

TORONTO, November 28th 1887.

JAMES BAIN, jr., called and sworn.

By the CHAIRMAN:—

Q.—What position do you hold? A.—I am librarian of the Toronto Free Library.

Q.—When was that established? A.—In 1883.

Q.—Is it supported by voluntary contributions or in what manner? A.—It is supported by city rates, by rents and by fees and fines—the fee which we charge for the printed ticket, to the extent of five cents, and the fines which are imposed for delay in returning books. Those two items amount to about \$900 a year. The amount of our grant from the city is fixed at a maximum of half a mill on the dollar, but we have not drawn more than a quarter of a mill, which realised last year \$18,000. The total amount of our income for 1886 was \$22,821.59.

Q.—All classes have access to the library and attend there and get out books? A.—All classes. We have now about 20,000 readers on our list.

Q.—What proportion of that number are mechanics or laborers? A.—It is a difficult matter to say exactly how many mechanics are represented in that number. A rough estimate I made this morning of those registered as mechanics shows 2,600; but in addition to those, a great many wives of mechanics, when mechanics have not time to attend to the library, take out books, so you may safely put it down at 5,000, as the number of mechanics and mechanics' wives who regularly receive books from the library.

Q.—I suppose your library is well supplied with books for mechanics? A.—We aim at getting in the library everything of value. I noticed this morning that we have 1,500 volumes directly bearing on the manufacturing arts. In addition to this we keep all the workingmen's newspapers and those specially applied to manufactures and inventions. In quoting this number of books I have merely reference to our circulating library, to books loaned for home reading. We have in addition to that number a library of sixteen thousand books exclusively works of reference, books of reference of all kinds which are only used in the reading room. In that department we aim to keep all the works we can pick up on the manufacturing arts. We have also in addition a patent library, a library consisting of specifications of patents taken out in Great Britain and Canada during the last two centuries. These are open for reference to mechanics at all times.

Q.—Can you tell the Commission anything about industrial schools? A.—I have no information except that obtained from my general reading on the subject. I have said however all along that some link was wanting between working men and what should be the workingmen's university, the public library, and it has been a problem for me for the last three years how to make that connection. I commenced two years ago in December calling upon the heads of large factories, those engaging a large number of hands, to obtain permission to invite the men down to the library in the evenings; and I had during two winters from twenty to fifty mechanics present during the evening. I made it a rule as far as possible to get the mechanics of one special class, the mechanics engaged in one special manufacture together, and I provided, as far as I could, comfortable accommodation for them, had the room nicely lighted and laid before them all the books we could gather together on the subject of their own special work, many books which they could not otherwise see. I also tried to induce the men to take the numbers and names of those books so as to be able to refer to them continuously. So far as the attendance is concerned it was always satisfactory to me. I found the men when they did come gladly availed themselves of the opportunity and were always very hearty and warm in their thanks for what they considered my kindness in the matter. I approached one or two of the unions with the purpose of endeavoring to induce them to take up the work, to try to work with the Public Library; but I am sorry to say I failed with them, as only one accepted my proposition, and that was the Painters' Union. They considered the matter and provided a certain number of men from the shops to go to the Library in