JAMES CAMPBELL AND THE ONTARIO EDUCATION DEPARTMENT 1858-1884

Messieurs Campbell & Son, who have come to the Country years after the School System was established and matured, would teach our Government how to constitute the Council of Public Instruction! And then they would teach the Council how to discharge its duties! . . . Mr. Campbell then [1858] said that this branch of the Department was a great boon to the Country, — had helped his business, and but for it he would not be in the Country; but now Mr. Campbell thinks he can dispense with the ladder on which he has climbed from the position of a small travelling Agent to his present position as Bookseller, — that he can now do the work of the Department himself, and, therefore, that it should be abolished!¹

— Egerton Ryerson, 13 April 1866

The story of James Campbell & Son, Toronto publishers and wholesale booksellers from 1858 to 1884, constitutes an important chapter in the bibliographical history of nineteenth-century Canada both because of the firm's unique position as the largest wholesale bookseller in Canada and because of certain political and commercial pressures it faced in common with other booksellers and publishers of the time. Egerton Ryerson, as Chief Superintendent of Public Instruction for Upper Canada from 1846 to 1876, exercised an extraordinary influence over the native book trades through his nationalist principles, his right by virtue of the Common School Act of 1846 to prescribe the textbooks used in publicly-supported schools, and his creation of the Educational Depository, a branch of the Education Department that provided books, maps, and other apparatus to schools on terms far more agreeable than those that retail booksellers could afford to offer. Against Ryerson's principles, his law, and his institution, James Campbell fought relentlessly for his book business. In most of these battles Campbell was supported by other publishers and booksellers in the province and by the editor of the *Toronto Globe*, George Brown, a fellow Scot and long-standing political foe of Ryerson.

In the following discussion a preliminary sketch of the evolution and output of the firm of James Campbell & Son precedes an examination of the principal Campbell-Ryerson confrontations and their implications for the book trades during the years surrounding Confederation.

¹ J. George Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*, 28 vols. (Toronto: King's Printer, 1894-1910), 19:198.

I

James Campbell was born in 1809 or 1810 in Edinburgh, where he worked as a carpenter before entering the employment of Thomas Nelson & Sons as one of the firm's early "bagmen," or "book travellers."² Thomas Nelson had shocked the book world of 1829 with his innovative forerunners of the travelling salesmen, now everywhere a mainstay of the publishing industry. At first receiving "a very chilly reception in many centres," the book traveller nevertheless soon established his practical value; or, as Nelson's romantically explained:

With dogged perseverance the lone traveller persisted, and it was not many years before he was a welcome visitor in the booksellers' midst The name of the first traveller has been lost, but truly he was a benefactor to the average man.³

Perhaps James Campbell was not this anonymous first traveller, but he would have been among the early ones, and the independence and hardiness obviously required of these men may be said to prefigure the tenacity and stout pride Campbell manifested in his later business career in Canada, especially in his relations with Egerton Ryerson and the Education Department. In fact, there is substantial evidence — from an examination of Campbell's wares in the British-American publishing context of his time to testimonials from Mechanics' Institutes — to support the view that he was a "benefactor of mankind" in precisely the sense that Nelson's claims its travellers were. At the same time, however, in Campbell's early period with Nelson's are rooted those business practices that most outraged Ryerson — the canvassing of teachers, superintendents, and trustees to promote sales and the establishment of an extensive distribution network through local booksellers that tended to camouflage the highly-centralized (monopolistic, Ryerson would say) reality of the firm's operations.

Campbell had served Nelson's well enough by 1840 to go with the younger Thomas Nelson to establish a branch in London. Presumably he remained there until 1854, when he accompanied Thomas Nelson to New York to establish the first branch of a British publishing house to open an office in the United States.⁴ James Campbell, a "trusted employee," was left in charge of this office until he moved with his family to Toronto around 1854 and founded his own book business.⁵ An affiliation with Nelson's endured, however, until the bankruptcy of James Campbell & Son in 1884, and it seems likely that Campbell would have managed a branch for Nelson's in Canada, had it not been for the opposition of Egerton Ryerson. Campbell was Nelson's agent throughout the twenty-six-year existence of the firm, and his imprint appeared on many Nelson

² "Thomas Nelson & Sons' 50th Anniversary," *Publishers' Weekly*, 3 June 1905, p. 1553.

³ *Nelson's of Canada, 1914-1964* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1964), p. [2].

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. [3].

⁵ "Thomas Nelson & Sons' 50th Anniversary," p. 1553. This account claims, impossibly, that Campbell remained in New York for ten years before, "with his sons, he established himself in the book business in Canada."

publications, until an apparently unique joint imprint marked the Special Canadian Series of Nelson's famous Royal Readers (1883): "Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons and James Campbell and Son."⁶ Campbell's agency was presumably the sole justification for the inclusive use of "Toronto" in the imprint, while an appeal to prevailing nationalism, reflected both in popular sentiment and in rules for the authorization of textbooks, was the motivation. Both the Nelson connection and the opportunistic manipulation of imprints are recurring themes in the Campbell story.

Although the James Campbell imprint appeared as early as 1858 on the second edition of a textbook originally published in 1857 by Maclear and reissued jointly with Campbell and four other publishers,⁷ Campbell was perhaps more notably a wholesale bookseller than a publisher, especially in the early Toronto years; his publishing enterprises were usually reissues rather than original works. Even in the end the impact of Campbell's failure was felt most severely by those who knew him as a wholesale bookseller. In fact, only in the Toronto directories for the years 1862-63, 1877, and 1878 was Campbell listed as a publisher, though he published throughout the life of his firm. Apparently he identified himself above all with "booksellers and stationers," and, during most of this time, he carried on an exclusively wholesale business. He had little interest in importing books from the United States and was openly hostile toward them on occasion; that his stock was British was a constant source of pride and a weapon used against the Education Department. Indeed, mutual accusations of pro-Americanism were hurled regularly between Campbell and Ryerson.

In addition to a wide variety of stationery supplies, James Campbell stocked an extensive selection of textbooks, Sunday school literature, prize books, and popular religious and general works, including both his own publications and the standard British works for which he was the Canadian agent — in Nelson's case, the sole Canadian agent. The extent of Campbell's stock may perhaps be indicated by an advertisement of 14 July 1865 that announced to the trade Campbell's exclusive agency for the sale of the Rev. Charles Kemble's Psalm and Hymn Book, of which he offered forty-seven different versions, including examples with and without music and otherwise varying in binding style and typeface.⁸

In his 1865 *Catalogue of School Books* James Campbell listed more than two hundred titles, indicating by use of capital letters those published or sold exclusively by him. These textbooks were distributed to schools throughout

⁶ Thomas Nelson & Sons today deny having any knowledge of an actual or intended Canadian branch prior to 1914 or of James Campbell; their early records were destroyed in an 1878 fire at the Hope Park Works in Edinburgh.

⁷ J. George Hodgins, *The Geography and History of British America*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Maclear & Co., James Campbell, and W.F.C. Caverhill, 1858); Campbell also co-published a 3rd ed. in 1860.

⁸ The extent of Campbell's stock of stationery supplies is vividly revealed in the firm's illustrated 1872 wholesale *Trade List*, which can be found with other ephemeral items mentioned here among the Canada Booksellers' Catalogues at the Baldwin Room, Metropolitan Toronto Central Library.

British North America and clearly comprised a lucrative portion of Campbell's business. Just how lucrative this portion was and how heavily it depended on the Ontario market may be inferred from the energy Campbell manifested in struggles with Ryerson to obtain authorization for Ontario schools of those textbooks that he published or for which he enjoyed the exclusive agency. Ryerson built the foundation for monopolistic control of the textbook industry, and it is hardly surprising that the largest Canadian wholesale bookseller, backed by one of the largest British educational publishers, would compete with Ryerson to gain this control.

In addition to textbooks, many titles of general interest, including a large number of religious works, bore the Campbell imprint. Some of these were joint ventures with British publishers; others, in pronounced contrast to the textbooks, were probably financed by the authors themselves. One of the three advertisements that were most frequently appended to Campbell's books announced "To Authors" that

Jas. Campbell & Son, . . . are prepared to Furnish Estimates To Authors for the publication of their MSS., and may be consulted personally or by letter.

They will engage to have proofs carefully revised while passing through the press, if required.

The facilities possessed by Jas. Campbell & Son for the Publication of Books in the best Modern Styles, at the Lowest Prices, and their lengthened experience warrant them in undertaking the Publication of any work submitted to them, and in offering their services to Authors who desire to publish on their own account.

While some titles bearing Campbell imprints were published solely and originally by Campbell, the sample of books this author examined in an effort to compile a bibliography of Campbell imprints suggests that this number was neither substantial nor particularly imaginative. Significantly, however, there was no "trash" issued under a Campbell imprint, much less any of the American "trash" that Ryerson so vigorously decried. On the contrary, most Campbell publications would have to be considered creditable and conservative.

Campbell does not seem to have discovered or encouraged future members of the Canadian literati, although two possible exceptions might be mentioned. Agnes Maule Machar, daughter of the Rev. John Machar, second principal of Queen's University, became a fairly well-known writer of history and fiction; Campbell published her first two works of fiction after they won prizes from "an old country paper" seeking "the book best suited to the needs of the Sunday School library."⁹ Both *Katie Johnstone's Cross: A Canadian Tale* (1870) and *Lucy Raymond; or, The Children's Watchword* (1872?) were published

⁹ F. L. MacCallum, "Agnes Maule Machar," *Canadian Magazine*, March 1924, p. 355. Klinck either ignores or is unaware of these works when he says that Machar began her career with *For King and Country* (1874). The 1872? date assigned to *Lucy Raymond* is based on an anonymous listing in the *English Catalogue of Books*. Both Watters and the National Library, Ottawa, assign a 1902? date, which, of course, is impossible.

either first or simultaneously in Edinburgh. Campbell also published *Letters from East Longitudes* (1875), a travel book by Thomas Stinson Jarvis, who wrote several novels that were published in the United States in the 1890s. Like many Campbell publications, this book was printed in Toronto by Hunter, Rose and contained a series of headpieces and ornamental initials commonly found in Campbell editions.

The most important original Campbell title is probably the Rev. George Monro Grant's *Ocean to Ocean: Sandford Fleming's Expedition through Canada in 1872* (1873). Containing sixty plates, this book was published jointly with Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle of London: Campbell's issue, at least, was printed by George Desbarats in Montreal. There were several later editions that include the important "enlarged and revised" 1877 edition published in Toronto by Belford Brothers, printed and stereotyped by the Globe Printing Company, bound by Hunter, Rose, and reprinted in 1967 by Hurtig of Edmonton. In 1970 a facsimile reprint of Campbell's first edition was published in the Coles Canadiana Collection.

Adult literature of a religious cast was a favorite Campbell product, principally in the form of biographies of prominent clergymen connected in some way with Canada. Here James Campbell followed in the footsteps of the first Thomas Nelson, who liked to publish his own favorite divines, however unprofitable the enterprise might be. Most of Campbell's publications were related to the Presbyterian Church, but the Methodist clergy were also represented, for example, in John Kay's *Biography of the Rev. William Gundy* (1871) and David Savage's *Life and Labours of the Rev. Wm. McClure* (1872). Notable and heavily advertised among the Presbyterian biographies are George Smellie's *Memoir of the Rev. John Bayne* (1871), *The Life and Times of the Rev. Robert Burns* (1872), edited by his son, R. F. Burns, and *Memorials of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. John Machar* (1873), "edited by members of his family." (Agnes Maule Machar was given credit for this work in a 1902 list of members of the Canadian Society of Authors.) The latest clerical biography discovered among James Campbell's publications is George Patterson's *Missionary Life among the Cannibals: Being the Life of the Rev. John Geddie* (1882), which was issued jointly with James Bain & Son and Hart & Co. in Toronto and with publishers from Hamilton, Montreal, Halifax, and Pictou. Not only the literary, but the physical form of these biographies was conventional; examples of the genre appeared in the lists of publishers on both sides of the Atlantic and regularly consisted of a neatly but conservatively printed volume with a portrait frontispiece (either a photograph tipped in or, rarely in Campbell's books, a steel engraving) over a facsimile signature. Biographical sketches were plumped out with sermons or diaries, or vice versa.

Interpretations of scripture and doctrine, as well as liturgical works such as a Psalter, a prayer book, and a hymnal were also undertaken by Campbell. *Psalms and Paraphrases . . . for Use in the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (1884) was the latest Campbell imprint located. Campbell himself, according to his obituary notices, was a prominent elder in the Presbyterian Church, and one of his sons was a clergyman. Indeed, it is defensible to attribute to James Campbell the authorship of *Our Hymn Writers, Being Biographical Notices of the Authors of the Hymns Selected by the Hymn Book Committee of the Presbyterian Church*

in *Canada* (1880); the preface, signed "J.C.," asserts that "much of the value of a hymn lies in the assurance that the Christian poet sang of Christ, of his need of Him, and of his experience of Him, under circumstances leaving no doubt of their being heart utterances."¹⁰ Campbell's two collections of sermons, *Canada Presbyterian Church Pulpit* (1871 and 1873), conclude with "The Three Foundations" by the Rev. John Campbell, Toronto, probably the publisher's son.

One of Campbell's most publicized ventures was his distribution of Sunday School libraries that consisted of numbered, pre-selected groups (or "libraries") of British works so wide-ranging in subject as to include virtually all the reasonably sober juvenile literature of the day; prominently featured were works by R.M. Ballantyne and C.M. Tucker ("A.L.O.E."), for example, who were undoubtedly read by adults as well as children. Many selections were identified as from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Library. Catalogues listing hundreds of these titles were published separately by James Campbell and were also bound at the back of many of his books. This general advertisement appeared frequently in Campbell's publications:

James Campbell & Son's Sunday School Libraries, Containing Upwards of One Thousand Volumes, Carefully selected from all the Religious Publications of Britain, and put up in boxes, varying in prices from One Dollar to Twelve Dollars, and containing from Six to Fifty Volumes each case.

These Libraries are now in extensive use throughout the Dominion; are in every way suitable for Canadian Sunday School Children, and supply a want long expressed by Superintendents, Conventions, and friends of Sunday School instruction.

Campbell's Canadian Sunday School Libraries and Catalogues will be supplied by all Booksellers in the Dominion.

Some of these titles were discovered with Campbell's imprint, though they usually were printed in Scotland, yet evidence suggests that others that were distributed by Campbell would have had only the original publisher's imprint.

The Canadian Prize Sunday School Library of five titles was the only one singled out for special advertising. Of these, only the author of *Katie Johnstone's Cross* (1870), by "A.M.M.," has been identified. Also published in 1870 were *Jessie Gray, or The Discipline of Life*, by "N.L.G.," and *The Old and the New Home*, by "J.E.," while *Sowing the Good Seed*, by "Alicia," appeared in 1872 and *Emily's Choice*, by "E.V.N.," sometime after that. In giving all these books the subtitle *A Canadian Tale*, Campbell was possibly appealing to nationalist sentiment in the early years of Confederation; but since the first three titles, at least, were published at the same time in Britain, where fiction set in Canada enjoyed considerable popularity at the time, there is no certainty that all the authors were Canadian. The unusual publicity given this series does, however,

¹⁰Watters attributes authorship to the Hymn Book Committee, but intrinsic evidence does not contradict Campbell's authorship.

argue for Campbell's having had greater financial interest in these than in his other Sunday School libraries. Head and tailpieces and ornamental initials used in the Canadian Prize Sunday School Library constitute some slight evidence to suggest that they were printed by Hunter, Rose & Co. in Toronto, but this is hardly conclusive.

Other works of general interest discovered during the compilation of a Campbell bibliography fall into different categories. There are, for example, *The City of Toronto* (1860), from Nelson and Son's Hand-books series; colonial editions of Byron, Tennyson, and Thomson; J.M. De Courtenay's *The Canadian Vine Grower: How Every Farmer in Canada May Plant a Vineyard and Make His Own Wine* (1866); *The Canadian Horse and His Diseases* (1867) by Duncan McNab McEachran and Andrew Smith; Alexander Mackenzie's *Speeches* (1876); and a puzzling, undated edition of *A Face Illumined*, one of the lesser works by Edward Payson Roe, America's best-selling clergyman-novelist. The titles mentioned here comprise, at best, a small representative selection intended to indicate the general nature and scope of Campbell's publishing activities. The tentative chronological pattern that emerges from an examination of Campbell imprints suggests that he began by co-publishing textbooks and peaked in this role in the late 1860s and early 1870s, at which time he also entered heavily into the original publication of religious and other general works. Sometime around 1879 he began to transfer his textbook publishing to the Canada Publishing Company, and by 1884 Campbell was apparently publishing very little under his own imprint. The wholesale bookselling aspect of the business, on the other hand, appears to have maintained a more constant level throughout the firm's existence.

The *Annual Report of the Board of Trade* for 1860 summarized the Campbell position in this way:

Mr. James Campbell is not only exclusively engaged in the finer descriptions of English stationery, of which he has constantly on hand a well-selected stock, but is also a wholesale dealer in books. He is the only person in Canada who carries on an exclusively wholesale trade in books, having built up a business of this kind peculiarly his own. The magnificent publications of the Oxford Bible Warehouse, comprising bibles [sic] of the most elaborate style, for presentation, at \$50 down to the nonpareil [sic] testament at 9d. The publications of Nelson & Sons (including the Child's paper, of which the circulation in Canada is nearly 10,000), Darton, Ward & Lock, Dean's, with many others. The best series of school books, including among others a summary of Canadian history, recently published by Mr. Campbell, are always on hand. His trade in fine stationery is the largest in the city, and Mr. C. now not only extends his business throughout Canada, but sells and sends quantities of goods to Prince Edward's Island and other lower Provinces.¹¹

¹¹ *Annual Report of the Board of Trade, with a Review of the Commerce of Toronto for 1860*, by E. Wiman Toronto: Published annually by the compiler, n.d.), p. 30.

It is an extraordinary review for a business that had existed only three years; that the times and the man were uniquely suited to each other at the beginning of Campbell's Canadian career seems indisputable. About twenty prosperous years followed, during which Campbell's position was consolidated and maintained, though it was not unthreatened.

In the 1859-60 Toronto directory two business locations for James Campbell are listed: 16 Masonic Hall, Toronto Street, and 132 Yonge Street. In Brown's 1861 directory Campbell was located at 9 Toronto Street, where he remained until 1869, when the firm moved to commodious new quarters at 24-26 Front Street West. From 1874 until the demise of the firm in 1884, its address was 32-34 Front Street West. By 1863 Campbell had opened a branch in St. John Street, Montreal, and from 1874 to 1878 James Bain, later the first chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library, maintained a branch for Campbell in London, England.¹² While many books have a joint Toronto-Montreal imprint, none has been discovered that mentions Campbell's London establishment.

By 1866 William Cooper Campbell had joined his father's firm, which for the first time was listed as "James Campbell & Son" in the city directory: this name persisted to the end, though by 1879 William Darling Taylor had joined the Campbells as a partner, after serving previously as manager, and by 1882 W.C. Campbell had dropped out of the partnership and assumed the position of managing director of the Canada Publishing Company, which was first listed in the Toronto directory of 1881. James Campbell & Son apparently owned a large portion, but not the majority of shares in Canada Publishing, who issued many of Campbell's copyright titles during these years and long after the Campbell failure.¹³

In 1884 W.D. Taylor, still James Campbell's partner, was listed as secretary of the Canada Publishing Company, and the commingling of the two firms extended beyond the realm of managerial personnel to the books themselves. The publisher's device is suggestive: the "JC&S" monogram became a plain "C" and later a "CPCo," with the corresponding imprints, bindings, and advertisements mixed inconsistently during the transitional years. On the whole it is fair to say that the letterpress and engravings in Campbell editions were noticeably superior to those of Canada Publishing, whether Campbell's were produced in Toronto or abroad. It is interesting to speculate that James Campbell created Canada Publishing Company, which shared the premises of James Campbell & Son, in order to produce textbooks in Canada cheaply enough to enable him to compete without degrading the name of his own publishing house; it is likely, however, that rather more sophisticated financial maneuvering was involved. In any event, W.C. Campbell relinquished his managerial involvement in Canada Publishing sometime in 1883, probably when his *Royal Canadian Readers* were rejected for authorization allegedly because James Campbell & Son and Canada Publishing Company had been perceived as one business entity by the Education Department. W.D. Taylor's position with Canada Publishing was probably lost as a result of the Campbell bankruptcy.

¹² This chronology is based on information in the Toronto city directories, Campbell's trade lists and catalogues, and Morgan (1898) on Bain.

¹³ Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 37, 5th Leg., 2nd sess., 48 Vic., 1885, p. 69.

In view of the many prosperous years enjoyed by the Campbells, who both maintained prestigious Jarvis Street homes for some time, the son later moving to suburban Deer Park, their failure was spectacular. An editorial in the November 1884 issue of *Books and Notions* discussed the event, characterized simply as “the failure by reason of its wide-spread and calamitous effects on the book-trade of Canada, causing serious loss, and in many cases disastrous bankruptcy”:

The firm a long time in existence, had an honoured name at home and abroad, until the consummation of the evil inner workings of the concern was brought to light through the assignment made on the 15th of last month.

The firm has been in questionable repute as to its financial standing for some years; therefore, when the failure was announced, it did not, at least among the wholesale trade, cause any great surprise, though it was entirely unlooked for just at the time it took place.

The origin of the great deficiency is said to have occurred some years ago, through the carelessness of management of one of the partners of the firm. It has been going from bad to worse ever since, until no longer being able to meet payments, an assignment was made, when the fact became public property (hitherto known to at least some of their opponents in trade), that a large proportion of the booksellers and stationers in Canada had been foolish enough to give the firm accommodation paper to a considerable extent.

At first the paper was given, as a general thing, through good nature and confidence in the name of James Campbell, and when objection was made to renewals or the giving of additional amounts, threats of forcing payments of indebtedness made the reluctant retail merchant do the bidding of the firm, who now had become master.

It is the old, old story, and, as far as we can learn, without a redeeming feature. The whole thing was done with the eyes of the financial manager of the firm fully open — knowing that the firm was hopelessly insolvent, and that those who were aiding in tiding over the difficulties were but bringing ruin on themselves. There might be some palliation for the offence had there been any hope in the future.

Had there, for instance, been any chance of obtaining more capital, or of selling the business with its good-will (which might have been supposed to have been worth considerable) — this has been the case in other somewhat similar instances — then there might be considered to be some excuse, but we cannot learn that such was the case.

While blame is justly attached to the firm, others must also bear the odium of the failure of the retail dealers. As already mentioned, the fact of accommodation paper being used by the firm was known a good while ago by others in the same line of business. Why did the banks not know it? . . .

The Wholesale Trade is but little affected by the failure. The firm owned none of them direct any large amount, though, of course, they all lose more or less through the failure of those in the retail trade who had to succumb on account of giving accommodation paper.

The writer continues to deplore the favoritism shown to some creditors and to object to the manner of disposal of the stock adopted by the trustees:

Those who got an inkling of how matters stood, took care to secure all they possibly could. Night and day did they and their employees work. Thousands of dollars worth of goods went to the favoured few, to the loss of the general creditors.

O for the righteous old Insolvent Act! Righteous at least in this, that neither the firm of James Campbell & Son, nor their creditors, would have dared to give or accept preference!

Apparently the large Toronto creditors (principally Copp, Clark & Co.; Hunter, Rose & Co.; and Buntin, Reid & Co.; as well as the banks) were more satisfied with the settlement than smaller creditors, and many businessmen objected to the damage to holiday trade that they feared would result from flooding the market with Campbell's large stock at discounted prices. In any event, "the failure" was discussed in letters and notes in *Books and Notions* throughout the following year, and the editor concluded philosophically in January 1886:

The year 1885 has been an eventful one to the Canadian Book Trade. The failure of James Campbell & Son brought with it the stoppage of a large number of firms in the retail trade. It was not an unmixed evil, for many who had been worried day after day to make both ends meet, felt relieved when compelled to assign or compromise, as they by that means got a fresh start on life's journey.

After James Campbell & Son was assigned on 15 October 1884, W.C. Campbell set up briefly at 29 King Street West, where he was listed as an atlas publisher in the 1886 Toronto directory. Campbell's Geographical Series included several school and general atlases, some or all of which were copyrighted by W.C. Campbell in 1885 and contained maps produced by J. Bartholomew of Edinburgh, a firm in which Thomas Nelson had become a partner in 1878. In 1888 W.C. Campbell was involved in a small exchange with the Education Department regarding the publication of authorized geography textbooks for Ontario schools; at that time he disclaimed any affiliation with a publishing house and sought the right to publish the texts himself.¹⁴ Geography textbooks prepared for Canadian schools by W.C. Campbell were published into the twentieth century by George N. Morang in Toronto. H. Pearson Gundy noted that W.C. Campbell went into the subscription book business after the bankruptcy,¹⁵ and James Campbell's obituary in 1890 placed this son in Chicago.

In February 1885 W.D. Taylor, James Campbell's partner, purchased in his wife's name the entire residual stock of James Campbell & Son and established the firm of C.M. Taylor & Co. on the old Campbell premises. *Books and Notions*

¹⁴ Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 1, 6th Leg., 4th sess., 53 Vic., 1890, p. 19.

¹⁵ H. Pearson Gundy, *Book Publishing and Publishers in Canada before 1900* (Toronto: Bibliographical Society of Canada, 1965), p. 18. Gundy's study, though brief, provided leads to invaluable sources and must be considered the starting point for this paper.

reported in February 1885 that there were eleven tenders for the stock, "amounting to nearly \$70,000" worth of books, fancy goods and stationery, Mrs. Taylor's being the highest at 32-1/2 cents on the dollar per inventory. A *Globe* advertisement of 24 January 1885 claimed that the Campbell sale afforded "an excellent opportunity of securing Undoubtedly The Finest Business Of The Kind in Canada." A similar advertisement appearing on 27 January itemized the inventory to arrive at a total slightly greater than that given by *Books and Notions*: Book Department — \$49,025.95; Stationery Department — \$17,446.93; Fancy Goods Department — \$10,072.55. In any case, Taylor paid close to \$25,000 for the stock, an investment that turned out well in the immediately ensuing years, when he repeatedly styled his firm (in bold-face capitals): "Successors to James Campbell & Son, Toronto." Taylor's revival of part of the Campbell business was well-received by the trade: "The want of a house carrying on the miscellaneous books, as sold by the former firm, has been much felt since the new year, the estate having ceased selling at that date. The same line will be to be had from Taylor & Co."¹⁶ In March 1886 it was announced that C.M. Taylor & Co. were leaving the "old Campbell stand" and "fitting up No. 52, Front St. West; a fine commodious store."¹⁷ This is an appropriate point at which to drop the Taylor story, noting that Taylor's firm had nothing to do with carrying on the publishing end of the Campbell business.

One further Campbell affiliate whose story has not been pursued, but who might be mentioned for the record, is William J. Campbell, listed in the 1883 directory as a traveller for James Campbell & Son. In the *Books and Notions* issue of December 1885 it is noted that "W.J. Campbell . . . has taken a place on Colborne St., Toronto. His lines are mainly stationery and fancy goods, aiming to do almost exclusively import orders." The family relationship that possibly exists here has not been traced.

James Campbell himself was reported in February 1885 as having gone into business as Campbell & Middlemiss,¹⁸ but this was probably short-lived, since his name had disappeared altogether by the time the 1886 Toronto directory was published. That there is no home address in this directory may be explained by the fact that the Campbell freehold property, including the residence at 411 Jarvis, was offered for sale by auction in an advertisement in the *Globe* on 15 November 1884, the sale to be held on 22 November. As it turned out, the real property was not sold on the twenty-second because, according to the *Globe* account of 24 November, the reserve figure was not reached by any of the bids. Presumably, however, the property was eventually sold; at least it did not remain in Campbell's hands, for he no longer maintained a home address. Sometime during the next few years the elder Campbell suffered a stroke of paralysis from which he never entirely recovered, and on the evening of 13 July 1890 he died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. J. Herbert Mason, 477 Sherbourne Street. In addition to his widow, three sons and three daughters survived: W.C. Campbell;

¹⁶ *Books and Notions*, February 1885, p. 110.

¹⁷ *Books and Notions*, March 1886, p. 116.

¹⁸ *Books and Notions*, February 1885, p. 107.

the Rev. Professor John Campbell, LL.D., of the Presbyterian College, Montreal; Thomas Campbell of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; Mrs. Mason; Mrs. Morrison; and Mrs. J.S. Ewart of Winnipeg.¹⁹ The obituary notices were neither as long nor as prominently placed as might be expected for a man who had been head of such a publishing house; presumably bankruptcy was a blot sufficient to preclude any extravagant final glories.

II

The following discussion falls into three parts that focus on the major areas of conflict between James Campbell and the Education Department, principally represented by the person of Egerton Ryerson or of his faithful deputy, J. George Hodgins. The first part concerns Campbell's relationship with Thomas Nelson & Sons, which pervaded both the bookselling and publishing ends of his business, while the second and third deal with each of these separately — that is, with Campbell's efforts as a publisher to secure from the Council of Public Instruction authorization for his textbooks and then with his attempts as a bookseller to get the Educational Depository abolished.

It is, of course, Ryerson, not Campbell, who is remembered; yet their relationship was perhaps not as unequal as it now seems. James Campbell & Son, for better or worse, initiated at least two Ryerson innovations, hastened the weakening and eventual abolition of the Depository, interrupted Ryerson's policy of authorizing a single textbook for each subject by influencing his successor, Adam Crooks, and precipitated Ryerson's retirement from office. While Campbell's offensive may at times have been merely a "sapping and mining process"²⁰ rather than a brave attack, its effects were nonetheless important and have been little noticed in the history of the province.

¹⁹ Obituaries may be found in the *Toronto Globe* and the *Toronto Evening Telegram*, 14 July 1890.

²⁰ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 27:80.

THOMAS NELSON'S AGENT IN TORONTO

I think, those Canadian Publishers of Maps and School Books are entitled to consideration and gratitude, who have borne the burden and heat of the day in publishing Maps and Books for the Schools in the infancy of our Country and School System, when, in no instances, have they realized more than very small profits, and, in many instances, have sustained serious losses. By their enterprise and sacrifices they have developed the Trade to respectable dimensions, so as to render it an object of attention and speculation by British, as well as American Publishers. The more every branch of the printing and publishing business is developed, the more will the facilities of knowledge and education be promoted in the Country On the other hand, it can be shewn that during the ten years of the operations of this System, the Bookselling and Publishing Trade has advanced more in proportion than any other branch of Trade in the Country.²¹

— Ryerson to Thomas Nelson, 16 January 1863

James Campbell's difficulties with Egerton Ryerson almost all stem from his strong connection with Thomas Nelson & Sons of Edinburgh. Campbell imported practically his entire stock of books from Britain, and by far the greatest share of these were Nelson's. He was accused by Ryerson of trying to disguise Nelson publications as Canadian in order to secure authorization and of restricting the variety of books available through the Depository catalogue by promoting Nelson's books when the booksellers were finally permitted to compete with the Depository under the provincial grant allowances.

The 1862 *Annual Report of the Board of Trade*, while not directly mentioning Nelson and Campbell, nevertheless referred to these firms, as Campbell asserted many years later in the *Globe*; the 1862 reviewer wrote:

These facts present some indications of a change for the better in the literary taste of Canada. This improvement is in no small degree attributable to the persistent and unwearied exertions of our wholesale importers, and the advantages which they enjoy in close connection with first-class British publishing houses. We hope, and indeed are certain that they will be well compensated for their efforts. In this connection we are glad to notice that we are likely to have established amongst us a branch of an extensive and highly respectable Scotch firm, for the purpose not only

²¹ *Ibid.*, 18:78.

of re-issuing in much improved style our leading text and school books, but for the publication of other works of merit that may offer. We have long needed an establishment of this character, and through its operations we may hope to see Canadian literature take a higher place in the world of letters. With long experience, ample means and the best facilities are commanded by the house in question, and we are sure their advent here will be hailed with pleasure.²²

The advent of Nelson's in Toronto might have been hailed with pleasure by many; instead it was thwarted by the Chief Superintendent of Education. Ryerson's motives were complex, to say the least: admirable principles regarding the Canadianization of the publishing industry were certainly colored by a personal hostility toward Thomas Nelson, perhaps because of his relationship with George Brown's Scottish faction, perhaps because of Nelson's own power and strength of character, perhaps because of the obviously superior quality of Nelson's books; regardless, Ryerson viewed the possibility of Nelson's establishing a Toronto branch as a real threat to his authoritarian control of all segments of the educational system.

In the first place, controversies between Campbell and Ryerson were politically complicated by the fact that Nelson's had formed an alliance of a different nature with Toronto on 27 November 1862, when George Brown married Anne Nelson, the sister of his old schoolmates, William and Thomas Nelson.²³ When Brown returned from Scotland with his bride, he also brought his brother-in-law, Thomas, who entered on this occasion into a fiery correspondence with Ryerson. The 1862 *Report of the Board of Trade* would undoubtedly have been in preparation at the time of Nelson's visit, and it is probably this visit that precipitated its speculations.

In the correspondence that passed between Ryerson and Nelson from 6 to 21 January 1863, Nelson attempted to persuade Ryerson with arguments that were suicidally condescending in manner to approve his maps and textbooks for use in the schools of Upper Canada.²⁴ Ryerson began with a taut politeness, but was quickly roused to his usual blunt rhetoric when Nelson's claim to acknowledged superiority in educational publishing in England produced, in effect, the argument that the acceptance of his books in England was in itself sufficient cause for their acceptance here. Ryerson restrained himself on this general issue until the terminal letter, in which he defined the basic distinction as he saw it:

In reference to the part of your Letter relating to Text Books for the Grammar Schools, I remark that in England there is no system of public Grammar Schools established and managed under the authority of a general

²² *Annual Report of the Board of Trade, with a Review of the Commerce of Toronto for 1862*, by E. Wiman (Toronto: Published annually by the compiler, 1863), p. 30.

²³ J.M.S. Careless, *Brown of the Globe*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1963), 2:78.

²⁴ For the complete Nelson-Ryerson correspondence that is discussed in this section, see Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 18:75-81.

law, as a branch of the System of Public Instruction - that the Government, or Parliament, has little, or no, control over the Grammar Schools there, which are so many independent Establishments . . . but the Grammar School law of Upper Canada makes it the duty of the Council to prescribe the Text Books for the Grammar Schools, and does not authorize the Council to place any Text Books on its list which it does not prescribe.

In fact, Ryerson was merely telling Nelson that his books, like those of other publishers, would not be placed on any authorized list until they had undergone the entire procedure of examination and until the list as a whole was revised, but between the lines he was telling him a great deal more about his potential future in Canada — enough, it would seem, to alter profoundly the course of Thomas Nelson & Sons in Canada by delaying the establishment of a Canadian branch for some fifty years.

Nelson was more or less explicit in these letters about his intention to establish a branch publishing house in Toronto, though its projected relationship to James Campbell & Son was not made clear. In his first letter Nelson wrote:

I am busy making arrangements for publishing in this Country, and shall be able, ere long, to show that we can help on the cause of Education in Upper Canada.

We possess facilities for the production of educational works beyond that of any other publishing house, and are prepared to carry out any suggestions that you may favour us with, either in regard to new books or changes in those we are at present engaged with.

Moreover, on 10 January Ryerson advised Nelson:

Should you establish a printing and publishing House here, the same offer to tender for the publication of School Maps which we may require will be made to your House, which has been, or may be, made to other Map publishing Houses in this City.

Nelson's plan was perhaps not altogether abandoned for some time, since on 2 September 1865 Hodgins wrote to Ryerson:

His Agent, Mr. Campbell, is doubtless the *alter ego* of Mr. Nelson in this matter; and I should not be surprised if a Book and Publishing Establishment were contemplated by them, of which *The Globe* Office would be the printing House.²⁵

On 4 April 1866, however, James Campbell observed in a letter to the *Globe*:

Dr. Ryerson also takes credit to himself for having frustrated the intentions of a member of one of the largest publishing houses in Britain. He undoubtedly foresaw that he could not make him pay black mail to the

²⁵ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 19:32-33.

monopoly, and therefore, as he states, he threw every obstacle in his way. This gentleman was Mr. Thomas Nelson, of the firm of Thos. Nelson & Sons, whose intention, as is shown by the "Trade Review," of 1863, was to establish an important printing and publishing house in Canada, where school books and books in general literature might be produced, and which would have been a credit and an honour to the country. Dr. Ryerson's opposition was so great that Mr. Nelson abandoned the scheme, and thus a valuable branch of industry was lost.

It is certainly true that Ryerson took pride in the effect of his 1863 correspondence with Thomas Nelson, for he cited it repeatedly through the years as a statement of his advocacy of native industry and as self-evident justification of his position regarding booksellers and publishers who were motivated by the desire for profit rather than the public good.

The 1863 Nelson-Ryerson letters suggest several relevant points: that Ryerson was a formidable and devastatingly frank man to deal with, a man sometimes petty, but with sufficient power to make it worth the while of such a publisher as Thomas Nelson to attempt to deal with him; that Nelson's allegiance with George Brown had worsened his, and hence Campbell's, position vis-à-vis Ryerson; and that Nelson and Campbell functioned in certain respects as one business entity, as Ryerson frequently claimed, since Nelson operated directly from Campbell's establishment while he was in Toronto and consistently referred to the agency arrangement.

Ryerson's pettiness and his hostility toward Brown were evident in the fact that his first response to Nelson was addressed to the residence of George Brown: Nelson requested that further communications be directed to him at Campbell's business address. Hodgins attempted to explain this in a footnote pointing out the family relationship and the fact that Nelson was staying with the Browns, but the gesture does not seem innocent. Ryerson repeatedly insinuated in future years that the liaison between Nelson and Brown through marriage prompted Brown's defenses of Campbell in the *Globe*, though Brown had consistently attacked Ryerson's policies long before his marriage to Anne Nelson. On 24 March 1866, his sixty-fifth birthday, Ryerson wrote to George Brown to forgive the personal wrongs he had suffered at his hands. Brown duly replied that he was "entirely unconscious of any 'personal wrong' every done you by me, and had no thought of receiving 'forgiveness' at your hands," and, what is more directly relevant, that "your dragging my name into your controversy with the Messrs. Campbell -- in a matter with which I had no personal concern whatever -- was one of those devices, unhappily too often resorted to in political squabbles to be capable of exciting more than momentary indignation."²⁶

If Ryerson demonstrated prejudice against Thomas Nelson, Nelson certainly exercised considerable want of judgment in dealing with Ryerson, clearly underestimating his man. In the dispute that focused on Nelson's allegedly innovative use of blue coloring for the seas in his maps, for example, Nelson wrote on 9 January 1863: "Now that I have come to this Country, it will be unpleasant

²⁶ C.B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1947), 2:556.

to me to see imitations of what is peculiarly my own, and the result of years of experiment and study.” And again on 13 January: “It is our intention to make arrangements for publishing our Maps here, and I feel it necessary, therefore, at the outset to remonstrate against any private Publisher, and still more against any Public Institution imitating what we have already, or shall hereafter produce.” And finally, on 19 January:

When they were first published I wrote from Scotland to Mr. James Campbell, our Agent here, requesting him to call and submit the Maps to you and offer them for introduction among the Schools of Upper Canada. They were duly sent up to the Institution, and one copy of each was ordered; since which I have heard nothing about them. You can imagine my surprise to find, among the first things I saw on reaching Toronto, that two Maps had been prepared in imitation of them, and I thought it best to let you know how I view the matter.

Allow me to say that you have been misinformed on one point. Messieurs Chewett and Company have not only seen our Maps, but a few days after the copies were sent up to the Institution, they obtained for themselves a copy of each, which they afterwards returned. As far as they are concerned, I believe that, in the long run, it will be better for them not to imitate the style of these Maps.

Ryerson rose to the attack, arguing cogently: “I do not see upon what possible ground you can claim a monopoly of blue in the colouring of Maps, since it has been used by French, English, American and Canadian publishers long before last year.” Ryerson deliberately oversimplified Nelson’s argument, for, as ridiculous as he made it sound, it does seem possible that Nelson’s maps were imitated; their distinctive coloring is emphasized by A.&W. Mackinlay of Halifax, for example, when they advertised “Nelson’s Blue-Sea Maps.”²⁷ Furthermore, throughout this period the Scottish maps that appeared in Campbell geographies featured blue seas and other sophisticated features not present in the maps in the authorized geographies written by Hodgins and published by Lovell. Nelson’s attack on Ryerson’s integrity was nonetheless an unhappy approach for a businessman to take; Campbell’s own success with the Department came only when he manifested considerable humility.

To Nelson’s several offers to make adjustments according to the Department’s prescription, Ryerson consistently maintained this position:

Each Publisher thinks, — at least he tells us — that his Maps are preferable to all others and that he has peculiar facilities for preparing and modifying them and will be happy of any suggestions from us for that purpose; but I cannot assume the office of counsellor, or adviser, or prompter, to one Publisher more than to another.²⁸

²⁷ J.B. Calkin, *School Geography of the World*, rev. ed. (Halifax: A. & W. Mackinlay, 1876), back cover.

²⁸ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 18:80.

Indeed Ryerson and the Council were true to the letter of this remark, the Council consistently refusing to authorize any book until the publisher submitted it in a final form, having thereby already incurred the substantial expense of preparation and publication. Yet commissions of various sorts, especially the arrangements made with the publisher John Lovell for textbooks written by close associates of Ryerson — notably, Hodgins, J.H. Sangster, and T.J. Robertson — suggest that the spirit of Ryerson's claim was violated.

In addition to Ryerson's rejoinders to Nelson, Hodgins' published version of these letters contains his own annotations. When Nelson complained that he could not "consent to others carrying out improvements made by ourselves," Hodgins retorted: "How different this is to the whole policy of the Department on the subject. Any improvement it may make in Maps, Globes, or Apparatus, may be freely copied by any one, while Mr. Nelson, of course, as a Publisher in the trade, claims a monopoly of all of his revisions and improvements." The contradiction apparent here and elsewhere between the Department's self-righteous defense of Canadian free enterprise and its scorn for a businessman who demonstrated any interest in making a profit reflects the persistent difficulties Campbell encountered, both as publisher and as bookseller, in dealing with Ryerson.

When Nelson proposed that "if ordered in quantities we are prepared to furnish them at a very low rate," Hodgins noted that "nevertheless the Department pays Mr. Nelson and Mr. Campbell, his Agent, more for each map than to any other publisher." And so the debate went, prefiguring more heated controversies to come. Evident in the Nelson-Ryerson correspondence of 1863 are virtually all the attitudes and rhetorical positions relevant to Campbell and to mid-century Canadian publishing in general that the powerful Chief Superintendent maintained. In the course of frustrating Thomas Nelson, Ryerson articulated his view of the dichotomy that plagued Campbell for twenty years:

It is of course, your object and interest to sell as many of your Maps as possible, and upon the most advantageous terms. It is my object and duty to get the best maps possible upon the most favourable terms for the local School Authorities and supporters of the Schools, without reference to individual interest.

In 1866 James Campbell would ask: "Is not every business man all over the world selfish, a victim to avarice, and of the lust for gain," according to Dr. Ryerson's definition? ²⁹

²⁹ *Toronto Globe*, 4 April 1866, p. 1.

THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORIZATION

Strange to say, there is not a single book on that list written by a Canadian author, except those by employees of the Education Office — Messrs. Hodgins, Sangster, and Robertson We have hitherto had to work against all obstacles. We did not employ Education-office employees to write our books, — so they were rejected by the Council. We dared to publish a book on geography — it was rejected, because there already existed one written by one of their own employees.

— James Campbell, Toronto *Globe*, 9 March 1866

After 1846 a textbook publisher in Upper Canada was forced to secure authorization from the Council of Public Instruction before his books could enter their most potentially lucrative market. Although it is clear that many unauthorized textbooks were used by schools in defiance or in ignorance of the law, it is equally certain that authorization and the official monopoly it conveyed in the case of a copyrighted text was a decided economic advantage. Indeed, a large number of Campbell imprints, both copyright and reprint titles, were authorized during and after Ryerson's tenure, but the exceptions were nonetheless intolerable to Campbell. Principal among these were two textbooks that he had caused to be prepared especially for Upper Canadian schools — Sir John Alexander Boyd's *A Summary of Canadian History* (1860) and Campbell's *Modern School Geography and Atlas* (1865); his British-American Series of reading books narrowly escaped the same fate.

The climax of Campbell's struggles with Ryerson for authorization was recorded in a series of letters that appeared in the *Globe* during March and April 1866. Ryerson was most enraged by Campbell's letter of 9 March; this, he contended, was the first systematic attack on the principle of authorization and the provision of a uniform series of textbooks, rather than merely on the Educational Depository. Stressing again the mercenary objectives of Campbell and Nelson and the selfless motives of the Council, Ryerson answered Campbell's attack:

Mr. Campbell has come to the country to make as much money as he can, and has not the least responsibility as to the efficiency and economy of the public schools. He has published no book to supply a want in our schools, but has published two inferior books to supersede others already in use in the schools.

This *ad hominem* attack continued:

Mr. Campbell several times impugns the motives and conduct of others. I must remark, therefore, that it is only since his own agency has been dispensed with by this Department in procuring some ten thousand dollars worth of school prize and library books from himself and the firm of Thomas Nelson & Sons, that he has commenced his attacks upon our school book system; and that it is only since Mr. Lovell refused him a share or interest in the General Geography prepared by Mr. Hodgins, that Mr. Campbell has proceeded to publish a geography on his own account — a geography professedly printed in Canada, but actually printed in England, and imported into Canada.³⁰

This geography was a focal point for hostilities for some time to come and was never authorized during Ryerson's tenure. The specimen of the *Modern School Geography and Atlas* issued by Campbell in 1865 verifies Ryerson's accusation of duplicity to some extent.³¹ It claims to have been printed both by Campbell and in Liverpool; that is, a general printer's imprint on the verso of the title page states explicitly that it has been printed by James Campbell & Son (such an imprint was discovered on only one other book and is therefore suspicious), while the preface boasts that the maps were printed in Liverpool by Messrs. Philip & Son, stressing that they are copperplate maps printed in colors, rather than old-fashioned woodcuts with hand-coloring. Though this is obviously not bald deception, given the preface, the fact that the maps are each signed "James Campbell, Toronto and Montreal," rather than "Philip" reinforces Ryerson's position. While it is fairly certain that the maps were produced in Scotland, Ryerson's insistence that the textbook was entirely prepared by Thomas Nelson is contradicted not only by Campbell at the time of publication, but by W.C. Campbell in a letter of 15 September 1888 discussing a revision of, presumably, this text with the Minister of Education, G.W. Ross: "I was aware that the old book, prepared by me over twenty years ago, had become somewhat out of date, and was not up to the style of the requirements of the present time."³² Whatever the extent of W.C. Campbell's involvement in the preparation or adaptation of this controversial geography, the authorized geographies written by Hodgins and published by John Lovell were undoubtedly more thoroughly Canadian — written and published in Canada, "printed in Canada, on paper of Canadian manufacture, by Canadian labour and capital."³³ On the other hand, Ryerson's pedantic attempt to refute Campbell's charge that favoritism had been shown toward "employees" of the Council was absurd: Hodgins was not an employee of the Council, but of the government, Ryerson contended: he had no "interest" in the book because

³⁰ Toronto *Globe*, 27 March 1866, p. 1.

³¹ Ryerson also cites a *Globe* editorial that claims that Thomas Nelson is both author and publisher of this geography; see Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 19:189.

³² Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 1, p. 19.

³³ Toronto *Globe*, 27 March 1866, p. 1.

he was merely paid by the publisher to write it, but received no subsequent remuneration from its sale.

The fact that Campbell's first original textbook, Boyd's *Summary of Canadian History*, was also rejected in favor of a work by Hodgins was not conciliatory. First published in 1860, this small volume was reprinted many times and updated at least once. Although Ryerson claimed that it was not "prepared or published to meet any want in our schools, but as a speculation," and that insofar as it related to Upper Canada since 1815, it was "a bald and partial rehash of old party disputes,"³⁴ Campbell consistently maintained the position expressed in the preface:

Many histories of Canada have been written, but there is not one which, while comprehending in brief space the story of our three historic centuries, is not either confused and fragmentary in arrangement, or disfigured by gross blunders; while some are remarkable for a union of both defects. To supply a deficiency, therefore, the present little summary has been written. Even without authorization Campbell claimed to have sold nearly forty thousand copies of Boyd's *Summary* by 1866, as well as eleven thousand copies of the *Modern School Geography* during its first year.³⁵

Ryerson was relentless in his attack on the Nelson-Campbell-Brown "family compact" and probably succeeded in establishing that Campbell and Nelson, at least, were more interested in making money than in deferring to Ryerson and his brand of nationalism. Indeed, the superiority of Hodgins' works may well be defensible, but Campbell would not have been convinced of the Department's disinterestedness by Hodgins' panegyrics on his publisher, John Lovell. In the second edition of his early *Geography and History of British America* (1858), for example, Hodgins noted his "great pleasure in stating that, at the request of an enterprising Canadian publisher, he is now engaged in the preparation of a work on general geography and history . . . which is designed to supersede the anti-British publications on geography, which are to be found in many of our schools." And in the preface to the 1865 edition of his *History of Canada and of the Other British Provinces in North America*, Hodgins described his labor thus:

To say that the preparation of this and the author's preceding books has been an agreeable duty, is but to express the general feeling of those who have had the pleasure and opportunity of aiding Mr. Lovell in his patriotic purpose of providing a colonial series of text-books within the provinces, especially adapted for use in the Schools in every part of the proposed Confederation.

But Campbell had his own nationalistic stance and consistently accused Ryerson of American leanings: "Unlike the Chief Superintendent, who admires the United States, their books and educational institutions, we confine our

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Toronto Globe*, 9 March 1866, p. 1.

attention entirely to British and Canadian books, as most befitting a Province of Great Britain, and the inclination of our people.”³⁶ Objecting to the number of American pirated editions of British copyrights on the authorized list, Campbell contended that with fair competition, “we will then keep up with Britain and other countries, and our authors will occupy a name and a place never hitherto accorded to them.”³⁷ Which point of view was more conducive to the health of literature and publishing in Canada may be debated. Ryerson’s prevailed.

One of Ryerson’s principal objections to Campbell’s methods for securing authorization was aimed at his practice of canvassing teachers themselves and other prospective customers in circumvention of the central authority. Ryerson characterized this “insidious” practice as a corrupt influence from the United States, citing persuasive examples of the problems book pedlars presented to school systems there; but Campbell’s practice may be traced back to Nelson’s travellers and had nothing to do with the proliferation of “trash” that was the American problem. The custom that is still observed of distributing “examination copies” to teachers in the hope of their being adopted for classroom use inspired Ryerson’s greatest displeasure, ostensibly because it promoted wasteful, unnecessary changes in textbooks. Campbell attempted to deny offering such bribes, but all the evidence weighs against him on this point — including testimonials that he published and his own advertisements. On one occasion Campbell declared:

We have now fairly commenced one series of Canada school books, and notwithstanding all the opposition of Dr. Ryerson, we shall continue to add to them, and shall submit our books to the Council of Public Instruction, and make them known to the school trustees, and to the “despised” teachers, and be content to stand or fall by their decision, irrespective of Dr. Ryerson or the efforts of the monopoly.³⁸

Campbell and Brown stressed the fallacy of Ryerson’s claim that parents, who paid for the texts and to whom the teachers and trustees were responsible, should be protected by the Council from extravagance. Clearly the Education Department had at least as much demonstrable interest in the adoption of particular texts as the trustees and teachers.

Of all the textbooks used in mid-nineteenth-century schools, the readers promised the greatest return to any publisher who could monopolize or at least participate in their production. In the 1860s the movement for a Canadian series of readers to supersede the old Irish readers that had been authorized exclusively since the institution of uniform textbooks in 1846 gained momentum; Brown argued for Canadian readers in the *Globe*, and the requests of many educators for this change in textbooks are preserved in the records of the Depart-

³⁶ Toronto *Globe*, 4 April 1866, p. 1.

³⁷ Toronto *Globe*, 9 March 1866, p. 1.

³⁸ Toronto *Globe*, 4 April 1866, p. 1.

ment, in the columns of the *Globe*, and elsewhere. Campbell's espousal of this movement in 1866 in connection with his denunciation of the central authorization mechanism was clearly prompted by a predicament in which he found himself at that time: Campbell had been only a minor publisher of the Irish readers, but by 1866 had had caused to be prepared a series of British-American readers with which he hoped to replace the Irish readers and to meet the growing demand for Canadian content in Upper Canadian schools, as well as the schools of other British North American provinces. The Council, however, announced a ban on the adoption of new readers in the cause of maintaining uniformity at the same time that it promised to revise the old reader itself, a move which promised a death-blow to Campbell's undoubtedly costly enterprise. An editorial in the *Globe* of 8 March 1866 discussed the issue:

When thus revised, it is the intention of the department to give a copy gratuitously to any publisher who will print the books for sale to the schools. Under this arrangement, it is claimed that "no single publisher will be able (as in the case of Mr. Campbell's new series) to claim a monopoly in a class of books which are considered so essential for use in the schools."

In the end Campbell salvaged his project with an extraordinary proposal so amenable to Ryerson that it set the course for the Department's arrangements with publishers until several years after Ryerson's retirement. While Hodgins toured England in order to negotiate better terms for the Depository with British publishers, he received the following news from Ryerson: "Mr. James Campbell has made a liberal offer in regard to the Readers. He proposes to leave the publication of them open to all Printers throughout the Dominion, without charge, or hindrance. Doctor Sangster, after examining them after revision, reports rather favourable on them."³⁹

On 4 January 1868 the Council of Public Instruction formally authorized the Canadian National Series of reading books that had been "published under their direction by Messieurs Campbell and Son."⁴⁰ These readers, which came to be known as the "Ryerson Books,"⁴¹ consisted of Campbell's newly-prepared British-American Series with revisions by the Text Book Committee of the Council, whose members signed with James Campbell & Son the indenture of 23 September 1867 that transferred the copyright for the series to the Chief Superintendent in return for a payment of five shillings each to the publisher and the revisers.⁴²

³⁹ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 20:2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁴¹ Viola Elizabeth Parvin, *Authorization of Textbooks for the Schools of Ontario, 1846-1950* (Toronto: Published in Association with the Canadian Textbook Publishers' Institute by University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 40.

⁴² Alexander Marling, *A Brief History of Public and High School Text-Books Authorized for the Province of Ontario, 1846-1889*, Prepared for the Education Department (Toronto: Warwick & Sons, 1890), p. 54.

These books were published entirely at Campbell's expense, and it was only after they had been finally authorized that the Council ordered

That, in regard to those Publishers and Printers who have transferred or may hereafter transfer to the Chief Superintendent . . . the copyright of School Text Books, . . . it is deemed right and best, for the encouragement of authorship, and the printing of good Books, that the Chief Superintendent . . . should not sanction, or countenance, for at least twelve months after the authorization of such Text Books, the reprinting of them by any other than the party who has incurred the expense and responsibility of preparing and printing the first Edition.⁴³

Although a Departmental pamphlet by Alexander Marling claimed in 1890 that Campbell held exclusive publication rights for the series from its formal authorization to 1871, when Warwick was granted the right to publish them,⁴⁴ this privilege was the result of events rather than law, for Alfred Dredge had been granted permission to publish the readers in 1869, but later abandoned his intention.

From April to October 1869 the Text Book Committee was engaged in revising the readers, which contained numerous errors attributed to the haste necessarily involved in their original preparation, particularly insofar as it prevented trans-Atlantic transmission of proofs for correction before printing, which was executed in Scotland. The 1869 revisions were minor, but arbitrators were appointed to determine the remuneration to be paid by the publishers to the Committee, who were disgruntled at not having been paid for their original labors. Having been granted publishing rights in July 1870, Warwick shared with Campbell responsibility for the payment for the revised edition. The whole question of payment to members of the Council for work authorized by themselves aroused considerable political controversy in 1872, and James Campbell certainly fed the flame.⁴⁵ In self-defense Ryerson returned to one of his familiar anti-Campbell themes, the threat of a publisher's monopoly:

It is also to be observed, that the first Publishers of the revised School Text Books have seemed anxious to pay as large an amount as could be justified, (when they understood that any succeeding Publisher would have to pay a like sum, or pay them proportionally what they had advanced), in order to retain as long as possible the exclusive sale of the Books, by preventing another Publisher from undertaking the printing and sale of the Books, and thus accomplish to a certain extent, if not completely, what certain Publishers and Newspapers in their interests have so long contended for, namely, the monopoly of the publication and sale of School Books, beyond all comparison the most certain and most profitable branch of the Book Trade, as may be conceived from the fact, as is believed, that hundreds of thousands of copies of the revised School Text Books have already been sold by one Publisher alone.⁴⁶

⁴³ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 20:63.

⁴⁴ Marling, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁵ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 24:212-25.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

For the right to publish the revised editions, each publisher was required to give \$2,000 security and to provide two \$1,000 sureties guaranteeing that the “new editions shall be equal to the former ones in typography, paper, illustrations and binding, as shown in the standard copy.”⁴⁷ The physical quality of the textbook was always taken seriously by Ryerson and his successors; publishers were legally bound to publish only books equal in quality to the samples approved by the Council. The binding style of the Canadian series, which seems to have been Campbell’s original conception, was widely used for other textbooks and by other publishers. On the original readers it consisted of red cloth, usually with a pebble grain, with the boards blocked in blind, a four-rule border enclosing a circular design with a short title and the words “Authorized by the Council of Public Instruction for Ontario.” The two parts of the first book were bound in limp white cloth for durability. The use of illustrations was a departure from the Irish readers, although Nelson had tried to introduce illustrated readers as early as 1863. The wood engravings were apparently all executed by British artists, including many as prominent as Harrison Weir, the Dalziels, and Whymper. At one point, when the Text Book Committee intended to prepare its own series, Ryerson asked Hodgins to seek out appropriate illustrations on his trip to England; apparently engravers were not established in Canada at the time, though by 1885 the Ontario Readers claimed to have thoroughly Canadian illustrations.⁴⁸ The letterpress in early editions of the Canadian readers was good, but severe deterioration is evident in the plates used for later printings. Canada Publishing Company’s imprints are noticeably less attractive than Campbell’s, and Warwick and Adam Miller also produced some inferior examples. It is possible, perhaps, that the fact that Campbell’s first edition was produced in Scotland accounts for the general impression that Campbell’s issues were physically superior to the others.

The Council declared that all new editions after January 1870 “shall be printed in Canada, on paper made in the Dominion, and shall also be bound therein,” a dictum that coincided with the *Canada Bookseller’s* announcement in March 1870 that Campbell was preparing to produce his readers in Toronto for the first time. A report from the Council to the Provincial Secretary on 29 April 1872 acknowledged certain drawbacks in the enforcement of the requirement of production in Canada; at the same time it noted that publishers had claimed to require five rather than one year of exclusive sale to ensure adequate remuneration for the publication of a textbook, but that the latter claim had not been assented to by the Council.

More important historically than the publishing difficulties related to the physical quality of the book is the issue of Canadian content. The British-American Series of readers was, according to Campbell, written in Canada by Canadians: although there appears to have been no mention of it at the time of publication, W.C. Campbell was later identified as the author of this series —

⁴⁷ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 21:270.

⁴⁸ Detailed accounts listing all contributors to the production of the Ontario Readers are printed in Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 37, pp. 102-5.

of, in fact, the Canadian series that grew out of the British-American.⁴⁹ Certainly an effort had been made to include works by Canadian authors, and in the more advanced readers the nationality of Canadian and United States authors was indicated in the indexes. The prefaces of the Canadian readers were derived to a great extent from those of the British-American Series, though they were signed by the Council. Sophisticated discussions of educational theory were combined in these prefaces with self-conscious appeals to nationalism.

Although critics point to its extensive inclusion of rearranged material from the Irish readers, the Canadian Series of readers nevertheless stands as a milestone in the history of Canadian textbook publishing; it was the first authorized series of reading books specifically created for the schools of Canada. James Campbell & Son not only provided the basis for the series, but they were the sole publishers of the first edition. Campbell's success with the Department in this venture was only in part due to his having a good product to offer in the first place and to his being willing to relinquish the copyright to the Chief Superintendent. The connection in Scotland that allowed Campbell to produce creditable textbooks much more quickly than any other Canadian publisher surely influenced Ryerson's decision at a time when pressure for new Canadian readers was mounting and the Text Book Committee was showing little progress in its own efforts to produce a new series. The 1867 bargain was indeed a hard one for Campbell, but his persistence and confidence did not go unrewarded, for during the next decade he produced a major share of the textbooks used in Ontario and throughout British North America.

The Canadian Series of readers enjoyed exclusive authorization for Ontario until 1883; Campbell also published a companion speller (1868) and an advanced reader (1871) in the same series. There was only the one revision, in 1869, throughout this period. Adam Crooks, who succeeded Ryerson in 1876 to become the first Minister of Education for Ontario, had announced that more than one series of readers would subsequently be authorized, and in the 1880s three firms undertook the preparation of new readers. The change from Ryerson's policy of authorizing a single textbook for each subject was undoubtedly prompted by public criticism that was encouraged in large measure by Campbell and Brown, while public pressure for replacements for the obsolete 1867 readers had also peaked by this time.

James Campbell & Son, in conjunction with Nelson's, prepared a Special Canadian Series of Nelson's Royal Readers, which were widely used in Britain and elsewhere in British North America. The Canadian editor of the new Royal Readers was J. Howard Hunter, who had written in 1873:

In 1860, the Council limited its action to *recommending* a certain work concurrently with others: in 1867, it had got to the length of "authorizing" *one* text-book, to the exclusion of all others. One cannot fail to remark, in reading these suggestive Minutes, that this change of policy coincided, in point of time, with the publication of works by officers of the Education Office and Normal School.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 37, p. 84.

⁵⁰ J. Howard Hunter, "School Administration in Ontario," *Canadian Monthly*, July-December 1873, p. 523.

At the same time, W. J. Gage & Co. prepared its Canadian Readers, an adaptation of J.M.D. Meiklejohn's English Readers, published by W. & R. Chambers in Edinburgh; and Canada Publishing Company issued the Royal Canadian Readers prepared by W. C. Campbell and a large slate of local editorial and literary advisers that included several prominent educators and another Campbell son, Prof. John Campbell, "M. A., Presbyterian College, Montreal, Gold Medallist in Modern and Metaphysics, and Prince's Prizeman."⁵¹

The three firms competed fiercely before and after publication both for authorization and for adoption by individual school boards. A lively correspondence records exchanges between the publishers and the Department regarding complaints about each other's misleading advertising, the Department's alleged favoritism toward one or the other, the relative merits of the competing series, and finally the authorization in 1883 of the Royal and the Canadian Readers, but not the Royal Canadian Readers.⁵²

Both of the authorized series have some legitimate claim to being called "Canadian": they include Canadian selections, and they have been altered to eliminate illogical or inappropriate non-Canadian allusions--more rigorously so, it might be noted, in the Campbell than in the Gage series. Nevertheless, the bases for both of these were Scottish, and much of the initial production of both was carried out either in Scotland or, in the case of the Gage readers, in the United States. The rejected series, as W. C. Campbell strenuously argued, was the only thoroughly Canadian series of the three. (Predictably, his arguments were aimed more directly at the Gage than the Campbell-Nelson series.)

The Royal Readers were ranked first by the committee of examiners, ahead of the Canadian Readers. According to their report, "In literary excellence the series of Nelson and Campbell & Son stands first, "while "the earlier books of Gage's series have the advantage of greater simplicity."⁵³ While Campbell agreed to remedy certain defects in the first edition of the Royal Readers, principally in regard to the strength of the binding and the requirement that authorization date and price appear on the title page, it is unlikely that a second issue ever appeared; in December 1883 "notice was given that The Royal Readers, and The Canadian Readers . . . would be superseded as soon as a new series of Readers could be prepared. The effect of this notice was, practically, to extend the use of the authorized Readers of 1867 for another year, and to prevent the introduction of new Readers . . . except in a very few instances."⁵⁴

Although the practice of transferring the copyright to the Department was abandoned in 1882, elaborate legal instruments were still signed to allow the Department to exercise control over the quality, price, and distribution of the text-books. For example, the Indenture of 11 July 1883 between James Campbell

⁵¹ Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 37, p. 84.

⁵² For the correspondence relating to the authorization of these series of readers, see Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 37, pp. 34-86.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁵⁴ Marling, p. 9.

& Son and "the Queen (on behalf of the Education Department for Ontario)" included the following specification:

The paper to be used in any and every edition of the said "Royal Readers," and in every copy thereof, shall be equal in quality to the sample prescribed by the said Department of Education, to wit, sixty pounds D. Royal, of good color and texture, and well calendered and no inferior quality of paper shall, under any pretext whatsoever, be used: the type and ink shall be such as to produce a clean and distinct impression; and the stitching of each and every book shall run from top to bottom of each sheet with broad tapes or extra mull, at or near top and bottom, and in the centre of the back of each and every book, and shall be attached to the covers: so that the whole binding shall be thoroughly done and durable. If, however, the said publishers, their executors, administrators, or assigns should prefer it, Brehemir's wire may be used, the same to be used with stitching-machine with wire staples to extra strong mull running from top to bottom, the stitches being as close as possible to top and bottom, corresponding with sample submitted by the said publishers to the said Department; and no copy of the said work which does not in all particulars comply with the foregoing in regard to paper, type, ink, and binding, shall be sold or disposed of for use in Ontario.

Controls on Prices and Profits, as well as contents and physical quality, were included in the same document; there was also provision for the protection of Ontario industry:

The said publishers . . . will not publish nor cause to be published, nor be in any way accessory or privy to the publishing of any edition or copy or copies of the said "Royal Readers" in the United States or anywhere else without the limits of the Province of Ontario, for sale or use within the said Province of Ontario. ⁵⁵

An additional bond required that Campbell cease publishing the old Canadian series of readers and provide for relieving retailers of their stock of these by filling orders according to carefully specified procedures. In short, while the Department under Crooks radically altered Ryerson's authorization policy, his principles regarding quality and price control were upheld without interruption.⁵⁶ When both publishers from the United States and local parties were asked on various occasions to review the prices of Ontario textbooks in the nineteenth century, they without exception found them astonishingly low and questioned the ability of the publishers to realize any profit at all.

The Department claimed in 1883 that the specific authorization decisions resulted simply from their estimate of the relative quality of the competing series of readers and from their decision at the outset to authorize only two series. W. C. Campbell and other Canada Publishing officials suggested, however, that the Royal Canadian Readers were rejected because James Campbell & Son and Canada Publishing Company had been viewed as one firm, while

⁵⁵ For legal documents relating to the Royal Readers, see Marling, pp. 56-61.

⁵⁶ For detailed statements of the costs of six Campbell textbooks, see Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 37, pp. 27-31.

in fact James Campbell & Son held less than a majority of shares in Canada Publishing Company, and the latter had no interest whatsoever in the Royal Readers. The interpretation of these events that never quite surfaces, as it would have in Ryerson's time, is that James Campbell was once again trying to monopolize the reading book industry by publishing not just one, but both of the authorized series — a high-powered, sophisticated series from Britain and a simpler, native-born series as well. In any event, Adam Crooks' mental illness precluded verification of W. C. Campbell's claim that the Minister had assured him of authorization, without which assurance he said he would not have undertaken the production. The legitimacy of Canada Publishing Company's claim was sufficiently acknowledged, however, in the end, that they were granted equal publishing rights with Campbell and Gage in the Ontario Readers that were compiled by the Department of Education to replace the two newly authorized series. W. C. Campbell relinquished his position with Canada Publishing Company during the course of these exchanges, and the issue arose years later when Campbell was trying to secure publishing rights for the Department's geography. At that time he pointed out that he had lost a great deal of money on both the Royal Canadian Readers and a revised edition of his geography, while Canada Publishing Company had recovered some of its losses by sharing in the publishing of the Ontario Readers and the new geographies.⁵⁷

The Royal Readers were the last important publishing venture for James Campbell & Son, since the firm's bankruptcy occurred shortly before the contract for the Ontario Readers was signed. The Department, amidst much controversy, transferred the publishing rights to Thomas Nelson & Sons on the alleged assumption that they, not Campbell, were the true proprietors of the Royal Readers.⁵⁸ It was argued that leaving the matter to be settled with the rest of Campbell's estate would allow the other two publishers to get a substantial head-start, thereby benefiting the Canada Publishing Company portion of Campbell's estate at the expense of Thomas Nelson & Sons. Other creditors of James Campbell & Son were not convinced that Nelson's had automatic right to the contract, which they sold immediately to Copp, Clark of Toronto. Favoritism toward Nelson's could, of course, only be plausible in a Department no longer headed by Egerton Ryerson.

⁵⁷ Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Return*, no. 1, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁸ Ontario, Legislative Assembly, *Supplementary Return*, no. 51, 5th Leg., 2nd sess., 48 Vic., 1885, p. 3.

THE EDUCATIONAL DEPOSITORY

We should hope that the days of the Provincial store in the Normal School buildings are numbered without the intervention of the booksellers, either as individuals, or as an Association. There is absolutely so little that can be said in defence of that concern, viewed either educationally or economically, that we cannot imagine the Government consenting to its continuance, or the Minister of Education acquiescing in the idea that in addition to his other duties he must turn bookseller, and look after all the petty details of a huxter's stall.

— Editorial, *Toronto Globe*, 10 March 1876

Confrontations between James Campbell and Egerton Ryerson stemmed not only from Campbell's role as an educational publisher, but--perhaps more surprisingly--from his role as wholesale bookseller as well. The complete history of the Educational Depository will have to be written elsewhere, but a few examples of James Campbell's difficulties with it should contribute to an understanding of his unusual importance and vulnerability, as well as of the Education Department's effect on the bookselling trade in the province.

In operation by 1853, the Educational Depository was created by Ryerson to supply schools and the public libraries that were being developed in schools with books, maps, and other apparatus at cost prices; although the stress lay on library and prize books, textbooks were also sold through the Depository to some extent. Beyond the exceptionally low prices, a provincial grant to the amount of one-hundred percent was applied to every order over a certain modest minimum. Ryerson and Hodgins negotiated directly with publishers in Britain and the United States to obtain favorable terms for imported books and then issued Depository catalogues from which local authorities could order either individual items or whole libraries, the latter selected either by themselves or by Department officials, if the buyer preferred. Sunday schools, local superintendents, and teachers could order books from the Depository at catalogue prices, but without the grant. It is important to consider that in addition to its official purpose, the Depository served to increase the central authority's control: in the event, many officials opted to allow Department employees to select books for them, and in any case the Depository catalogue had been entirely selected by Ryerson and Hodgins: furthermore, individual orders were monitored to make sure that teachers were actually ordering suitable books for their particular classes and were not, for example, trying to order books for their personal rather than professional purposes.

It is hardly surprising that the Depository sustained innumerable attacks from retail booksellers who objected to losing their "legitimate trade." As vehemently as Ryerson claimed to promote literacy through the distribution of inexpensive good books, the booksellers argued that a flourishing book trade contributed to the cultural life and education of Upper Canadians. (Ryerson, of course, made this claim for indigenous publishing and printing industries, but failed to acknowledge the booksellers' value.)

While James Campbell was the booksellers' standard-bearer in many of these attacks on "Dr. Ryerson's Book Shop," he had one skeleton in his closet that Ryerson and Hodgins tirelessly exposed every time the issue arose. In response to an attack in the *Globe* of 8 April 1870, for example, Hodgins wrote:

In regard to the statement that the Depository is injurious to the Book Trade of the Province, let me answer it in words of a memorial presented to the Legislature by Messieurs James Campbell and other Booksellers of Toronto in 1858.

"Your Memorialists are of the decided opinion that the establishment of the Educational Depository has done a great deal, in fostering a desire for literature among the people of Canada, and has indirectly added to the wealth of persons in the Book Trade, inasmuch as the desire for general literature has been supplied through their means; and your Memorialists would respectfully refer for a proof of this to the Customs Returns attending this branch of trade in the Province of Canada.

"Your Memorialists would further urge the fact that the destruction of the Depository would be attended with grave consequences to the people of Canada, seeing that a pure and healthy fountain of literature would be destroyed, and the advantage lost that Public Schools have enjoyed of forming the nucleus of Public Libraries at an easy and reasonable rate. ⁵⁹

During the first major attack on the Depository, which was led by George Brown in 1858, Campbell was aligned with Ryerson. According to Ryerson, Campbell turned against the Depository only when his own services as supplier were dispensed with in 1865, ⁶⁰ but Campbell explained his change of heart in this way:

At that time, except in the largest cities and towns, few booksellers were to be found, and except in the cities, no books were ever imported from Britain at all; now, there is scarcely a small town or village in the country which has not at least one bookseller, and the greatest facilities exist for procuring books in every department of literature. ⁶¹

It was noted above that the 1866 war against the Depository evolved into a war against the principle of authorization and the involvement of officials of

⁵⁹ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 22:178.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 19:191.

⁶¹ *Toronto Globe*, 4 April 1866, p. 1.

the Department in the production of textbooks. From that time on Campbell was firmly lodged with Brown against the Department. A series of attacks on the Depository during the years 1874 to 1877 can probably be considered the climax of that struggle, which resulted in considerable erosion of the Depository's position.

Ryerson changed the name to the People's Depository of Ontario at about the time that the Legislative Assembly passed the School Reform Bill of 1874 that "afforded an opportunity for the Book Trade to share with the Depository the supplying of prizes and library books for the schools through public grants to the extent of one-half the cost."⁶² Although titles and even editions supplied under this arrangement had to appear on the Depository lists, the Depository's monopoly was nevertheless ended, and in this as in other respects, Ryerson's power was on the wane. Commenting on the effect of the new law on 4 February 1875, Ryerson wrote:

I can term this little better than a conspiracy to commence building up a monopoly for the Brothers-in-Law of the Chief Manager of *The Globe* Newspaper, and their Agent in this City, to the detriment of the public, and against other Booksellers both in England and Canada.⁶³

Having been given an inch, the booksellers acted according to the old adage, and the struggle continued; the Depository officials, by the same token, immediately lowered their prices from nineteen to eighteen cents per shilling sterling. In response, renewed attacks from booksellers centered on the question of "cost" — whether the Depository actually covered its cost at that price or was being subsidized in the area of overhead costs by the people and thus still exploiting an unfair competitive advantage over the retailers. The Depository was subjected to yet another investigation in 1875 when a special committee chaired by Daniel Wilson and including Goldwin Smith debated the issue until it was declared *ultra vires* on 8 July 1875. Ryerson for his part had prepared an extensive brief in order to submit the cost question to the courts, but Attorney General Oliver Mowat stopped him on the grounds that the question was not appropriate for the consideration of the courts and that the brief was much too lengthy and filled with irrelevant, if otherwise "interesting and valuable" information. Both Mowat and Ryerson were obviously irritated over this matter.⁶⁴

These continual objections to the Depository apparently precipitated Ryerson's retirement from office. On 10 April 1875 Ryerson wrote to Hodgins from his summer home in Long Point, in response to Hodgins' personal concern with unfavorable publicity surrounding the investigation:

When I get home I will write the Attorney-General a Letter on the subject of the Depository attacks and misstatements, which will probably be remembered by him. You need not be concerned, or worried about it. I

⁶² Sissons, p. 613.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 26:236.

⁶⁴ *Papers and Correspondence with Respect to the Depository Branch of the Education Department*, Presented to the Legislative Assembly by Command (Toronto: Printed by Hunter, Rose & Co., 1877), p. 78.

will bring the matter to an issue, and, not having this “sapping and mining process” continued through the agency of Mr. James Campbell, I will tell the Attorney-General that I wrote nearly every time to Mr. Campbell myself, and what Letters I did not write, I revised. If this system of worry continues I shall insist upon a Parliamentary Committee of Investigation, if not a Commission.⁶⁵

Hodgins noted that rather than writing, Ryerson discussed the matter of the Depository with Mowat in an interview, the results of which impressed him “with the desirability, even the necessity, of his retirement from Office.”

A petition of 4 February 1876, just fifteen days before Adam Crooks was sworn in as Ryerson’s successor, urged “that the sale of books be discontinued at the Education Office” and was signed by eighty booksellers from fourteen Ontario municipalities; the name of James Campbell & Son headed the list.⁶⁶ Included with the petition were testimonials from school trustees and other parties who claimed that the booksellers were equally or better able to supply the books desired than the Depository. In a lengthy response to this petition Hodgins rehashed the Department’s traditional arguments in defense of the Depository: first, since it is customary for the government to supply to any of its branches at cost prices whatever they require, the Education Department should supply books to the schools, and second, that only the Depository is large enough to stock the variety of books desirable for the schools of the province. He claimed that,

As a matter of fact the supply to Schools through Booksellers is wholly centralized in Toronto. All the lists which are sent in to the Education Department from the various parts of the Country for payment are prepared at Mr. Campbell’s Bookstore, in Toronto, and the Books ordered by School Trustees are distributed from there.⁶⁷

Hodgins continued by quoting statistics that showed that nearly half of the books sent out by booksellers under the grant allowance in 1874 and 1875 were publications of Thomas Nelson & Sons, “represented by their Agent Mr. Campbell,” while another thirteen percent were Routledge’s, leaving about forty percent “to be supplied from all the other leading publishers in England, Scotland and the United States.”⁶⁸ As this same condition prevailed in 1876, Hodgins concluded “that the Nelson-Campbell monopoly is now a settled matter of fact” and “a great injustice to the Schools and a restrictive monopoly of a pernicious kind.” Hodgins then produced a characteristic Ryerson argument: “Another evil arising out of this centralized private Nelson-Campbell monopoly,

⁶⁵ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 27:80.

⁶⁶ *Papers and Correspondence*, pp. 1-3.

⁶⁷ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 27:222-25.

⁶⁸ For a breakdown of books supplied by James Campbell & Son by publisher, see *Papers and Correspondence*, p. 6.

is, that the lure of a percentage for securing orders have been offered to some of our Inspectors, which is directly contrary to Law. Teachers also are sought to be influenced in the same way.”⁶⁹ Campbell’s canvassing techniques again offended the Department, perhaps because they threatened to weaken its own institutionalized authority and influence.

In a memorandum to Crooks, Hodgins extended his defense against an attack he construed as “chiefly to impugn the past administration of the Educational Depository”; the issue of a monopoly was raised again:

Owing to the extent and variety of Books approved by the Council of Public Instruction for Schools, a monopoly must exist, either under public control, or in the hands of a large private Bookselling Establishment. The Latter is now actually the case; for no Books are supplied by Booksellers to the Schools except from Messieurs Campbell and Son, through their local Agents. The lists we receive from various places are in the same handwriting, and attest this. These Agents receive 10% on each Order sent to Messieurs Campbell and Son, although they may never see the Books.⁷⁰

Hodgins further asserted that in practice the trustees left the selection of the books to the bookseller or to the Department, as the case may be:

Booksellers would be more than human if they did not, — they having the choice, — constantly select and send out the Books which afford them the greatest profit, and of that Publisher, (as in this case of the Nelson Books cited), who will give them the largest discount. This species of favouritism can never occur in the Depository.

Soon after Crooks received this petition he appointed the accountant James Smith to examine the records of the Depository from its establishment in 1850 to the end of 1875. “The late Chief Superintendent had frequently desired this to be done,” Crooks said, and, as in all prior investigations, the report showed “that the working and financial management of the Depository Branch of the Department have been satisfactorily conducted by the late Chief Superintendent and his Deputy, Dr. Hodgins, with whom during this whole period rested the personal oversight of all its transactions.”⁷¹

Meanwhile the booksellers’ attacks continued, not only on the definition of “cost,” but also on the Depository’s claim to having the only adequate variety of books. W.C. Campbell, then Secretary of the Booksellers’ Association, prepared a document intended to establish that there was sufficient capital investment and stock held on hand by Ontario booksellers to allow school trustees “to select their prize books by personal inspection from the shelves of book-

⁶⁹ Hodgins, *Documentary History*, 27:222-23.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁷¹ James Brown, *Special Report on the Operations of the Depository Branch of the Education Department, Ontario, from 1850 to 1875 Inclusive*, Presented to the Legislative Assembly by Command (Toronto: Printed by Hunter, Rose & Co., 1877), p. 2.

sellers,” rather than “to send an order to the Education Office, and to trust to what may be selected for them.” Accordingly, Campbell submitted a list of 102 Ontario booksellers “whose chief business is bookselling,” a list of places “where Booksellers combine the business of Druggists, &c., with their bookselling,” and a list of wholesale booksellers in Toronto and Montreal. Refutations by the Department and by H. J. Clark of Copp, Clark & Co. claimed that Campbell exaggerated the amount of capital involved, the importance of books in many of the businesses named, and the variety of stock on hand.⁷²

On 17 June 1876 James Campbell & Son requested that booksellers be given equal publicity in the *Journal of Education* regarding their ability to supply books on the grant basis, insisted that the Depository could not legally supply books to Sunday schools, and urged that its right to supply textbooks be examined.⁷³

Making little headway there and having already attacked the Department’s handling of public libraries, comparing them unfavorably with Mechanics’ Institutes, Campbell negotiated in July with George Paxton Young and the Central Committee of Examiners on the question of “cost”; adhering to the spirit of the 1874 law giving booksellers the right to compete, the Committee required that the price of Depository books reflect true cost, including taxes, rent, and other overhead factors.⁷⁴ The Committee also agreed to permit Campbell to publish his own selection and catalogue based on the Depository list and to submit a list of books to the Department for approval, rather than being forced to rely solely on the Depository list. To every point Hodgins and S.P. May, who was currently in charge of the Depository, objected strenuously.

On 4 October 1876 James Campbell, as President of the Booksellers’ Association, complained to the Minister of Education that booksellers suffered from excessive delay in receiving payment of the grant. Again Hodgins objected, but in November, on Crooks’ recommendation, the price of Depository books was raised from eighteen to nineteen cents per shilling sterling and the procedure for obtaining the grant was simplified.⁷⁵

These small triumphs notwithstanding, in January 1877 yet another petition was presented by the booksellers of Ontario to the Lieutenant-Governor, reiterating their old arguments and claiming rather eloquently:

That your Petitioners are compelled to contrast the invidious position which the Canadian Bookseller thus occupies, as compared with those in Great Britain, where the Government not only takes no part in the sale of books, but all parties have cordially united in removing every restriction to the amplest diffusion of literature among the people, by abolishing the stamp act, removing the duty on paper, and regulating the copyright law so as to give the greatest encouragement to literary production in the interests of the people.

⁷² *Papers and Correspondence*, pp. 29-34.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-63.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-85.

Your Petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that the Government Book Depository may be abolished, as an institution at variance with sound principles of trade, wholly inconsistent with the advanced condition of the Province, and involving great injustice to the Book Trade, while it secures no compensating benefit to the community; but, on the contrary, hampers School Trustees, limits them in their choice of books, and interferes with the growth of a local Book Trade in the smaller towns and villages of the Province, which could not fail to exercise a beneficial influence in the general diffusion of literature among the people.⁷⁶

The petition was signed by ninety-eight booksellers in the province, with the name of James Campbell & Son sixth on the list.

On 1 January 1881 the doors of the Depository were finally closed, and its stock of books, maps, and apparatus was distributed to appropriate public institutions throughout the province.⁷⁷

The foregoing discussion undoubtedly raises more questions than it answers, questions that relate both to basic factual matters, such as the cause of the Campbell bankruptcy, and to historical interpretation. While historians have hardly neglected Egerton Ryerson in their studies of the development of education in Ontario, they have nevertheless usually approached him as a "great man"; explicators of his ideas and motives have taken him at his word, tending to ignore the discrepancies that inevitably exist between a man's articulated philosophy and the motives and beliefs that can be inferred from his actions. In the small segment of Ryerson's career that constitutes his interaction with the publishers and booksellers represented here by James Campbell & Son, two virtually unassailable principles — the Canadianization of textbook production and the diffusion of good books — must be measured against a practice that established restrictive, monopolistic bases for control over the industry, that conveyed exclusive privileges to trusted authors and publishers, that protected Ryerson's own absolute authority, that manifested considerable personal and political animosity toward the Scottish liberal government, and that retarded the development of the retail bookselling trade. This account may suggest in a small way that Ryerson's decisions must be explained as much by these aspects of his practice as by the admirable principles according to which he so convincingly justified them in public.

If Campbell's relationship with Ryerson constitutes only a minor, if suggestive element of Ryerson's biography, it is probably little more of Campbell's. But this relationship looms larger in an account of James Campbell & Son because these are the records that are available. Indeed, there is in the records of the Education Department a significant body of documentary material relating to the Canadian book trades that, when so many publishers' records have been lost, should contribute substantially to a history of publishing in nineteenth-century Canada.

LINDA WILSON CORMAN

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89.

⁷⁷ Ontario, *Report of the Minister of Education for the Years 1880 to 1881* (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1882), p. 157.