

REPORT ON THE BOTANIC GARDEN FOR 1899-1900.

TO THE CORPORATION OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY,

GENTLEMEN,—The Botanic Garden was established in 1890, and the location at present occupied was chosen as the only suitable site then available, with a view to ultimate transfer to a property not only better adapted to the purpose, but one affording that element of permanence which can only come from actual ownership. The ground and houses now utilised were leased from the Trustees of the Trafalgar Institute for a short term of years, and this lease has been subject to annual renewal pending a final decision as to permanent location.

The Garden has now been in operation for a period of ten years, during which time it has served a most important purpose in connection with the scientific and educational work of the Botanical Department. The grounds were carefully laid out and a large amount of material, representing forms of vegetation from many parts of the world, was planted. The conservatories were stocked with types of plant life from various regions of the world, and this portion of the collection is especially rich in Australian forms, many of which were contributed by the late Baron von Mueller at considerable personal expense. The conditions under which the property was occupied, however, have prevented the expenditure of money either in the direction of permanent improvements or in the enlargement of the collections which have been kept within such limits as would barely suffice to meet the ordinary requirements of class instruction.

An examination of the reports annually submitted to the Corporation shows that during the short period of its existence, the Garden has not only served a most important purpose in the prosecution of original research, but it has proved of great educational value. Until the present year, it has provided educational resources for an average of 250 students annually, and graduate students have found there the necessary means for the prosecution of special studies.

During the last fifteen years, the character of botanical teaching in the schools throughout the province has shown marked improvement, both with respect to the quality of the instruction imparted and the number of the pupils taking advantage of such important means of culture and training. This improvement has been most marked within the last five years in consequence of the increasing number of our graduates who have entered upon the teaching profession in the schools of the province, and are especially qualified to teach botany in accordance with modern views. In this we are able to note the direct influence of the Botanic Garden, as having provided special facilities for that class of instruction which is particularly adapted to the requirements of the various schools.

The present uncertainty of our tenure which may expire at any moment, and the very critical condition of the buildings,