

of our young mechanics have not been taught those elements of practical technical education that would create in them a desire for further knowledge. In fact the greater number of them leave school for the workshop with a very superficial knowledge of even common arithmetic, and having, in small towns and villages, no evening classes at which they could improve their deficient education, nor books of instruction to read, they soon become careless and apathetic. This class of the community being often thrown out of employment, from no fault of their own, have no resources within themselves for occupying their time, and idleness soon begets evil and dissipated habits. There is no class more to be pitied than that of operatives whose living depends, from week to week, upon the prosperity or otherwise of manufacturers. Their lot is much to be commiserated, and young mechanics require more interest to be shown by the government, manufacturers and employers, in their education and morals.

It may also be asked, is there any other reason why mechanics do not resort to the Institutes? Yes, there is another which has frequently been given to the writer, and that is they are not managed by their own class. This arises from diffidence caused from a deficient education, which makes them feel a want of fitness and competency to take a lead in any public matter—others therefore, not mechanics, and wishing to establish a town reading-room or library, find it very convenient to secure the grant under the pretence that it is for a Mechanics' Institute. As a natural consequence they appoint the majority of their officers from their own class; take the arrangement into their own hands; and buy what class of books they think proper, without regard to the interests and education of the industrial classes, for whose special benefit the grant is given. If there is a reading-room the working mechanic feels that he cannot avail himself of it, for this reason: that after he leaves the foundry, or workshop, where he works until 6 o'clock; gains his home; which may be some distance off, and after partaking of his evening meal; and done some chores, perhaps, about the house, he feels but little inclined to dress as he feels he ought to do, to mix in an assembly of well-dressed men, and that it would be an insult for him to appear there in a working suit. With respect to the library, he finds on reference to the catalogue that even the small selection of technical works it contains have not been judiciously chosen, and that the bulk of the works consists of books of fiction. He would, therefore, sooner spend the amount of a year's subscription upon some work on his own particular trade, and this is another reason why he does not become a member of an Institute. Thus these institutions, which might, under better organization and management, be a boon to the mechanical interests of the country, are, in fact, made use of, to a great extent, to transfer the bonus granted by government to the partial support of town reading-rooms and libraries, got up under the name of Mechanics' Institutes.

Now, it is not because an evil exists that it should not be remedied. The task must fall upon some one to expose it, which we now do, and if, upon full enquiry, the management and working of the Institutes are found to be unsatisfactory, the sooner the evil is remedied the better.

The following suggestions have occurred to us as likely, if acted upon, to bring about good results.

1st. That a return should be called for by the Pro-

vincial Government (if the annual reports do not supply such information) of the number of working mechanics who are subscribers in each place where there is a Mechanics' Institute. Also, a statement of the sums actually expended upon scientific and technical books—their names, cost, &c., and if 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. has been allowed off the cost by publishers, as is customary to public libraries. Or, perhaps, it would be more satisfactory, if the Government sent a special Inspector to visit these institutions and make a personal investigation into the manner in which they are conducted.

2nd. That the system should be re-organized, and no sum of money granted to any Institute that could not show annually a list of subscribers, being mechanics, whose subscriptions should be equal to two-thirds of the grant.

3rd. That all mechanics in small towns and villages, should be allowed to become subscribers (conditionally), to some neighbouring Institute, on the payment of \$1 annually, said sum to be expended for monthly periodicals on their own trades.

4th. That drawing-classes should be formed, and suitable books, paper and instruments be provided.

5th. That a semi-annual inspection should be made by a Government Inspector, who should give lectures at the several Institutes, and be supplied with the necessary apparatus to make such lectures pleasing and instructive.

6th. That prizes should be offered annually to members of the Institutes, being mechanics, for the best specimens of work, drawings and designs.

7th. That a Dominion grant should be voted annually for the formation of a Dominion Reference Library—such library might be under an Inspector of Institutes. To this library all members of Mechanics' Institutes desiring to obtain information, not to be found in the local library, would be entitled to it free of cost, and further, that this library should be available to all others, on payment of a small fee for a clerk's, or draughtsman's time in copying—and further, also, that all postage, to and from this library and the Institutes, should be free, the same as in the United States.

As before stated, it is a lamentable fact that there has grown upon the mechanics of the Dominion, complete apathy with respect to their own mental improvement, and the time that is spent in loafing around taverns, might, under different circumstances, be spent in a more profitable way. It is neither right nor politic that such a state of affairs should be allowed to exist without an effort being made in the right direction to improve the mind and moral status of the industrial classes. We know that where young men are congregated together in masses in towns, they are open to greater temptations to vice than any other class of the community; there exists, therefore, a strong reason why particular efforts should be made to reform and instruct them, not only by Government aid, but by the manufacturers and employers in whatever line of trade they follow, and there can be no doubt but that Mechanics' Institutes, properly organized and directed, would tend greatly towards this end; but, in order to bring about the good results hoped for, these Institutes must not be left entirely to the management of the mechanics themselves. It is necessary that they should be under some departmental head to supervise, direct and instruct them, and to see that the funds appropriated for their use are judiciously and pro-