

# The Canada Bookseller

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[NEW SERIES.

## AN ONTARIO PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY, AND THE GRANTS TO MECHANICS' INSTITUTES.

We are glad to see that the new Provincial Administration has proposed, and that the Parliament has endorsed the expenditure of a considerable amount for the purchase of books for the Legislative Library. This "new departure" from the parsimony of the late administration will be hailed with satisfaction; and, we doubt not, the liberal appropriation will bear fruit in the increased facilities and aids it will furnish to intelligent legislation. In the necessity for works of reference, in jurisprudence, constitutional history, and the science of government, as well as in the many important works in general literature bearing on questions frequently discussed in legislation, it is not a little surprising that the late Government, while having an ample exchequer, should have declined to make so necessary an expenditure as this. It is all the more anomalous, also, that the Library should have been so neglected when it is borne in mind that there is a large sum due the Province by the Dominion Government as its interest in the general Library assumed by the Ottawa authorities at confederation, and that though this sum was not definitely adjusted and immediately available, yet it was certain, ultimately, to be placed to the credit of the Province and might have been drawn against, even if no special appropriation had been made.

The present appropriation, though, of course, voted specially in the interest of Legislators, will moreover be gratifying to the large professional and general reading public of the City who feel the want of an important and accessible reference library; and we trust that in the present foundation and prospective additions to the Parliamentary Library, the Capital of the Province will be relieved from the discredit of not possessing an available and well-equipped public library.

Another commendable appropriation, wisely proposed by the new Government, and which is creditable to their intelligence and liberality, is the increased aid to Mechanics' Institute libraries, and the provision of material help to their funds should they be found to be properly managed, and conform, in the purchase of additions to their library, to the class of works the Government desire to aid them to acquire.

These Institutes perform good service to the State in many districts where they are intelligently and actively

conducted; and, as "popular educators," their influence must be important in the country.

A generous annual grant to these Institutions, with proper restrictions governing the investments for the library as to technical works, manuals of useful reference, histories, biographies, and important works of travel and research, &c., is most desirable, and must be productive of the highest benefit to the people. Moreover, aid, we may be permitted to say, in *this direct manner*, to the respective trustees of these libraries, and which shall leave them free to make their purchases in the class of works most serviceable to their wants, and abreast of the thought and culture of the times, will manifestly be more sensible than the grants for such investments as the intelligence (!) of the Education Department book-shop make, and insist upon furnishing, *volens volens*, to the School Boards of the Province! Heaven free the country from the continuance of this evil, and this libel on intelligent, modern and legitimate bookselling!

One word more regarding these Institutes. Let them be generously aided, and every facility given for their extension and development, coupled, as is being provided, with proper inspection and supervision; and while the Legislature is at present discussing the apportionment of the public funds—happily increasing in the Treasury beyond our wants—to enterprises of a material kind, regard should be had to the higher wants and intellectual necessities of the people.

## OUR NATIVE SCHOOL BOOKS.

THE long existent dissatisfaction with most of the Text Books authorized for use in the Schools of the Province is again breaking out in loud complaints from many quarters, though, lately, the adverse criticism of their merits has been specially directed against recent additions to the list. Nothing can be more unfortunate than that our Educational system should have the drawback of different text-books; and, it is very much to be regretted that the body dignified with the title of "Council of Public Instruction," should be either so perfunctory in the performance of their high duties, or so committed to the employment of native talent, irrespective of the consideration of brains and capacity for the work. Desirable, in many respects, as it is that our schools