

the insurance departments at Ottawa and of the several American States, and a score or more of such standard books of reference as are the tools of professional men and invaluable to all whose public duties require them to have a wide field for collecting. It is a generation too late to discuss the advantages of a public library well supplied with works on history, science, art, travel, biography, and fiction, and kept up to date by new acquisitions of literature. The day when public schools were established brought the day for public libraries, for they are essential as a supplement to our educational system. A free library is a university for the people.

The Free Library Act of Ontario is an honour to Canada. There would probably be difficulties in securing such an Act for this Province, or this city, which, however, are not insurmountable. We are a bilingual people, we have the literature of two languages. This would necessitate a considerable outlay for a large and continuous supply of both English and French works. To overcome the difficulties caused by this condition would require much thoughtful consideration, but an arrangement both as to books and management is by no means impossible. Whether the offer of Mr. Carnegie is finally accepted or not, there are ample resources in Montreal to lift from it the reproach of being the only metropolitan city in the Empire without a free public library.

* * * * *

The death of the Dowager Empress of Germany is for her a blessed relief from suffering. But for her august mother, the Queen of England, after whom the Princess Royal was named, the Empress of Germany would have been the ablest, most distinguished woman of this age, and the most highly cultured and noblest in character who ever sat upon a throne. She combined the intellectual refinement of Prince Albert and his prescience with the statesmanlike wisdom and womanly virtues of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria. The King has lost a devoted sister, and the Royal family its most beloved member, next to Queen Alexandria.

* * * * *

The celebrations in honour of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York will be held as arranged with some restraint, probably, on certain proposed festivities that may be considered advisable to cancel out of respect to the Dowager Empress.

* * *

There is a rumour that another insurance company will shortly erect a large building in this city. This, in addition to that of the Royal and the future one of the Liverpool & London & Globe, will add to the already high reputation of Montreal as a city of noble buildings.

The proceedings at meeting of Harbour Commissioners on 7th inst. were made highly interesting by a letter from the Honorable Mr Tarte. After stating that he had been in communication with the Grand Trunk, Canadian Pacific and Canada Atlantic railways, he writes:

"I will confine myself in writing you to-day to those works which in my humble opinion are of prime necessity in the harbour of Montreal. Works are going on at both ends of the port. There is trade, and there will be more and more traffic at both ends. It is then necessary that they should be connected by a satisfactory system for transportation, railway tracks, etc. I suggest the immediate organization by your board of a terminal system, which will carry the cars of all the railways, giving to all equal rights and equal justice. This will necessitate, I know, additional works, the widening and enlarging of certain parts of the wharves. Those additional works will be more than repaid by the additional accommodation and by the cheapening of rates and handling of goods that they will produce. The Canadian Pacific Railway is anxious to have access to all parts of the harbour. The Grand Trunk and the Canada Atlantic feel the same necessity. Parliament has placed at the disposal of your board important sums of money for work to be carried out in the port of Montreal, because of the geographical situation of that port. We must not have in view the present only. I for one feel, and I am sure you share that feeling, that splendid developments are in store for the St. Lawrence route. It is our duty to prepare for that future."

Letters were read from the C. P. R., and G. T. R., pointing out that the Windmill Point wharf would need elevating to the level of the other wharves to render it of any use to them, the vessels to be laden with their freight. The secretary reported that up to recent date there is an increase of 42,967 tons in the shipping of the port over 1899.

The design for decorating the City Hall is complete. The façade will present a very beautiful appearance, and the interior will be like a conservatory. The demand for electric illuminations for residences and street buildings of a business character will tax the resources of the supplying companies. There is every certainty of Montreal presenting such a scene of tasteful splendour in decoration as was never before witnessed on this continent, or even in England. The committee cannot be too careful in having any platforms erected thoroughly inspected by the most competent experts so as to put their safety beyond doubt.

* * *

The new building to be erected by the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company in this city, we are informed by the resident secretary for Canada, Mr. G. F. C. Smith, has been under consideration for some time, but no decision has yet been arrived at as to what date operations will commence.