

return the opportunity of reading a large number of volumes. The money thus expended continues to perpetuate and multiply advantages for thousands and tens of thousands, without reflecting injury upon any. Not so with the money that is spent in the purchase of intoxicating drinks, and many other things, equally useless, if not equally injurious. Nor can any one easily estimate the amount of vice that will be prevented, and of enjoyment and benefits conferred, by the youth of the land having access to useful and entertaining books.

And among the indirect, though not the least of the advantages conferred upon the country by the wide circulation of useful books, may we not include the influence which will thus be exerted upon the spirit and temper of no small portion of the *public press*—that most important and powerful engine for the promotion of what is both good and bad in civil government, public morals, and social life. It has often been observed by intelligent strangers and others, that the tone of the press and public discussions in Canada, are, with some exceptions, lower than in Europe, especially in England. Mr. Tremeneere, who has long held important situations under the Imperial Government in connexion with the advancement of education in England, who is the author of two able and interesting books, the one on the "*Political Experience of the Ancients, in its Bearings upon Modern Times*," the other, entitled, "*The Constitution of the United States compared with our own*," and who travelled through this country in 1853, has, in his excellent "*Notes on Public Subjects in the United States and Canada*," observed as follows on the Canadian press:—

"With a very few exceptions the press of Canada does injustice to the political, moral, social and intellectual character of the people, and is not of a tone to qualify it to speak for a cultivated and intelligent society. It rarely, as far as I could observe, attempts any calm and philosophical discussion of the topics of the highest moment to the future destiny of the colony, moral and social; but is rather occupied in stimulating, instead of striving to allay, the exasperations of party struggles, which are always apt to be most bitter among men only beginning to learn to act together on the great arena of public life, under a system of political freedom. An improvement in the tone of the press would by degrees educate the public taste above that which now only tends to lower it, and with it, to a certain extent, the estimate in which Canada must be held elsewhere."—pp. 234, 235.

The infancy of the country generally, and especially its infancy in regard to the principles and practice of constitutional free government, may go far to account for the corresponding infancy in the character of the public press. Much improvement has of late been witnessed in this respect; and the considerable attention and space which are given in many of the newspapers to notices of books and literature are gratifying indications, as well as instruments of further improvement. Nor is there any good reason why any portion of the public press of Canada should suffer so much in comparison with that of England—why the Canadian press should not be able to accomplish its high functions and duties, as the dispassionate exponent of the great science of national life, and the moral antagonist of all that feeds the worst feelings and develops the worst passions of our nature,—the animating spirit of what is just, and generous, and patriotic, and the promoter of knowledge, virtue and good will among men. In no country is a more noble career open to the public press than in Canada. An elevation in the character and tone of reading of the country, by the supply and circulation of good books, will doubtless

react beneficially upon the public press, correct much that is to be deprecated and lamented in it, and add vastly to its power and usefulness. In this then, as well as in other respects, will Libraries prove a most valuable and potent system of social police, improving and elevating society, multiplying means, and diffusing streams of enjoyment, happiness and usefulness before unfelt and unknown.

## OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS PROPOSED BY LOCAL SCHOOL AUTHORITIES.

(Continued from the Journal for June, page 101.)

### NUMBER 31.

#### *Fear of embarrassment from a small Rate-Bill.—Threat of a Mandamus,—Protection of Trustees.*

A special school meeting having fixed the monthly rate-bill at seven-pence half-penny, and certain parties having threatened to apply for a Mandamus to compel the Trustees to collect it, the trustees feared embarrassment from want of means to meet their engagements. In this dilemma, they sought advice, preparatory to imposing a higher rate-bill in opposition to the decision of the meeting. The inexpediency of doing so was thus pointed out:—

"You should have no hesitation in carrying out the decision of the special school meeting to which you refer. In doing so it will not be necessary for you to do more at present, than simply to impose the rate-bill of seven-pence half-penny per month for each pupil attending school. It is not until the end of the year, or towards its close, that you will have to impose a general rate upon the property of the Section, to make up the balance required to pay the teacher's salary and other expenses of the school, as authorised by the latter part of the 7th clause of the 12th section of the School Act, of 1850. In the mean time it will not be necessary for you to offer any explanation either of your intentions or of your conduct to the party who has addressed to you the uncalled for letter which you have enclosed. By acting in the manner I have indicated, it is not at all likely that the parties who wrote the letter can obtain a mandamus; and even if they should succeed, all the expenses which you may incur must be borne by the Section, and can be collected by a rate upon the property of the Section. In all your official proceedings you will be particular to use your corporate seal. Any opposition you meet with will likely be on the part of those refusing to pay the rate which you may impose at the close of the year. In such a case the legality of the matter can, if the opposition choose, be tested in the Division Court. But from the 24th section of the Supplementary School Act of 1853, you will see that ample protection will be afforded you by this Department, in the exercise of your rights and the performance of your duties."

### NUMBER 32.

#### *Right of Trustees to obtain legal advice.—Auditing of School Section accounts.*

The Trustees of a rural Section not being careful in the observance of the details of their duties, advantage was sought to be taken of their ignorance in such matters, and an effort made to deter and embarrass them. Their local Superintendent applied for advice in their case and received the following:

"1. Trustees have a perfect right to procure such legal advice, at the expense of the Section, as they may deem necessary to aid them in the performance of their duty in doubtful cases, such as those to which you refer. They are required by the 7th clause of the 12th section of the School Act, of 1850, to take "all lawful means" to collect School Moneys. Sometimes they may be doubtful as to the "lawful means" they should adopt. In such a case they should apply for advice.

2. No advantage can or should be taken of an error in judgment on the part of trustees in the matter, as the County Courts being