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A SKETCH OF THE COMMON SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.*

(In alphabetical order.)

This class of public libraries has in several States attracted much attention and involved large expenditures. An effort has been made to collect reliable information on the subject, and the following article is believed to contain much that has never been given in a connected form. A whole volume could be prepared, and would indeed be necessary to illustrate the various systems of school libraries; and it is hoped that this may yet be done by a competent hand.

The aggregate number of volumes in the Common Schools in the United States is about TWO MILLIONS, and in Canada nearly a quarter of a million. The system introduced, under the energetic and judicious measures proposed by Dr. Ryerson, in Upper Canada, deserves special mention. *It appears to be the opinion of some who have given special attention to this subject, that the system of School Libraries of Canada is in advance of any in the United States.*

CALIFORNIA.

During 1854, \$3990 52 were expended in 14 counties, for school libraries and apparatus.

CONNECTICUT.

In 1838, no efforts had been made to provide the district schools with libraries. Mr. Barnard states that out of 1400

* From the Manual of American Libraries, by William J. Rhees, Esq., first clerk of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

schools which he visited, there were but six libraries, containing in all less than 1000 volumes.

By an Act of the General Assembly, May Session, 1856, the Treasurer of the State, upon the order of the Superintendent of Schools, is authorized and directed to pay over the sum of ten dollars, out of any moneys that may be in the public treasury, to every school district which shall raise, by tax or subscription, a like sum for the same purpose, to establish within such district a school library, and to procure philosophical and chemical apparatus; and the further sum of five dollars, annually, upon a like order to the said districts, upon condition that they shall have raised a like sum for such year for the purposes aforesaid.

Since the passage of this law up to May, 1857, 133 districts have availed themselves of its provisions, and the aggregate amount raised by these districts has been nearly \$2000. The total number is 186; 53 libraries having been reported previous to the enactment of the new law. The amount paid from the State treasury to districts, is \$1330. In some districts a large proportion of the money was expended for reference books; but in others, for volumes for general circulation. The law requires that books purchased for district libraries be approved by the Board of Visitors of each town.

The whole amount expended for libraries, during 1858, was \$3757 29. A large proportion of the money has been appropriated for the purchase of books for circulating libraries. More than 14,000 volumes have thus been placed within the reach of parents and children during the past year. In city and village districts, reference books, maps, philosophical and chemical apparatus have been more frequently purchased.

On the 1st of January, 1859, there were 461 school libraries with 25,700 volumes.

INDIANA.

"The law of 1852 imposed a tax of a quarter of a mill on the property, and an assessment of twenty-five cents on the poll, for the purpose of establishing a library in every civil township in the commonwealth. This tax was limited to the period of two years. The assessment for the aforesaid purposes during these two years, amounted to \$186,327. The amount realized from that levy was \$176,335, leaving a delinquency of only \$9,991. The Revised School Law of 1855 provides for a similar levy for only one year, which will amount, according to the data found on page 54 of the Auditors's Report, viz.: \$301,858,474 of property, and 178,877 polls, to the very handsome sum of \$123,183. The uncertainty, however, inci-