 to 25 per cent.

I am under obligations to the gentlemen who furnished these estimates as the work of going through a series of readers and furnishing estimates for information only, is no small task. I hope the members of the house will appreciate their efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

F. R. CONAWAY, State Printer.

STAR ENGRAVING CO., 416 FOURTH STREET, {  
DES MOINES, Iowa, February 2, 1898. }

*Hon. F. R. Conaway, State Printer, Des Moines, Iowa:*

DEAR SIR—Your request for an estimate of the cost of illustrations similar and in every respect equal to those shown in Barnes' readers at hand, and am sorry to have delayed you. I have been waiting for additional data which was necessary to have before I could give intelligent opinion.

I presume from your request, that you desired original drawings, as the illustrations in Barnes' readers are copyrighted. We are not prepared to figure on the work being done here, except the electrotyping, and all we could do would be to act as your agent in the matter.

We do not think there are any houses west of New York and Boston which are prepared to do this class of work. This is largely because the artists and engravers who do this class of work make their headquarters in the east where they are in touch with the large publishing houses. Chicago houses are not much better prepared for this work than we are. Their work, like ours, is nearly exclusive zinc etchings, half tone and wood engravings of machinery. If half tones or zinc etchings could be substituted for the readers the state has in contemplation it could be done for about 50 per cent less, a great saving in the cost of the books.

The illustrations in Barnes' readers are works of art. Nothing better in that line of illustrations are made for the use of small children. Barnes evidently spared no expense since they secured such artists as W. H. Lippincott, W. M. Carey, Sol Etygne, P. Frenzeney, J. Wells Champney, George G. White, F. S. Church, John Steeple Davis, J. C. Beard, W. St. John, Harper and Lauber. These are all artists of national reputation, being specialists in their lines. There is hardly one of them who would touch a pen to make the smallest kind of an illustration for less than \$25.

The same is true of wood engravers, as I notice by examination that the best have been selected; such as Karst, Held, Edith Cooper, Varley E.

Clement, Pettie, S. Davis, H. Wolf, Wygand and Siker. They are kings and queens in their profession and, like the artists mentioned, are able to get about what they ask for their work. They receive even more money for their wood cuts than the artists receive who draw the illustrations.

The smallest illustrations, with few exceptions, in Barnes' readers cost, I dare say, not less than \$50 for the engravings and probably the same amount for the original drawings.

The full page cuts cost not less than \$150, and probably the same amount for the drawings. From the correspondence I have had in regard to this matter, I have every reason to believe that the illustrations, with the *special made character letters* in Barnes' readers cost from \$25,000 to \$30,000. By accepting work from artists who could undoubtedly do the work as satisfactorily, and who have not a reputation to pay for in addition to their work, this cost could materially be reduced, probably 20 per cent.

If half tone or zinc etching could be substituted, this cost could be reduced about 50 per cent. In addition to the engraving we submit the following prices for electrotyping: First reader, \$35.52; second, \$65.12; third, \$88.80; fourth, \$142.08; fifth, \$177.60, and \$100 for the embossing plates on the five covers.

By C. W. Stiles, Secretary.

STAR ENGRAVING CO.

NEW YORK CITY, February 16, 1898.

Mr. Norman J. Smith:

DEAR SIR—I will make drawings for a series of five readers, equal in quality and quantity to those in Barnes' New National, for the following prices.

First Reader.....	\$ 2,325.00
Second Reader.....	2,450.00
Third Reader.....	1,660.00
Fourth Reader.....	1,265.00
Fifth Reader.....	1,880.00
Total.....	\$ 8,586.00

After carefully estimating the value of each drawing and considering the various sizes, material needed, models, etc., necessary for their execution, I have arrived at what I consider a fair average price.

Sincerely yours,

J. M. GLEESON, 400 West 57th Street, New York City.

12 EAST FIFTEENTH STREET, }  
NEW YORK, February 15, 1898. }

Mr. Norman J. Smith:

DEAR SIR—I hereby submit for your approval an estimate for engraving on wood illustrations equal in amount of square inches to those contained in Barnes' Readers numbers one, two, three, four and five.

I guarantee to supply first-class work, for I believe that nothing is too good for educational purposes.

Barnes' First Reader.....	\$ 3,438.75
Barnes' Second Reader.....	2,546.25
Barnes' Third Reader.....	2,320.50

Barnes' Fourth Reader.....	\$ 1,706.25
Barnes' Fifth Reader .....	1,254.75
	<hr/>
Total.....	\$ 11,266.50

Very truly yours, HORACE BAKER.

CHICAGO, February 23, 1898.

*Hon. F. R. Conaway, State Printer, Des Moines, Iowa:*

DEAR SIR—As per your request in regard to furnishing type for school-books, if we have to furnish a facsimile letter or face of same, this including 300 pounds each of the four sizes—6, 8, 10 and 18 point—the matrices belonging to you, we could do this for \$5,000. If something similar could be used we could reduce the cost of this about 50 per cent and think it would answer the purpose just as well.

Yours truly, BARNHART BROS. & SPINDLER.

This \$5,000 includes 850 characters; if there should be additional characters they would cost \$5 each.

SUMMARY.

TOTAL COST FIFTY THOUSAND READERS.	First Reader.	Second Reader.	Third Reader.	Fourth Reader.	Fifth Reader.
Type-setting, presswork, paper	\$ 1,137.60	\$ 2,085.00	\$ 2,844.00	\$ 4,550.00	\$ 5,680.00
Binding .....	4,000.00	6,000.00	7,500.00	10,000.00	12,500.00
Electrotyping .....	35.52	65.12	88.80	142.08	177.60
Illustrations and drawings .....	2,325.00	2,450.00	1,660.00	1,285.00	880.00
Wood cuts.....	3,438.75	2,546.25	2,320.50	1,706.25	1,254.75
*Special character letters.....	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Embossing plate cover.....	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$ 11,956.87</b>	<b>\$ 14,166.37</b>	<b>\$ 15,433.30</b>	<b>\$ 18,683.33</b>	<b>\$ 21,512.35</b>
Estimated cost per volume for mechanical work .....	.239	.283	.309	.373	.43

\*The special character letters are used more largely in the first three readers, but as the estimate does not specify, it is equally distributed among all.

IOWA GOVERNORS AGAINST STATE UNIFORMITY  
AND PUBLICATION.

Governor Larrabee, in his message to the legislature in 1888, made this reference to the schoolbook question, which was then under discussion in the state: "In reference to this subject, I would say: Keep the state from engaging in commercial enterprises like the publishing of schoolbooks. Leave the people of school districts great freedom to determine such questions, and to govern their own affairs."

Again, in his message of 1890, he said: "The arguments presented by the superintendent in favor of free text-books merit your earnest attention. Since children cannot avail themselves of the educational advantages offered them by the state unless they are supplied with the necessary text-books, the public school cannot be said to be free to all until such books are supplied, like maps and other school apparatus, at public expense. Only then will the children of the poor be fully able to compete with those of the rich in the acquisition of such knowledge as is indispensable for the true enjoyment of life and the intelligent performance of the duties of a sovereign citizen of a free commonwealth. The experience of other states has demonstrated that free text-books are productive of good results in securing attendance at school. I recommend that you pass an act making it the duty of boards of directors to furnish free text-books to all children attending public schools."

Governor Boies referred to the schoolbook question in both of his messages, and took a very strong position against all kinds of state schemes. In his biennial message in 1892, referring to the state superintendent's report, he said: "The text-book law passed by the last general assembly is reported as working satisfactorily. At least 70 per cent of the state has taken advantage of the law, and the average reduction in the price of books is from 30 per cent to 50 per cent."

Governor Jackson was likewise opposed to all kinds of state uniformity schemes, and supported the teachers of the state in the position they have always occupied on this question. He strongly approved the recommendations of the state department of public instruction. In his biennial message of 1896, he said: "The subject of furnishing free text-books for the use of pupils in the public schools is also one of great importance. This system has been successfully tried in a number of states, and it has been found to be a great public economy and to largely increase the attendance and beneficial results of the schools. The very large number of children of school age who are not in our schools would indicate that something should be done by the state to secure their attendance. It is believed that the adoption of the free text-book system would greatly aid in bringing about this result, and I would recommend legislation along the lines suggested by the state superintendent."

After eight years' trial of the present schoolbook law in

Iowa, Governor Drake heartily commended the law, and approved the present plan of allowing districts to furnish textbooks free where it is desired by the taxpayers. At the conclusion of a strong summing up of the educational advantages now enjoyed by the children of the state, he said: "It seems indeed that the entire school law may remain unchanged for years to come, without detriment."

The interest taken in educational matters by Governor Shaw is well known. He devoted a large part of his inaugural address to the discussion of public school needs, and he did not find anything to criticise, but much to commend, in the present laws in regard to schoolbooks.

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#### NO CRITICISMS OF PRESENT LAW.

Hon. R. C. Barrett, state superintendent of public instruction, who was for twelve years county superintendent of schools of Mitchell county, was asked for his opinion of the workings of the present law in his county.

During his administration the law was put in operation in Mitchell county and the books readopted under the same plan at the expiration of the first five-year period. Superintendent Barrett says the law "has proven very satisfactory," and that it was generally approved and never criticised. His letter follows:

DES MOINES, Iowa, July 2, 1898.

*Hon. Henry Sabin, Chairman Legislative Committee Iowa State Teachers' Association, Des Moines, Iowa:*

DEAR SIR—In compliance with your request for a statement telling how the present county uniformity text-book law has worked in Mitchell county, I take pleasure in reporting that it has proven very satisfactory. Acting under provisions of chapter 24, laws of 1890, a uniform system of books was adopted in 1891. Within a year all cities and towns of the county had, by a vote of the electors, decided to adopt the list contracted for by the county board of education, thus giving practical uniformity in the entire county. At the expiration of the contract in 1896, books were readopted for another period of five years. During the time I was honored with the oversight of the schools of the county, criticisms were never to my knowledge passed upon the law or its workings, while many expressions of approval were given frequently.

Yours sincerely,

R. C. BARRETT,  
*Superintendent Public Instruction.*

## LETTER OF HON. G. L. DOBSON.

Hon. George L. Dobson, secretary of state, was a member of the Twenty-first, Twenty-second and Twenty-third General Assemblies, a leading member of the house and in the last session of his service was chairman of the house committee on schools and text-books. He had charge of the preparation of the law that was passed then and is now in force. He was asked to give a statement of his views on the text-book law, based upon his knowledge of the subject while he was a member and since. Complying with this request, he made the following statement:

I have always taken a deep interest in our public schools and am proud of the high rank they have attained. I was made chairman of the house committee on schools and text-books at a time when the schoolbook agitation was at its height. Prices were high and some of the books in use were old and the publishers seemed to have an understanding whereby they kept the prices up. The house passed a resolution early in the session declaring in favor of state uniformity of schoolbooks. At that time we did not have as much experience of other states to guide us as now exists, but the committee decided not to rush into this new experiment without making a thorough investigation, and that we proceeded to do. We entered into correspondence with school officers, educational men, state officers and others in every state where text-book laws were in operation, and we gathered all the information we could in Iowa. I wrote more than 400 letters asking for information. The result of our investigations was a bill allowing districts and counties to buy books at the lowest market price at wholesale and sell them to the pupils at cost. I have always thought that the greatest benefit to the poor and the widest spread of popular education would result from free text-books, and I tried to get that idea into the law then, in 1890, but so many members feared that the addition of this tax would not be acceptable that it was defeated, and the most I could get in this direction was an interpretation of the law that would allow the district or the county to pay the freight on the books, thus reducing their cost to the pupils to the lowest possible price. The law has been well received by the people, where it has been tried. I have yet to hear the first complaint of its operation, or demand among the people for any further legislation where they have entered into contract under the present law, which is said by many educational men of national repute to be the best text-book law in the country. The price of schoolbooks has been reduced 30 to 35 per cent and the quality of the books improved under this law, because it allows the freest competition and assures the publisher of quick sales and certain collections. Selling in large quantities to cash customers must of course reduce the price,

and it offers an inducement for the publisher to produce his very best for this market. We now have more than forty different publishers of school-books doing business in Iowa. Under the law passed in 1896 any district that desires may have free text-books by submitting the question to the voters, and I am informed that it has been done in many places with good results. I am naturally gratified that my work of eight years ago has stood the test so well and has done what the educational men said it would do, reduce prices, put a stop to frequent and expensive and disturbing changes of books, and improve the quality of the books. Other states have since adopted similar laws, which are working well. I hope that before anything is done to change this law, that works so well, the most thorough investigation will be made. I think it will be found that the experience of other states, notably Kansas, Indiana, California and Minnesota has been very unsatisfactory with state uniformity schemes; the quality of the books has been reduced and the price sometimes increased; but where reduced, the quality of the books has been more than correspondingly reduced, and a big price paid for the book secured. The better books were not offered in such a competition. Iowa is doing so well, and there is no demand from the people for a change, that it seems to me it will be hard to improve on the present system. Why not let well enough alone?

GEO. L. DOBSON, Secretary of State.

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### EDUCATIONAL OPINION.

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The following reflects the educational opinion of the state of Iowa. The earliest date of any is February 12 and the latest, February 18, 1898:

I am in hearty sympathy with any movement that will make it easy for the poorest children of the state to be supplied with the best schoolbooks of the day. The uplift that comes from the use of the best and most attractive text-books is quite as important in the building of character and preparation for citizenship as is the knowledge of bare facts with which a book may be filled.

I am opposed to any legislation that will make it probable that all our children will not only be denied the privilege of using the best books known to the book-making art, but be compelled to use cheap ones made to order or such as were prepared many years ago and which, if brought in competition with many good texts now in use, would not be selected by any progressive school board in the state. If the Ray bill provided for even the present high standard of literary and artistic merit of the best text-books of to-day and for the selection thereof by a body of practical school men, my most serious objection to the passage of the bill would be removed. But this it does not do, and I do not believe that *any* law providing for state publication can so provide.

Cheapness should by no means be the only nor even the most important determinant in the selection of a text-book. It does not seem *reasonable* to suppose that a book made to order can be as good as that which is the outgrowth of actual work of the schoolroom. The educational value of a text-book does not depend solely on the number of pages or facts it contains.

Every district pays for its schools and should be permitted to improve them as rapidly as it pleases through better teachers, better schoolhouses, better appliances, and better text-books. No district should be compelled to use cheap books because some other districts want them. Such a law would be undemocratic.

There is no more need for uniformity of cheap text-books than there is for uniformity of cheap teachers or cheap schoolhouses.

If there is to be progress, there must be competition. Competition is life. This is an era of competition. May it continue not only in the making of the tools and implements of the farm and the workshop, but also in the preparation of good text-books—next to the teacher, the most important essential to a good school.

Uniformity of text-books through state publication has been tried in other states and proved unsatisfactory. Let Iowa profit by their mistakes. Uniformity itself is, at best, not an unmixed good. Every school should be permitted to use the books best adapted to meet the needs of that school. That which is best for the closely graded systems of our larger cities need not be the best for many of our small ungraded schools; indeed, in some of the branches it is impossible to make a book that will fully meet the needs of all our schools.

The members of our legislature surely mean to legislate for the good of the schools. Not one of them believes a thing to be good just because it is cheap. They will therefore not attempt to improve the schools by compelling the people to have cheap teachers or cheap text books any sooner than they would compel our cities and villages to have uniformity of streets and sidewalks, and limit the amount that may be expended per rod, just because it would be cheaper.

In our commendable efforts to have better roads, better stock, better implements and machinery, better homes, and better government, let us not forget the children. F. T. OLDT, City Superintendent, Dubuque.

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If the possibilities of an education are to be measured by the cheapness of the text-books in use, the conditions are certainly unfavorable to the broadest education possible under present circumstances. There certainly is a tendency to measure the worth of a text-book by the cheapness of it. This fact is demonstrated daily by the clamor against the price paid for books now in use in the schools. Ten cents, and even 5 cents, difference in price will determine which of two books will be purchased without any regard to their relative worth. Men do not manifest this disposition in their purchases in matters in general business but worth is the strongest factor in determining the price paid. It is not a fact that good text-books are now higher than the same class and quality of books that fit a similar place in education. The matter of competition between the different book companies is as strong as any competition in business to-day, if not stronger. This competition is heightened by the fact that good standard authors have



to compete in price with books that are of the cheapest quality and authors that are the poorest. This cheap grade of books has been placed on the market without any regard to the educational advantage but with the sole object of commercial profit.

A further proof of this is that but few of the best authors turn their attention willingly to the writing of texts. We do not wish to bring about such a competition that an author like McMaster cannot be induced to take up his pen in behalf of the schools of our country. In what lines is authorship most profitable to-day?

The conclusion is that the uniformity of text-books must have as its foundation principle that of cost. It cannot be based on that of a meritable educational advantage.

As an educational principle it is wanting the essentials to make its worth apparent. The best possible knowledge or understanding of any subject cannot be had from one text-book alone. If the pupil is to be placed in a position in which it is impossible for him to come to an understanding of the subject under discussion, without having to use his judgment, he must have placed before him the statements and theories of the different authors on the subject. He is then compelled to draw a conclusion which in the drawing, he must put forth a personal effort. Thus removing the possibility of memorizing which he would have in case he used but one text on the subject. \* \* \*

The fact is that the needs of all the schools of the state, as to kind of text-books proper for use in the work, is not uniform, and what would do for one community would not serve another. Some communities employ competent teachers and pay good salaries and have the conditions favorable to more advanced work. Other communities employ cheap teachers and have not the conditions favorable for good advanced work and could not use profitably such a text as would best serve the former condition. The conclusions deduced from the above facts are:

1. Uniformity of text-books would not be advisable as an educational principle for any grade beyond the sixth.
2. It is uniformity of teaching, rather than uniformity of text, that is needed
3. The popular clamor for cheap texts has a tendency to reduce the standard of our education.

C. E. FLEMING, Superintendent, North English.

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When all men have identical appetites, state kitchens will thrive. When teachers have identical ideas, they can successfully use identical text-books throughout the state.

Under no circumstances should the state go into the business of buying or making books for sale to the people. It would not cheapen books except in quality. Schoolbooks are as cheap now as any other staple necessity, flour, meat, sugar, coffee, or even whisky and tobacco.

I should consider it a calamity to my own children to be obliged to go through their school life with one teacher, or one author on a subject. I would expect it to make them one-sided.

Under the present law every patron gets a chance to change a book occasionally, and that satisfies him.

I think the feeling of the people is in favor of letting the new code dry before we try to put on a second coat of plaster.

F. B. TAYLOR, Superintendent, Seymour.

I certainly do not favor the Ray bill.

NELLIE RICHARDS, Superintendent, Clarke County.

Five-dollar-a-day-men cannot select books for Iowa in six days and do a good job. Our county uniformity works well with us. If they want free text-books for the state, perhaps we would not object. But this idea of forcing all people to buy state books is worse than any trust ever can be.

F. H. BLOODGOOD, Superintendent, Fayette County.

It would be a serious handicap to our work in Iowa should such legislation take place.

H. E. KRATZ, City Superintendent, Sioux City.

It seems to me it is a gross injustice to the poorer class of people to impose upon them the necessity of several dollars outlay for books at this time.

C. M. DONALDSON, Superintendent, Louisa County.

The bill will be beaten, I hope.

GEO. CHANDLER, City Superintendent, Osage.

I hope this action taken by school boards generally will have some effect on the members in the legislature.

J. L. BUECHELE, City Superintendent, Independence.

I hope that the miserable affair will fall through.

E. J. H. BEARD, City Superintendent, Newton.

I am willing to do anything I can to defeat the measure

A. L. SPEAKER, Superintendent, Tama County.

Your favor relating to the Ray bill is at hand and contents noted. A few years ago we had a commission to revise the Bible. I inquired of a biblical student what the commission had done. He said, "Nothing, except to knock hell out of it." This bill ought to be revised.

I. C. HISE, Superintendent, Plymouth County.

It will result in giving us books whose only merit is cheapness.

O. E. FRENCH, City Superintendent, Creston.

Under our present contract we can buy the Rand, McNally Grammar School Geography for less money than the state of Kansas pays for it under a state contract. Our books are far superior to the Indiana text-books that I have examined.

G. O. HAUGEN, Superintendent, Winneshiek County.

We must defeat the Ray bill; our present law is good enough.

S. T. MAY, Superintendent, Clarion.

I brought this matter before our inter-county meeting of 400 teachers, and resolutions were passed condemning state uniformity and publication.  
J. I. MARTIN, Superintendent, Floyd County.

Our board is unanimously opposed to it.  
C. F. KUEHNE, Superintendent, Gladbrook.

Any school man, or any other man who knows anything of school affairs, should know that it is rotten.  
F. C. WILDES, City Superintendent, Fort Dodge.

*Our people are all opposed to it now.* I was chairman of a committee at Charles City meeting and we unanimously reported a resolution opposing and condemning state uniformity and state publication, and it passed unanimously.  
E. E. BLANCHARD, City Superintendent, Waverly.

I have written our senator and our representative at Des Moines, giving my opinion in opposition to an infamous measure, known as the Ray bill.  
L. E. A. LING, City Superintendent, Cresco.

I will do what I can to defeat the bill.  
AGNES J. ROBERTSON, Superintendent, Cherokee County.

In my opinion it would be a serious blow to the educational interests of the state.  
W. I. SIMPSON, City Superintendent, Sheldon.

I would regard state publication as a great calamity  
T. H. STONE, City Superintendent, Winterset.

A copy of the Ray bill was read at our teachers' association last Saturday, and it was decided to send a protest against the bill to our senator and representative. The action was almost unanimous, although the discussion was a trifle stormy.  
T. S. REDMOND, Superintendent, Osceola County.

I shall certainly do all in my power to assist in preventing its passage.  
W. H. LYON, City Superintendent, Pella.

I protest vigorously against any change.  
C. M. YOUNG, Superintendent, Guthrie County.

I have written our representative and senator and chairman of the senate committee on schools and text-books the opinion of a large number of prominent persons of this county urging against the adoption of the law.  
H. B. AKIN, Superintendent, Butler County.

I have noted with interest and dread the attempt now being made at Des Moines to fasten upon the state the Ray bill.  
C. W. CRUIKSHANK, City Superintendent, Fort Madison.

I am opposed to the bill, and find so much against it that it seems impossible for it to find favor

J. E. WILLIAMSON, City Superintendent, Fairfield.

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I am not in favor of the Ray bill.

J. F. RIGGS, City Superintendent, Mt. Pleasant.

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You may rest assured that I will do all I can to prevent such a pernicious bill from becoming a law in Iowa.

AMOS HIATT, City Superintendent, East Des Moines.

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I think it is one of the most nonsensical measures ever presented on the schoolbook question.

T. M. CLEVINGER, Superintendent, Iowa County.

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I can assure you I am in hearty sympathy with the resolutions adopted by the legislative committee of the Iowa State Teachers' association.

L. B. MOFFETT, Superintendent, Oelwein.

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I am most assuredly opposed to the Ray bill.

J. W. JACKSON, Superintendent, Sac County.

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God save the commonwealth from such legislation as is contemplated in the Ray bill.

F. T. OLDT, City Superintendent, Dubuque.

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I am very strongly opposed to the Ray bill.

O. P. BOSTWICK, City Superintendent, Clinton.

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I do not believe the bill to be in harmony with our school interests.

E. C. MEREDITH, Superintendent, Jasper County.

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Our directors' convention yesterday voted to oppose the Ray bill, and adopted a resolution urging our senator and representative to use all honorable means to defeat the measure.

GEORGE CHANDLER, City Superintendent, Osage.

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The board instructed the secretary to forward resolutions to our representative and senator, condemning the measure decidedly and requesting them to vote against it.

E. D. Y. CULBERTSON, City Superintendent, Ames.

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We are opposed to the Ray bill.

J. W. HAMILTON, City Superintendent, Sac City.

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The inter-county association known as "The Big Seven," comprising the counties of Bremer, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Floyd, Mitchell and Worth, met at Charles City, February 11th and 12th. About 500 people were present, and the following resolutions were adopted without a dissenting vote:

WHEREAS, The question of state uniformity and state publication of school text-books has been brought before this committee by the presentation of a bill in the state legislature involving questions; now, therefore be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this association that the plan of state publication and state uniformity would be detrimental to the educational interests of Iowa, for the following reasons:

*First*.—It would not remove jobbery any more than the present laws.

*Second*.—That the expense of text-books would not be cheapened, and might be raised in price.

*Third*.—That an occasional change and a variety of text-books produces educational growth.

*Fourth*.—That we, as teachers, believe that the state of Iowa stands high educationally, and that authors of text-books and originators of new ideas along this line would be thereby shut out.

E. E. BLANCHARD,  
City Supt., Waverly.

EUGENE BROWN,  
County Supt., Mason City.

J. A. BISHOP,  
County Supt., New Hampton.

F. E. HOWARD,  
Prin. Schools, Clarksville.

J. I. MARTIN,  
County Supt., Charles City.

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## IOWA PRESS OPPOSED TO STATE UNIFORMITY

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The newspapers of the state took a lively interest in the bill as soon as it became known that it would be seriously urged in the legislature. The Sioux City Journal, Cedar Rapids Republican, Burlington Hawkeye, Clinton Herald, Council Bluffs Nonpareil, the Iowa Homestead, the Leon Journal, the Humboldt Independent, the Des Moines Leader, the Iowa State Register, the Des Moines Daily News, the Daily Iowa Capital, Decorah Republican, Marshalltown Times-Republican, and many other papers had strong articles against the bill, and against the principle it represents. Following are a few brief extracts from some of the comments upon the bill, by Iowa newspapers:

*Council Bluffs Nonpareil* —The main purpose of this measure is to get cheaper text-books, and little thought is given as to quality. While economy is to be desired in the matter of books on which depends so greatly the

welfare of future citizenship, there should be as great care to save from errors as to save from extravagance. The quality of the text-books and the nature of the education afforded are the important features. Iowa should have the best and it should get it as cheaply as possible, but the cheapest is not necessarily the best.

*Iowa Capital, Des Moines.*—Of course in figuring the cost of the books it must be borne in mind that frequent corrections will have to be made to keep the books up to date, and such corrections will necessarily have a bearing upon the cost, for all books will be discarded and left a dead stock in the hands of the state or the publishers. It is not necessary to try any experiments or make any radical departures, for other states have tried the experiments and made the departures, and Iowa can profit by the experience of other states.

*The Iowa Homestead, Des Moines.*—An effort is being made to induce the legislature of Iowa now in session, to overturn the present schoolbook law of the state and substitute state uniformity; the plan being to have the books printed by the state. Experience, if worth anything, teaches how impossible it is to keep such work from becoming mere political patronage. The present would seem to be a very unfavorable time to spring upon the public the possible and almost certain abuse of such gigantic proportions. State publication has not a single good ground to stand upon except, perhaps, in the mind of jobbing politicians who scent the spoils from afar.

*Des Moines Leader.*—Before passing that state uniformity bill, or any other radical innovation in regard to the schools of the state, the house will do well to consider the opinion of experts—in this case, the superintendents, and principals and teachers and others who have studied the common school question from the practical side. As far as the Leader has been able to collect, the expert school opinion of the state is practically unanimous against the Ray school bill, and this being the case, certainly a strong presumption is made out against it.

*Burlington Hawkeye.*—Every friend of the public school system ought to unite in the protest that is going up all over the state against the Ray uniformity bill.

*Iowa State Register, Des Moines.*—The Ray schoolbook bill will probably come up in the house to-day. The almost unanimous opposition from superintendents, teachers and members of school boards, and the very strong opposition from many of the farming localities, and the almost united opposition of the press, indicate that there is not much sentiment in Iowa to-day for such hasty legislation—legislation that will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in changes of schoolbooks alone. The experience of Hon. John Cownie, and his firm opposition to the bill, along with that of ex-State Superintendent Sabin, indicate that Iowa is not yet ready to follow the recommendations of a portion of the Kansas “reformers.”

*Des Moines Daily News.*—It is a fact that no reputable school man favors the bill. It is ostensibly for the purpose of securing cheap schoolbooks, and experience has shown that legislation of this sort results in securing books that are not only cheap in price, but cheap in character. Ex-Superintendent Sabin has secured some samples from Indiana and Kansas, where such a law is in effect, and discovered that the contents of the books are from texts of the back number kind, and that the books are bound in the

cheapest sort of bindings. Letters from school men in Indiana show that the educators of that state are opposed to the law, and state that three out of four of the books provided are cheap in every sense. In Oklahoma, where the law has been adopted, the antiquated Sherman arithmetics and Miles' geographies are provided, covered with new bindings. In Indiana the American schoolbook trust owns shares of stock in the company which furnishes the books, and in Oklahoma the trust owns everything. Aside from the inherent defects in the practical operation of the law, such proposed legislation violates the principles of self-government, depriving each community of the right to select its books, and puts this privilege into the hands of a state commission.

*Daily Iowa Capital, Des Moines.*—We consider it our duty to oppose any scheme which shall simply aim to give cheaper books without special regard to quality. We have the best schoolbooks now that are printed in the English language, and the prices are not high after all is said and done. We doubt that the state can save any money by manufacturing her own books. Cheapness is not the only thing to be considered when it comes to schoolbooks. We cannot help but observe that thousands of men will pay 10 cents for a cigar and complain without limit if they pay 13 cents for a schoolbook.

*Des Moines Leader.*—The unanimous declaration of the officers and executive committee of the State Teachers' association against the Ray bill will doubtless end that bill for the present session. We are glad these experts have spoken. Most of us do not pretend to exact information upon educational subjects, and what indefinite opinions we do entertain are cheerfully yielded to those who have made a life study of the great subject. It is not conceivable that such men as President Currier, of the association, and ex-Superintendents Sabin and Knoepfler, in this matter, are animated by any other motive than a desire to promote the best interests of the schools.

*Iowa State Register, Des Moines.*—The Ray schoolbook bill was considered in the morning and afternoon sessions of the house yesterday and was defeated by a two-thirds vote of those present at the afternoon session. Fifteen members were absent. This effectually disposes of state uniformity for a long time to come. The farmers of the state, who are in the majority, are especially benefited by the defeat of the bill, as state uniformity would mean an additional expense, to make an entire change of books, of from one-half to a million of dollars. The measure was very strongly opposed by almost every prominent educator in the state, and by every farming community where the matter had been taken up. It also had the opposition of almost every newspaper in the state. Iowa has schools excelled by none, and more of them, in proportion to population than almost any state in the Union, and we are to be congratulated over escaping from such laws as have been inflicted upon Kansas, Indiana and California. Our school laws, like all other laws upon the statute books, could doubtless be improved in some particulars, but hasty legislation upon such an important subject is dangerous.

*Humboldt Independent.*—There is not a doubt but that the state uniformity and the state schoolbook printing bill, called the Ray bill, would be a long step backward in raising the expense and deteriorating the character of the books used in our schools. The bill contemplates letting the contract for the writing and publishing of text-books to the lowest bidder.

We should every bit as soon think of contracting with the lowest bidder for teachers in our schools. How would you like to place your boys and girls under the instruction of a person who would undertake to teach them for the least money? Again, this bill delegates to five persons the authority to select books to be used in all of the common schools of the state. How would you like to delegate to a committee of five in the state capital the selection and employment of all the teachers of the common schools?

*Clinton Herald.*—It seems that only two states have state uniformity, and the educators of those states do not seem to think the plan works well. California prints its own books, and a comparison of prices indicates that the books there are higher than in some of the counties of Iowa. The advocates of the state uniformity plan have had much to say about the farmers, but if we can read public sentiment aright the farmers generally seem to be against the plan. One of them in this county called at *The Herald* a few days ago and expressed himself very plainly. He said that he was a poor man, comparatively, and had five children in the district school. He said that if it carried he would have to buy new books for his children, which he was not able to do.

*Decorah Republican, edited by A. K. Bailey, formerly State Senator.*—Referring to the proposition of the Des Moines Typographical union to have Iowa-made schoolbooks and no others, sold in the state of Iowa, reminds this writer of an experience in 1890 worth the telling: The general assembly of that year had before it the entire schoolbook question. It had been the football of the professional politician and law-maker in the Twenty-second and Twenty-third General Assemblies and would not be crowded down. Old members were ranged on both sides of the question, and the schoolbook lobby was on hand to make "confusion worse confounded," *i. e.*, prevent any legislation if they could, or keep the law as unobjectionable to "the trade" as possible. The final result was the passage of the law now on the statute book, which State Superintendent Sabin pronounces one of the best yet devised. This scribe was a "new member" a tenderfoot in legislation—and had given only a cursory examination to the schoolbooks in use. One member of the general assembly, a farmer by occupation, had decided in his own mind that state uniformity was desirable, and the right thing for the state to do was to go into the printing business. He sent to Indiana and procured copies of the readers in use in that state, and when they arrived made a diligent display of them. They did make a good appearance, were nicely printed, and they were furnished to Indiana children for 25 or 33 per cent less, we forget which, than the book "combine" sold their readers for in Iowa. The case seemed almost made in favor of the state publication, but the idea of making a critical comparison between the "trust" readers and the Indiana product was conceived. The state superintendent's office supplied the opportunity. More than an hour was spent in the task, and a day or two later another printer-legislator was taken into Superintendent Sabin's office and, together, a more critical examination was undertaken. Both quality and quantity were considered. It was found that merely as a commercial transaction the trust books were the cheaper books. This they demonstrated to Mr. Sabin arithmetically, by typographical measurements and calculations. That officer had become interested in the examination and frankly said that that kind of comparison had not been suggested to him and was likely to occur only to a



printer's mind. At the same time there were features to the books of the great publishing houses of such a valuable nature that in quality there was no comparison. It was really a fact that a judicious parent could hardly afford to accept as a gift the Indiana books if the others could be purchased. We very much suspect that the effort of the Des Moines Typographical union would result in the production of the Indiana sort of schoolbooks.

Since the above was written we notice that Representative Ray, of Poweshiek, has introduced a "state uniformity" schoolbook bill, which he admits is based on the Indiana and Kansas statutes. Looking to those quarters for light on this question is like breeding backwards in stock matters. It may also be said that, while wisdom on the schoolbook question neither began nor ended with the Twenty-second or Twenty-third General Assembly, this particular phase of it was so thoroughly discussed—and condemned—that Representative Ray can add nothing to the illumination which was given "state uniformity" at that time. This whole question needs no tinkering at this time. An expert decision by such an educator as Henry Sabin that the Iowa law is "one of the best yet devised," and that "state publication results too often in the use of inferior books," is not to be disregarded.

*Sioux City Journal.*—The bill introduced in the legislature by Representative Ray, providing for uniformity of text-books in the public schools of Iowa, ought not to pass. We do not want anything of the kind. We want to buy whatever schoolbooks we please. The books that some state board or state officer might select might not suit us at all. We want to suit ourselves. And why should we not do as we please about this? Why is it that somebody is always wanting to interfere with people? Oh, it would be cheaper, would it? May be it would not. Even if it would be a little cheaper, that is not the only thing. It is an object to have that which we want. It would be cheaper, theoretically, to have uniformity of clothes and to have a state board to select and buy for the whole state. You could save ten dollar bills in clothes where you could save coppers in schoolbooks. Or to pass to a still more important thing, what an enormous saving could be effected, theoretically, by uniformity of food and state purchase thereof! It almost makes one dizzy to figure out the profits. But we will not have anything of the sort. It would provoke an insurrection, and it ought to do so, to attempt such a plan. Why can we not be left alone, to buy our clothes, food, books and everything else as we please? If the cranks are not satisfied to let intelligent and well balanced people alone, to quit bothering others about what they shall eat, drink, wear, read and study, let them go off by themselves some place where they will be at liberty to inflict their craziness upon themselves alone. The state uniformity scheme is one of the fads which it makes people tired to think of. The thing for the Iowa legislature to do is incontinently to hurl it into the abyss.

*Clinton Morning Age, February 23, 1898.*—Extraordinary efforts are still being put forth to pass a law compelling all school districts to buy schoolbooks manufactured in the state. We don't know as we have any objection to the state giving home industries all the encouragement that can be attached to state endorsement. There would be nothing objectionable in the state recommending that Iowa people buy wagons made in Iowa; but to say that Iowa people *must* buy Iowa wagons is preposterous.

In this matter of schoolbooks the state may go a little further. It may prescribe the kind that shall be printed in Iowa and then leave it to the several districts to say whether they would use the books or not. If the Iowa books were equal in every respect, in price and quality, to those made in other states, then state pride would prompt Iowa schools to adopt them. But this idea of compelling them to do so is repulsive. Local option cannot be abused. Let the people be trusted. A job may be endorsed by the general assembly; seldom, if ever, is a job endorsed by the people.

*Clinton Age, January 26, 1898.*—The Des Moines Typographical union is pleading mainly in behalf of work in Iowa for the printers of Iowa. This is commendable; we wish it success in that endeavor.

In its efforts to induce capital to engage in printing in Iowa the schoolbooks used in Iowa, it has the best wishes of this paper. But is it not weakening its own cause by demanding so much? Does it not load down its claim with the traffic of the continent? Is it not a load impossible for its entire fraternity to carry? Is it essential that it should plead for waters to make an ocean, when all it really wants is water enough to make a mill-pond?

We see no good reason, however, why both public school and Sunday-school books should not be made in Iowa. Why not make Bibles? Why not make very many of the standard works of fiction, art, medical and theological? It is simply a matter of competition. No more nor less a matter of competition in making schoolbooks than in making Bibles, or in making furniture or cotton cloth.

The field is open to enterprising capital to engage in manufacturing schoolbooks in Iowa. We don't understand that any legislation is necessary. The paternal hand ought not to lead capital hither and make propositions denied to other industries, in order that schoolbook making shall be profitable.

Suppose the state should pass a law requiring the people of Iowa to buy schoolbooks made in Iowa. Such a law would not be worth the ink used in printing its title. Suppose a law should be enacted requiring the school districts to furnish free the schoolbooks, and to buy only books made in Iowa. That law would be no better than the other.

Making schoolbooks in Iowa is a mere matter of competition. The *Age* is emphatically and resolutely in favor of not only making in Iowa the schoolbooks used in Iowa, but in favor of making the paper and ink that goes into those schoolbooks. If parties can be found who will engage in the business and will make books as cheap as they are made in other states we think a public sentiment could be worked up in favor of the people of Iowa giving preference to the schoolbooks made in Iowa.

## PRESS INTERVIEWS.

We have in the following, re-printed interviews from educational men, as published in some of the leading dailies of the state.

[The Iowa State Register, Sunday, February 6, 1898.]

Hon. Henry Sabin, the eminent educator who has just retired from the office of state superintendent of public instruction, is opposed to the proposed plan of state publication of schoolbooks. Knowing that Mr. Sabin is one of the best posted men in the country on the question of schoolbooks, a reporter for the Register called upon him in his office Saturday and asked for his views in regard to the matter.

Mr. Sabin began: "The experiment, as far as I know, has never been tried except in California. In the first place it is very expensive. California, in 1885, set aside \$170,000 for this purpose. In 1887, a further sum of \$165,000 was found necessary. Altogether that state has appropriated nearly \$500,000 for the publication of text-books for the common schools."

"Have they not been able to reduce the price of books to the pupils?"

"An inspection of the official price list shows that the California books cost more than any other series. For instance, the fourth reader in California costs 60 cents. In five counties in Iowa, under county adoption, the same reader costs 46 cents on an average. The books usually needed in the sixth and seventh grades in California cost \$3.95. The same books cost in Davenport, \$3.20."

"How do the California books compare in quality, as in mechanical make-up, in material selected, with other books?"

"As far as I have seen them, they are in no way superior; in some things I think they are inferior. They have not yet succeeded in producing a full, complete series, and have confined themselves entirely to the elementary books. In some cases there has been great delay in getting the books ready for the schools at the time they were needed. I am forced to the conclusion, after my careful study of it, that the plan of state publication has not proved a success in any one particular. This is shown by the fact that, although California has been experimenting with it since 1885, no other state has made the attempt so far as I know."

"But if, Mr. Sabin, the state can print and bind the code at \$2.50 a volume, why can it not make schoolbooks as cheap in proportion?"

"The price paid for the code represents only the cost of printing and binding. The entire cost of preparing the code, including the extra session, which was devoted entirely to that work, the expense of the code commission, the printing and binding, was, in round numbers, about \$231,000. Fifteen thousand copies were printed, so that each copy actually cost \$15.50. I only refer to this to show that the argument drawn from the cheapness of the code has no foundation upon which to stand. Governor Larrabee, in

his message to the Twenty-second General Assembly, said: 'Keep the state free from engaging in commercial enterprises like the publishing of text-books, etc. Leave the people of the school district great freedom to determine such questions and to manage their own affairs.' "

"But are there no men or women in Iowa who are capable of compiling, for instance, a set of readers?"

"Probably there are. I would not like to say there are not. And yet, in the mere matter of gathering material, publishers of the best books take great care to get only that which is most suitable. It looks like a very easy matter, but it is really exceedingly delicate and difficult. In the first place, much of the best matter is copyrighted. Then, both the literary and moral tone of the books must be carefully guarded. The grading of the selected articles must not be neglected. Publishers of such books as are to compete with others in the open market often expend thousands of dollars before a book is offered for sale. After the selections are made, a list of them is sent to a large number of prominent educators for additions, corrections, objections, and the compilers then go over their work again in the light of all the information thus gained. It is actually more work and requires more skill to make a good third reader than it does to make an accurate chemistry."

"What do you think of state uniformity?"

"The greatest objection to the scheme of state uniformity is in the fact that in fixing maximum prices for certain books it puts up a bar to all competition and delivers the schools over to the publishers of the poorest books. Not but that good books are occasionally adopted, but the commission is debarred from considering the best, under all circumstances. The difference of 10 cents in the price of a book may mean the difference between books, one of which is in all respects suitable, one altogether unsuitable. And yet, under the law as usually framed, the commissioners must take the poorer of the two. Another objection is in the fact that such a law, to be of any benefit, must be compulsory upon every district in the state. This would necessitate, in the near future, a complete change of books now used by 500,000 children at least. Figure the cost at exchange prices and the aggregate amounts to enough to pay nearly one-half the state debt. The matter of selecting books for a large system of schools requires careful consideration. No man in his senses would attempt it until he had acquired a thorough knowledge of the conditions and wants of the school question."

"How about the present Iowa law? How does it compare with the laws in other states?"

"I think it is one of the best text-book laws adopted. It gives the utmost freedom to the different communities in the choice of books, and at the same time affords means of putting them into pupils' hands at actual cost. Any township, independent district or county may adopt the Kansas or Indiana list and the law provides that the firms making the contract must guarantee that the books shall be sold in Iowa as cheap as in any other state. Many districts now purchase the books for their schools, pay for them from the contingent fund, sell them to the pupils without any charge for handling them, and the money is returned into the fund from which it was taken."

"How do you account for the fact that the same books are sold at different prices in different parts of the state?"

"Principally by the fact that local dealers in some places handle the books with very little profit, and in others they charge a profit of 25 per cent or more. The board of directors has power to regulate this if it chooses to exercise it."

"Are you entirely satisfied with our present system?"

"No, I am not. Some of our books cost too much; others are very reasonable in price. The tendency, however, is steadily to lower the price, without impairing the quality of the book. This is brought about by the sharp competition. There are several firms, with large capital, employed in making schoolbooks. The educational men and women are looking for books which are fully up to date, and boards of education are looking for those which are reasonable in price. These two means are working to put the very best books into the pupils' hands at a constantly decreasing cost. Before you go I want to say that, in my opinion, the only effectual remedy is in district ownership of the books. It is not only the cheapest, but it saves time and promotes the progress of the school."

[From the Des Moines Leader, February 16, 1898.]

Ex Superintendent Sabin is interested in the schoolbook uniformity question and has been paying some attention to the recent letter of Crane & Co., in *The Leader*. This firm publishes the text-books of Kansas, and the letter set forth their side of the state uniformity question. Commenting on it yesterday Mr. Sabin, who is opposed to state uniformity, said:

"My impression is that the price list of the Kansas books, published in my report is taken directly from the proceedings of the board of schoolbook commissioners of that state. At any rate, the price in each case is that at which the books are furnished the pupil, and is the only one with which we are particularly concerned at this time. In some cases prices paid in Iowa are too high. I am not able to say whether it is owing to the large profits charged by local dealers, or to the prices at which books are furnished by book firms. All I contend for is that under our present law we can get, and in many places are getting, our books at as reasonable prices as they are in any other state. For instance, the geography which sells in Kansas for 82 cents and in Missouri for 81 cents, sells in Davenport for 75 cents and in Winneshiek county for 67 cents. The large geography sells in Cherokee, Emmet and Buena Vista counties for 81 cents.

"A large number of counties get their spellers at 15 cents, others at 13 cents, and Harri on at 10 cents. In Missouri the speller costs 16 cents, and in Kansas 11 cents. There is probably no book which remains as long in the pupil's hands as his arithmetic. In Kansas it costs 38 cents, in Missouri 56 cents, in Indiana 45 cents. A book of the same grade as far as I can judge, costs in Appanoose county 45 cents, in Adams, Dallas, Davis, Harrison, Polk, Louisa and Ringgold counties, 38 cents.

"In Iowa the law requires every school to give instruction in physiology. The book is listed in Kansas at 55 cents. In Missouri it costs 45 cents. The average cost of a physiology which answers all the requirements of the law in five counties of Iowa, quoted in my report, is 41 cents; in eight cities it is 47 cents, and in forty-three counties, as reported to the department of public instruction, the average price of 40 cents."

"But have you not selected certain books to suit your own purpose? Are we not paying a high price for our readers?"

“I have chosen certain books to prove my assertion that under our present law we can get books at as reasonable prices as we could under the Ray bill, or under state uniformity in any form. In other words, I can see no reason for changing our present law, except it be to make it easier in introducing a system of district ownership of books. That, in my mind, is the solution of the whole matter.

“As to the readers, if I were to choose a list of books to be used in a school under my care, I should place the greatest stress upon the selection of the reading books to be used during the first three years of school life. I have not time to go into particulars, but the difference of 15 or 20 cents in the cost of a reader would count but little. In fact, I should fear that the cheaper book made for the present occasion, and with a view to selling it at a low price, would be in the end the dearer of the two.”

“Is there anything in our law which gives one book firm or company any preference over another?”

“No, there is not. There is nothing to prevent the Indiana Book company or Crane & Co. from coming into Iowa and competing with any other company for the patronage of Iowa schools. If their books are so much cheaper, and prices so much more reasonable, I wonder why they do not make the attempt, as they have a perfect right to do. Our present law compels boards to advertise for proposals before adopting books; and, in fact, invites competition.”

“Did you notice that the average cost per pupil as it is quoted in Omaha, Detroit and other cities is 98 cents and that under the Kansas law it would be about 50 cents?”

“I noticed that, but it furnishes no criterion from which we can judge of the cost of books in any other schools. Probably in this calculation is reckoned pens, paper, ink, drawing books and all supplies. Possibly, also, high school books are included. I have a letter before me from Council Bluffs in which the superintendent states that the average cost in that city per pupil last year was about 50 cents, and that in the ward schools it was only 41 cents, and this includes music books, drawing books and copy books in all grades above the first. I am not able to figure out the great amount saved. I was never very good at figuring, anyway.”

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#### HON. JOHN COWNIE GIVES STRONG REASONS FROM THE FARMER'S STANDPOINT.

[From the Iowa Homestead, February 25, 1898.]

The bill now pending in the Iowa legislature, which contemplates an entire revolution in the methods by which text-books shall be furnished for use in the public schools, is one of especial interest to the farmers of the state, for to them will accrue a large proportion of the advantages if the changes proposed are good, and an equally large share of the burdens if they be bad. The Homestead has already expressed very decided views on the subject, adverse to the proposed change. It believes that the pending measure has, as its sole claim to legislative attention, an air of economy which is entirely false and delusive, and that its adoption would be attended with evil to the schools, and demoralization to the public conscience, in the corruption and jobbery that would follow its passage, for

which the measure furnishes not even a pretense of compensation. The following letter, just received by The Homestead from Hon. John Cownie, president of the Iowa State Agricultural society, and a frequent and highly esteemed Homestead contributor, treats the subject from the farm standpoint and will be read with interest. Mr. Cownie, who was a successful teacher in his younger days, and has been much interested in the public schools ever since, does not approach the subject wholly without experience from that side, either. He says:

“There is at present pending in the Iowa legislature, a bill providing for state uniformity in schoolbooks, to create a school text-book commission, to provide for making contracts for text-books to be used in the public schools, and fixing penalties for violation of the provisions thereof.

For a number of years the question of uniformity of schoolbooks has been agitated, the claim being made that much lower prices could be secured than under the present system. It is not claimed that the quality would be improved, for scarcely any fault is found in this regard with the books now in use, it being generally admitted by those competent to judge that the matter, material and mechanical execution of our present schoolbooks would be difficult to excel. The question of reduction in price is, then, the sole object and only end that could be accomplished by the passage of the proposed bill

But this of itself is sufficient to secure for the bill due consideration, for with the low prices prevailing for several years for farm products we have a right to expect that the cost of what we have to purchase should also conform as nearly as possible to current values for our products. There is no question but we formerly paid extortionate prices for schoolbooks, but our present law has in a great measure remedied this evil, and full, free and fair competition would in due time give us still lower prices. Combinations and monopolies of each and every kind to uphold prices should be prohibited by law, and all offenders severely punished, and when this is done competition can be trusted to regulate prices.

In the proposed bill there are three distinct methods provided for furnishing text-books, viz: by contracting with publishers for text-books to be published in Iowa, nothing being said in regard to their being printed and bound in the state; second, by contracting with authors who are willing to sell their manuscripts; third, by arranging with those who are willing to undertake the compilation of a book or books, or a series of books.

In case the second or third method is adopted, it then becomes necessary to advertise for bids for the mechanical part of the books, and the commission created by the act has the further duty of providing in the contract for the payment by the publisher of the amount agreed to be paid for the manuscript.

Those of us who were identified with the Grange movement a number of years ago can yet remember some experience in the same line that proved rather expensive, and brought this most valuable organization of farmers into bad repute. The writer was an enthusiastic member of the Patrons of Husbandry, and was secretary of a local organization while it existed, but was opposed to the order embarking in the manufacture of agricultural implements.

But money was subscribed, patents were purchased and mechanics were employed to manufacture harvesting machines to compete with McCormick,

Deering and others who had devoted a lifetime to the work, and who had all the necessary equipment and unlimited capital and ability to produce the highest class of machines.

Failure, of course, was inevitable, for the machines and other farm tools which were manufactured proved so much inferior to those of old established firms that, although the prices were much lower, even members of the order refused to purchase, and those who did buy soon had cause to regret their action.

The firms that were to revolutionize the business have long since ceased to exist, and the old established companies have full control of the market; and the perfection to which the machines have been brought, while the price has been steadily reduced to less than one-half what it formerly was, proves conclusively that great results cannot be attained unless there is a personal incentive, which would be utterly lacking in a contract system of schoolbooks.

Again, if this bill should become a law the use of the books selected is made compulsory, with a heavy penalty attached to the use of other schoolbooks. What would the farmers of Iowa think of a bill for an act to create a commission to select a certain line of farm tools, contract for their manufacture, and make their use compulsory upon the farms of Iowa, and a failure to comply to be punished by fine and imprisonment in the county jail, as provided in this act in regard to uniformity of schoolbooks?

What matters it if the tools were furnished a dollar or two cheaper, or the schoolbooks a few pennies less, will the farmers of Iowa surrender their rights to a commission appointed by the governor and accept such books for the education of their children, or tools for the cultivation and harvesting of their crops, as such a commission would choose to designate?

There is not a farmer in Iowa who would trust a commission appointed by the governor to select his tools and machines for use on the farm, and the most progressive farmers do not hesitate to pay a few dollars more for their favorite machine than they would have to pay for one that might suit someone else, but would not prove satisfactory to themselves.

Is it reasonable to suppose that a commission appointed by the governor to contract for the manufacture of farm implements would succeed in securing better tools than those now within the reach of every farmer? And while, no doubt, somewhat lower prices would be obtained if one firm was given a monopoly of the trade in the state and no competition to fight, could it be expected that these new firms could produce tools of equal quality with the old established companies whose names are household words on every farm of the state and who have at their command unlimited means and trained talent of the highest order?

The making of good schoolbooks, like the making of high class machinery, is not work that can be done by inexperienced people, and yet this bill proposes to contract for manuscripts of books not published, and that probably have been rejected as worthless by experienced publishers, and also proposes to employ those without knowledge or experience to compile a book, or series of books, as if the making of schoolbooks was the cheapest of manual labor, that could be let to the lowest bidder.

In the locality in which I write, the people are well satisfied with the law in regard to schoolbooks as it now exists, and would certainly resent



any attempt at another change that would cause them to sacrifice their present books. The country stores have also large supplies on hand, believing that this matter of school text-books was settled, and times are not yet so prosperous as to warrant the practical confiscation of so much property.

With such conditions existing our law-makers would do well to pause and consider, before they cast their votes for any such radical change as that proposed, and rather make all possible provision for securing the books which we now have at the least possible price."

In Mr. Cownie's letter to us his views are forcibly put, and they coincide with many others which reach us from the farmers of Iowa. The sole pretense of merit in the pending bill, its economy, is wholly an illusion. This is not our own view, simply, but it is concurred in by such men as Hon. Henry Sabin and Hon. J. B. Knoepfler, ex-superintendents of public instruction, Profs. A. N. Currier and F. J. Sessions, president and chairman of the executive committee of the Iowa State Teachers' association, Prof. O. J. Laylander, editor of the *Western Teacher*, and, indeed, all others who have spoken on the subject from the standpoint of special knowledge derived from lifelong devotion to the work of teaching. The naked proposition of the pending bill, therefore is to overthrow a system which experience has shown to be one of the best in the country, and substitute therefor, at an expense of many thousands of dollars in each county in the state, a system that has no other claim to consideration than a doubtful economy, against which all the testimony emphatically pronounces. Against such a proposition the farm sentiment of Iowa is unanimous, and no legislator should hesitate for a moment in regard to it. At the lowest possible estimate and by turning in the books now in use at 50 per cent of their cost, it would cost patrons of the schools a half a million dollars to make the change, and for this large sum the pending bill offers not a single compensating advantage. [Mr. Cownie is now a member of the state board of control of state institutions, appointed on account of his sound business judgment.]

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#### IMPORTANT TESTIMONY FROM A COMPETENT WITNESS.

[From *Daily Capital*, February 14, 1898.]

Prof. J. B. Knoepfler, of Lansing, ex-superintendent of public instruction under the democratic regime, and one of the acknowledged leaders in all matters pertaining to education and the public schools, spent Sunday in Des Moines. In view of the agitation arising over proposed legislation for state uniformity of text-books and state publication it was believed that the opinions held upon the subject by so eminent an authority as Professor Knoepfler would be of general interest, and he was asked to give for *Capital* readers the situation as it appeared to him.

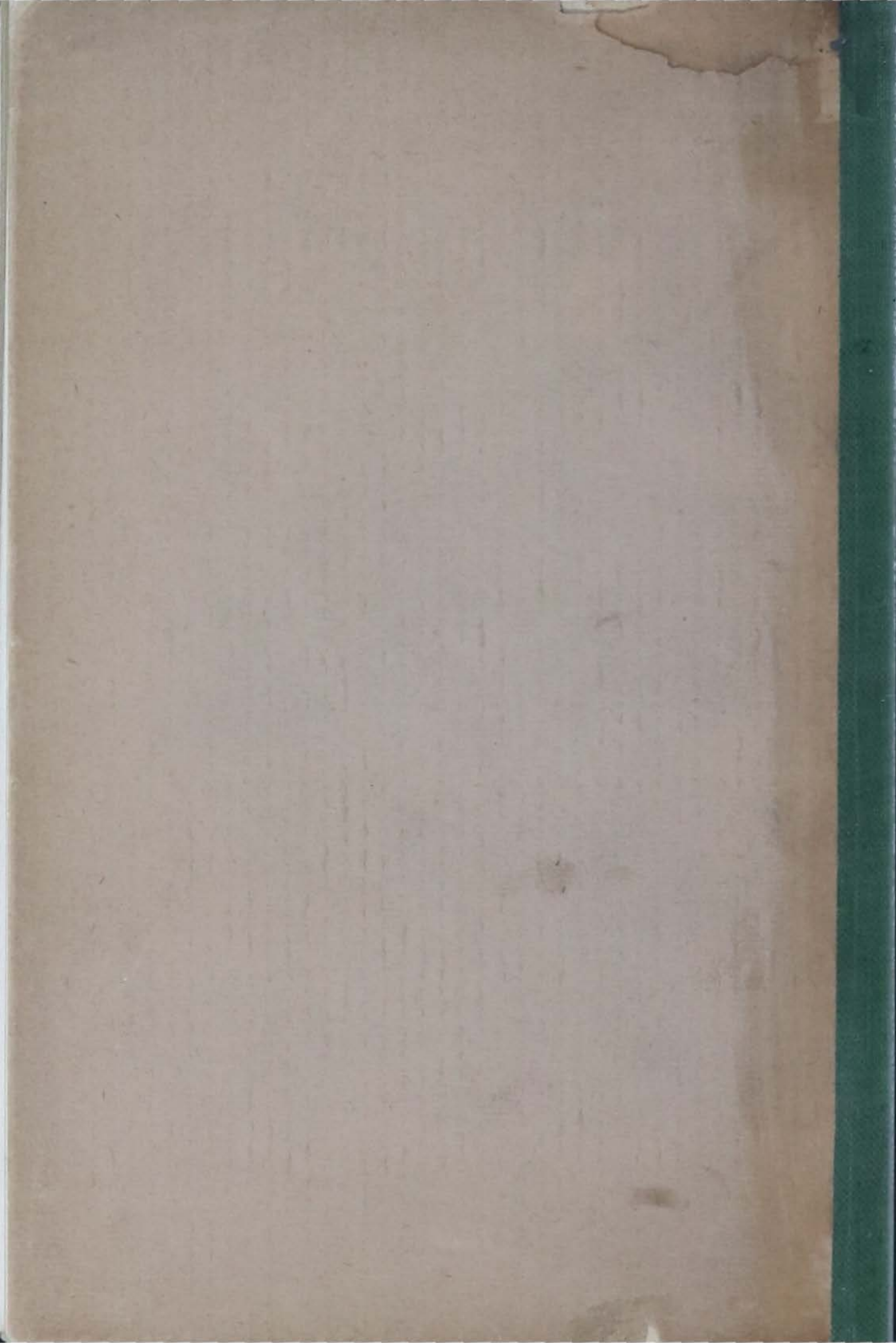
"I was strongly opposed to the changes proposed by the bill now before the lower house," said he, "before any of the teachers and prominent educators of the state had been heard from on the subject. About forty counties of the state have uniformity and some forty others have practically reached the same through adopting township uniformity. My own county is among

the last named class so far as it applies to independent city schools, and the result is very satisfactory. The present law allows boards to make their own selections and our people have secured just the books wanted and at very reasonable prices. We have saved from 33 to 40 per cent over former prices, and parents and teachers are delighted with the system.

“The new code already provides for furnishing free text-books on vote of a majority of the electors of the district; so that alleged feature of the Ray bill is fully met. A change, such as is proposed by the bill now before the house committee on schools and text-books, would result in a direct loss to the parents of Iowa scholars of at least half a million dollars. It will be obvious to anyone that this estimate is low, when it is considered that there are between 500,000 and 600,000 scholars in the state. The loss may greatly exceed the amount named. Section 7 of the bill is not clear as to whether, in making the change, all the books held by the district are to be taken by the corporation entering into the contract to furnish the books at 50 per cent of the maximum price of the new book, or only those in actual use by the scholars. It is well known that every district has on hand constantly many dollars' worth of books which are kept to be sold to pupils. In our district, the amount has sometimes reached several hundred dollars. If these are not to be taken the same as those in actual use by scholars, the loss would be greatly in excess of the estimate I have made.

“In all the correspondence I have had since the introduction of this bill, and of all the school men I have met personally, I have not yet heard a single whisper in its favor. The educators of Iowa keep well posted on book subjects, and they know that in other states that have adopted state publication the venture has proved a failure. In California the books are of an inferior grade—a fact that needs no verification. In a state not far from Iowa, where state publication was adopted, only two responsible book firms bid for the work for the reason that the state had placed the price so low as to preclude good work. The result was that the concern securing the contract put new binding on an old series of readers, shelf-worn stock—and these were placed in the schools as the state's books. I am of the firm belief that the best books are none too good for Iowa scholars, and that it is poor economy to place in our schools anything short of the leading text-books of the land. But, while under the present law we are securing the best books the world affords, we are also getting them at reasonable prices. Many towns are now advertising for bids—on standard books, of course—and are securing the same at figures as low as the quality of the books will permit. What more do we want? As I said in the beginning, I am strongly against any law which can have no other effect than to cheapen the grade of our text-books, as well as entail an immediate loss of half a million or more on the people of the state.

“Cheap books are not democratic, are not in line with the advanced thought of this day. The people of Iowa are nothing if not progressive, and to set down a system of teaching for all the districts of the state, to make all the educators follow certain rigid instructions, would retard the growth of many districts. At present we have access to the productions of the best bookmakers in the world, and existing competition insures not only the top standard as to quality, but the lower prices consistent therewith. I believe that it should be left to the boards of the different districts to say what is best adapted to their particular needs.”



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