

THE LEGISLATURE AND ITS LIBRARY.

The action taken by the Provincial Government and the House of Assembly, looking to the abolition of the Legislative Council, cannot but be satisfactory to the Province. It is in no spirit of disparagement of the Council, or of the manner in which it has discharged the duties which have fallen to it, that we consider the \$12,000 or so which it costs, a saving which will be universally welcomed. The machinery of governments at this advanced day should be tending towards simplicity, and the example of Ontario suffices to show that our provinces can get on quite well enough without the legislative complication of second Chambers. The idea of an Upper House being a check on hasty legislation may, in some cases, be found to possess a modicum of justification, but it is, after all, old-fashioned, and "the game is not worth the candle." Moreover, granting the expediency of abolition in the case of one province, the example will probably influence others to rid themselves in like manner of an expenditure which scarcely any of them can well afford.

It is to be hoped, however, that, assuming the measure to be passed, what is economized with one hand, will not be lavishly squandered with the other. A heavy expenditure has recently been incurred in alterations and improvements of the Provincial building, very largely to the increase of the personal ease and comfort of members. Nothing reasonable in this way would be grudged by the public, but we cannot avoid noticing that whilst members have secured to themselves a very considerable amount of the luxury of a good club, a very important institution of the House has been starved and obstructed—"cabined, cribbed, confined." We refer to the Library, the importance of which has apparently but very feebly impressed itself on the projectors of the improvements.

This is not the first place in which we have expressed the opinion that the Library of the Nova Scotia Legislature is far from being a credit to it.

Its collection of books is fragmentary in many instances, deficient in numberless standard works imperatively demanded by modern culture, and in fact altogether behind the legitimate requirements of the student of the day. It can, indeed, scarcely be otherwise, when the Library vote has been limited to \$400 a year for the last three years. When it is taken into consideration how large a proportion of this meagre grant is absorbed in the purchase and binding of newspapers, and compilations specially confined to legislative requirements, it will easily be seen how small a balance must remain for the purchase of sterling works. \$1000 a year would not be at all too much wherewith to begin placing the Library on a respectable footing. It is possible that some members may be influenced by the consideration that some road, or other grant, might suffer diminution from an increase of the sum devoted to the Library, and that road and other grants mean votes, but so low a consideration, if it exist, should be summarily put aside.

It is time for our Local Legislators to rid themselves of the opprobrium of a vulgar and cynical disregard of the intellectual claims of the young men of the province. To many of these the Library privileges accorded to the public are of the highest value from a self-educational point of view, and to manifest a sycaritic solicitude for extreme personal comforts to the starvation of higher instincts and demands, is not conducive to the regard which a legislature ought to deserve, and in which it ought to be held.

So much has the accommodation of the House been encroached upon in these lower interests, that while the members have now five rooms affording the comforts of a club, where formerly there were three, a room heretofore used for the custody of records has, we understand, been taken from the Library accommodation, and the Library itself incommoded by a pile of books dumped down in its centre, owing to their having been displaced by the alterations. Nor is this all. The accommodation of the official reporters has also, we are told, been interfered with, so that these necessary functionaries are also driven to do some of their work in the Library.

The archives of Nova Scotia have of late been recognized to have a very high historical value, not a little enhanced by the valuable labors of Mr. Akins in collating them. Mr. Justin Winsor, the Librarian of Harvard, is now engaged, with a number of collaborators, on a voluminous and exhaustive History of America (including Canada), in which the Nova Scotia records are found to be of inestimable value, and all considerations point to the propriety of accorded proper accommodation to documents of such acknowledged value, as well as to the ordinary contents of a library, which we trust to be able to point to in the near future as worthy the respectability of an important Province.

An arrangement which more than fully recognizes the claims of personal convenience and comfort, while striving those of the intellect, can scarcely be said to be an even and symmetrical one.

CIVIC REFORMS.

The time for the civic elections is drawing near, and citizens should rouse themselves from their apathy and make a determined effort to elect careful, competent business men to fill the approaching vacancies in the Council. Mayor O'Mullin has proved an efficient officer, and should be granted a second term without opposition. The present Council is composed of fairly good material, but amongst the retiring aldermen are some of the ablest men whose independent course has roused the enmity of the ward politicians, and who, therefore, may not care to court defeat by seeking re-election. Where this is the case, it is the duty of honest electors who desire economical civic administration, to see to it that these men are again brought out as candidates. In civic affairs, "the office should seek the man, and not the man the office," and those candidates who are devoting all their energies to secure election, are the ones that the careful

voter should let severely alone. In this connection we cannot better guide our voters than by calling their attention to some excellent advice contained in the inaugural address of President H. H. Warner, delivered before the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. The name is so associated with certain proprietary remedies that are warranted to cure all the ills that flesh is heir to, that we fancy our readers laying down their paper with a sigh and exclaiming, "we never thought that THE CRITIC would have sullied its columns with one of those horrid catch advertisements!" It is almost an inevitable conclusion, which we hasten to disdain, only remarking that Mr. Warner's remedy for disease of bodies corporate should work a radical cure. He says: "The management of our municipal offices compares favorably with that of other cities. I do not wish to cast any reproach on our city government, but it is proper for us to look on both sides; the disadvantage as well as the advantages that are presented. We find it an unfortunate defect in most cities that the municipal affairs are left to drift in a more or less indifferent way. What is the result of the loose political methods which prevail in the administration of the affairs of our cities throughout the country? In the first place, it increases our taxes, and increases them without giving a fair compensation for such increase. People who recognize the difference between spending money wastefully and investing it will not criticise the investment that brings back returns. To spend without proper returns is absolute waste. I think it is about time for the business men of our country to give municipal government some attention, and see that the men filling our principal offices are honest, careful, competent business men, and this evil of careless indifference or neglect, which permits the use of municipal offices for political purposes, should be blotted out of every city. &c., &c., &c."

Now, how are we to bring this matter about? I ask you to call up in your mind your city officials as a body, and ask yourselves: "Are these the kind of men whom we would select to be responsible for the expenditure on our own behalf of a million and a quarter dollars per year?" If they are not such men, whose fault is it that they are in office? It is not our duty to favor one party or another, but it is our duty, as individuals, as members of business houses and as heavy tax payers, to infuse some of our business methods, our business sagacity, our business judgment, into our conduct as citizens, and insist upon it that we shall have full value rendered, by competent, honest men, in the administration of our city affairs, &c., &c., &c.

When the success of our candidates depends upon the best elements of our city, and when they are surrounded by associates they would be glad to meet socially, politically, and in business affairs, we may look for a happy condition of our city government. On the other hand, it is too often the case that these positions of honor are filled by men that you, as business men, would not allow to sweep the floors of your business offices."

Our Chamber of Commerce, which has almost become a political debating society, would do well to ponder over Mr. Warner's remarks as to the matters which should command their attention, and our taxpayers would do well to ponder over his words and act upon them at the coming election.

COUNTRY COURTING

The far greater freedom of action socially accorded to young women on this continent than has yet commended itself to the more conservative social traditions of European countries has, like every other question or institution, two sides. On the whole, we are inclined to think it beneficial. If it sometimes produces a brusqueness of manner, which is not always quite pleasant, and occasionally leads to worse results, the gain in true independence and a courageous self-reliance, especially in view of the rapidly extending scope of female occupation and usefulness, probably more than offsets the possible disadvantages.

There is, however, a phase of it universally prevalent in the rural districts, both of this country and of the United States, which undoubtedly calls aloud for reform, and for restriction on the part of respectable parents.

The *Charlottetown Examiner*, making the Millman-Tuplin tragedy the subject of a lengthy article, has, in the course of it, some remarks so apposite and so well-directed, that, in the interests of morality where it most keenly and deeply affects social conditions—the purity of the rising generation of the women of our country, it seems to us that we cannot better acquit ourselves of one of the high duties of the journalist, or do a better service to that sacred cause, than by reproducing them:—

"One of the very bad habits of society in the country, is that familiarly known as 'courting' at night. It is a common thing for a young man to go to a farm house in the evening, and for the family to retire, leaving him and a young woman to sit up alone, hugging and kissing, and talking nonsense, until daylight—unduly exciting their nerves, losing their sleep, indulging in improper thoughts, and rendering very difficult the preservation of the purity and innocence of youth. We find little fault with John Tuplin for leaving his daughter in Millman's company on the night of the 5th of January. He acted in full accord with the custom of the country,—and Millman was supposed to be an eminently respectable young man. But if, when the hour for retiring arrived, he had signified that he desired to go to bed, and that Millman could have the spare bed-room or go home, the Tuplin-Millman tragedy would not, in all probability, have occurred. One of the lessons of the Tuplin-Millman tragedy is to abandon the pernicious and dangerous habit of 'sitting up at night courting.' It may be urged that young men and women must have an opportunity to come together and make love. So they must. But these opportunities may be afforded by means which are perfectly innocent and perfectly safe. We sincerely hope that parents throughout the Province will take warning from the terrible fate of Mary Tuplin and William Millman, and will, in future, forbid the one and be careful to provide the other."