

bought, and they are constantly appealing to new readers until worn out by use, and not merely shelfworn. Every few months a library is new to some public and its arrival is a matter of comment, and draws new interest to the library station. The books are bought at the lowest, and substantial additions are selected. They can be occasionally examined and repaired, an important economy, for with books as with clothing a 'stitch in time saves nine.' In the making of rules and regulations a wide body of experience can be drawn upon and in the printing much economy exercised.

"Finally, it practically takes the selection of the reading of great numbers of untrained readers from the hands of blind chance and puts it in the custody of trained experts who can draw for assistance upon the library experience of the world.

"Our great and costly system of public schools works unceasingly to teach children how to read, and then leaves too many of them to go through their adult lives without using that power to the best advantage, because of lack of opportunity.

"The travelling libraries offer an unexpectedly cheap, efficient, and practicable method of broadening our educational system to include in its beneficent purposes everyone who goes out from the brief course of our common schools, and to enable them to pursue a life-long system of education."

Such a system seemed to me feasible for Ontario. No part of the Province is beyond reach by rail or steamer and in no part need there be lack of read-

ers. I believe that the one need greater than any other among the people of Ontario, at present, is an abundant supply of helpful literature, accompanied by such assistance as will enable the people to use it to the best advantage.

On January 25th, 1900, I presented to the Minister of Education the following proposition:—"Permit me to submit for your consideration a plan which will facilitate the intellectual and material progress of our people.

"My suggestion is to organize, as a part of the Provincial Educational Department, a Travelling Library Bureau, which would undertake to select the most popular and most helpful books on a wide range of subjects, and place them in cases (100 in each case), and so distribute them that every school section and neighborhood in Ontario might have the use of an up-to-date library. The Bureau should encourage, by adequate supervision, the formation of literary societies, debating clubs, and magazine reading circles; conduct essay competitions, oratorical contests, and debates, by counties, districts and for the Province. Subjects might be assigned, and awards made in the form of medals, college and university scholarships, etc. The Bureau might also co-operate with existing institutions and movements, that the people may have advantage of the largest number of lectures and talks possible.

"The success of a work of this kind will depend in a large measure upon the character of the books placed in the cases, the thoroughness of the supervision and the extent of the advertising. Each case should contain