

FREE LIBRARIES.

The first free library established under the act was in 1883, and in the period between that date and 1896 54 have successfully come into operation. They contain 254,091 volumes, and circulated during 1895 1,216,407. Two of them, Toronto and Hamilton, take rank, both in number and character of their books, among the best libraries of the Dominion.

Unitedly the 346 public and free libraries of the Province of Ontario have on their shelves 658,696 volumes, and supplied in 1895 1,917,365 to their readers. Their revenue was \$183,688, of which \$42,741 was contributed by the Province, and they spent of this in books \$49,417.

The Province of Quebec has not yet introduced a free libraries' act, but the generosity of the late Mr. Fraser and of a number of gentlemen in Montreal has provided a fund for the establishment of a free library in that city, which was opened in October, 1885, under the title of the Fraser Institute. The Mercantile Library Association transferred to it 5,500 English books, and l'Institut Canadien 7,000 French.

In St. John, N.B., a free library was founded in June, 1883, to commemorate the landing of the Loyalists a century previous, and in Halifax a free library owes its origin to the generosity of the late Chief Justice Young, both of which have been very successful. A sister society, the Library and Historical Society of Manitoba, has been the means of introducing a public library, and with the assistance of the municipal authorities of Winnipeg have laid the foundation of an extensive and valuable library.

TABULATED STATISTICS.

In the lack of trustworthy information I have not attempted to give any particulars of the Law, Medical, Scientific, Collegiate Institute and

Young Men's Christian Association Libraries, further than they are summed up in the following condensed tables, showing the character and the Province in which they are placed, of the 480 libraries of a more or less public character in Canada.

Kind.	No.	Pamphlets.	Books.
Law	21	1,929	105,788
Legislative.....	9	48,834	309,395
Public.....	325	17,535	663,125
Collegiate, etc....	62	24,894	627,246
Others.....	29	15,224	96,918
Special.....	2	14,330	18,500
Y. M. C. A.....	32	23,660
Total	480	122,746	1,874,632

By Provinces the 480 libraries are distributed:—

Ontario.....	374	32,922	942,187
Quebec	39	31,841	531,356
Nova Scotia.....	26	17,756	97,521
New Brunswick..	15	2,689	54,787
P. E. Island.....	3	500	8,528
Manitoba.....	8	5,014	34,730
Brit. Columbia..	10	1,554	11,303
N.W. Territories	1	140	2,150
.....	476	93,416	1,682,572
Dominion.....	4	29,330	192,060
Total.....	480	122,746	1,874,632

LIBRARIES IN ONTARIO.

We may conclude, therefore, from these figures that so far as the ordinary reader and University student is concerned Ontario, at least in the cities and towns, is not badly served. The percentage of books per head is not unworthy of a Province which has only been redeemed from the wilderness during the past 50 years. In two directions, however, do we find shortcomings, if not actual want. Outside of the larger cities, towns and villages lies a large proportion of the population of this Province, as well as in the others, which are entirely without access to books. There are whole townships and numbers of villages where the weekly newspaper is the only connecting link with modern science and literature.