

ence all available printed information concerning the state of the markets here and elsewhere. A society of religionists may open a reading room where, for their common convenience, they may collect all available printed intelligence concerning their particular sect, or the particular fraternity of sects in which they are chiefly interested. In such cases as these the object is definite and legitimate. But where persons of various habits of thought and pursuits of life associate on a general basis, and invite all others to enter their association, without distinction of creed or calling, avowing as their purpose the acquisition of general knowledge, and the diffusion of general enlightenment, they are obviously forbidden by the fundamental principles of their organization to exercise any preferences in the management, founded on sectional partiality, or sectarian prejudice.

We have three general reading rooms in Montreal, connected respectively with the Mechanics' Institute, the Mercantile Library Association, and l'Institut-Canadien. The first and second of these were founded, and are still managed mainly, if not wholly, by persons speaking the English language. The third was founded, and is still carried on mainly, if not wholly, by persons of French or Franco-Canadian origin, speaking the French language. These reading rooms are open, as they ought to be, to every printed expression of opinion on politics, philosophy, and religion. Their floors and tables are in the same position with respect to their members, as the streets and squares of our city with respect to our citizens. In either case, if the conditions of citizenship or membership are complied with, the privileges accrue at once, and are indelible: viz., in the one case, of building a church or lecture-room, of any denomination, and going into it if we please; and in the other case, of presenting a newspaper or periodical of any denomination, and reading it if we please. The city Corporation, or the institutional Direction, for the time being, actuated by some sectional