

Q.—Do you think that the taste for such reading has increased since the establishment of the Library? A.—Without a doubt. The mere fact of our great circulation shows that. We have doubled our circulation in three years. Last year it reached a total of 300,000 volumes, taken for home reading.

By Mr. ARMSTRONG :—

Q.—Do you find the reading room occupied to any extent by mechanics on Saturday afternoon? A.—A great many mechanics are there on Saturday afternoon, and mechanics out of work attend on other days during work hours.

Q.—From your observation do you think that if mechanics had shorter hours of labor they would take advantage of the increased opportunity to frequent the library and reading room? A.—It is not a question to which I have given any consideration.

Q.—Of course there are many mechanics who do not work on Saturday afternoon; you say that on Saturday afternoon the reading room is full of them. Is it not evident that if all mechanics had the Saturday afternoon free the attendance would be increased? A.—I can only say, in reply, this; that I have had from a large number of mechanics this answer when I have asked them to come to the Library and consult books; telling them that if they would come in the evenings I would go over books with them and endeavor to obtain for them what they wanted. They have said “we do not get away till six o'clock and it is half past seven before we have got our supper and the Library closes at half past eight, and so there is no time.”

Dr. WM. OLDRIGHT, called and sworn.

By the CHAIRMAN :—

Q.—What is your occupation? A.—I am a physician; I have practised in Toronto twenty years, and have resided here twenty-eight years.

Q.—Do you occupy any public position? A.—I am professor of hygiene at the Provincial University (the University of Toronto). I was formerly chairman of the Provincial Board of Health here. I came here in response to a circular forwarded to me by the secretary, and I desire to make a few remarks with respect to the sanitary condition of the work-shops. Of course it is too large a subject to take up at length, but there are two or three points which I should like to bring before the Commission. One is with respect to the ventilation of work-shops at night. When I have visited printing offices at night, I have found the ventilation very bad, and I believe that it is greatly the result of a lack of means of consuming the foul gas, which I think might be obviated. Every gas light consumes nearly as much air as two men would do, and there is no provision generally speaking for the ventilation of these gas lights, whereas they might be made a means of ventilating the building, and be a benefit rather than an injury. If over each gas light there was placed a funnel that would act as a reflector, and throw the light down, and if from that funnel a small tube was placed up towards the ceiling, and all these tubes centered in one large tube of four or five inches, carried through to the roof, the ventilation of the offices might be greatly improved. Of course in some offices they have introduced the electric light, but in others the old plan still exists, and this method could be applied to other shops as well as printing offices. I mention printing offices as the light has to be greater in such shops, and as printers are notably liable to be affected with disease of the lungs. The condition of the offices and work-shops thus lighted would be very much improved, and it would obviate the necessity of throwing open the windows as the men are forced to do on account of the heat and foul air.

Q.—What about the electric light? A.—The electric light is a great improvement as it does away with the amount of gas, but I do not think if the gas lights were arranged in the way I have indicated the electric light would be any improvement in a sanitary point of view. Then another point is with respect to the dust of factories, which might be largely carried off. I recently visited Pullman near