

THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

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Chairman of the Hamilton Public Library

To the Members of the Board of Management :

GENTLEMEN,

It is a well understood maxim that nothing is more essential to the welfare and safety of a nation than the education of the individuals composing it, and no better index can be found of the degree of civilization to which any particular state has attained, than by a study of the provisions made by it for public education.

The slightest historical research will justify the assumption that the diffusion of knowledge and the encouragement of education are essential conditions to the stability and progress of the community. The establishment of free Public Schools, re-enforced by compulsory Education Acts, has been followed by legislation providing for the creation and maintenance of free Public Libraries as valuable aids, not only to students of maturer years, but also our skilled artificers and mechanics and our enterprising manufacturers.

The laudable desire of the people of Hamilton for the establishment of a Public Library culminated on the 7th day of January, 1889, in the passing of a by-law for that purpose by a large majority of the electors of the city. It was most gratifying to observe the great amount of public enthusiasm displayed by many of all classes of the community on the occasion in the efforts put forth to bring the matter to a successful issue in joining together for so praiseworthy an object.

In the course of the public discussions, prior to the polling day, it was freely stated by many of those engaged in promoting the object in view, that not more than a quarter of a mill in the \$ upon the assessment or about one half the statutory limit for yearly expenditure would be asked for or required for the purposes of the library. Having this in