

would be more satisfactory. By supplying also in this way the smaller existing public libraries who are barely able to add to their collections, boxes of 100 new books every six months, fresh life would be thrown into them and their readers brought into contact with the literature of the day.

The Minister of Education might justly consider the proposal to curtail the grants for libraries amounting to over \$42,700 and devote the saving to the establishment of travelling libraries.

NATIONAL NEEDS.

The second want is found at the other end of the scale. Our best libraries have not reached the stage of meeting the wants of our best scholars, and with the limited means at their disposal the time seems far distant when they will be able to do so. Rivalry is out of the question with such great libraries as those of Harvard, the Astor, Lenox, Smithsonian and others in the United States, not to speak of Great Britain, France, and Germany, or even Russia, but if our students are to remain at home some provision must be made to meet their wants. As a nation we cannot afford to be entirely dependent upon others for our highest culture, so that it is incumbent on us to consider carefully our position, and if possible, by combination and economy of energy, endeavor to supply our want.

TORONTO LIBRARIES.

We have in the City of Toronto some 15, more or less, public libraries, all of which, except four, are devoted to special subjects. These four are the Legislative Library, the University of Toronto, the Public Reference Library, and the Canadian Institute's. The first three mentioned are somewhat on the same lines, special departments being added to each to meet special requirements. In the past efforts have been made by

the librarians to prevent the duplication of expensive books and sets, but, necessarily, a large proportion of the books are alike, and much waste of money, time and energy, has ensued. The Legislative library, established to supply the demands of our legislators, has been forced to add to its shelves quantities of general literature. It has now outgrown the chamber provided for it, and it will be necessary for the Government at an early date to provide further accommodation. The City Public Reference Library has in like manner grown to about 45,000 volumes, which are housed in abuilding unsuitable for the purpose, exposed to danger from fire, and in need of additional space for expansion. The Canadian Institute, with its valuable collection of transactions, is in much the same condition, with the additional disadvantage that the student finds here only a portion of his work, though an important one, and a lack of proper catalogues and literary assistance.

We have here three libraries which partially overlap, and which fail to make full use of their opportunities by reason of special circumstances, and yet, which, if worked in harmony, would do much to remove the present reproach.

SUGGESTED REFORMS.

It has seemed to me, after careful consideration, that the best interests of the Province and city would be served by adopting a proposal such as the following:—

The Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto to unite in the maintenance of a common Provincial Reference Library, the books in which would be free to every person in the Province.

The Province, in consideration of the value of the books in the Public Library, to erect suitable buildings in a suitable locality.

The Legislative library to be