

Province ; so may it I think be said of the latter measure, that it introduces a new era in its educational and intellectual history. The subject is so important that I must beg leave to say a few words upon it before proceeding to other matters. In order to prevent misapprehension, however, I may observe that the term school libraries does not imply that the libraries in question are specially designed for the benefit of common school pupils. They are, in point of fact, public libraries intended for the use of the general population ; and they are entitled school libraries, because their establishment has been provided for in the School Acts, and their management confided to the school authorities.

"Public school libraries then, similar to those which are now being introduced into Canada, have been in operation for several years in some States of the neighbouring Union, and many of the most valuable features of the Canadian system have been borrowed from them. In most of the States, however, which have appropriated funds for library purposes, the selection of books has been left to the trustees appointed by the different districts, many of whom are ill qualified for the task, and the consequence has been that the travelling peddlers, who offer the most showy books at the lowest prices, have had the principal share in furnishing the libraries. In introducing the system into Canada, precautions have been taken, which, I trust, will have the effect of obviating this great evil.

"In the School Act of 1850, which first set apart a sum of money for the establishment and support of school libraries, it is declared to be the duty of the Chief Superintendent of Education to apportion the sum granted for this purpose by the legislature under the following condition : 'That no aid should be given towards the establishment and support of any school library, unless an equal amount be contributed or expended from local sources for the same object ;' and the Council of Public Instruction is required to examine, and at its discretion to recommend or disapprove of text books for the use of schools, or books for school libraries. 'Provided that no portion of the legislative school grant shall be applied in aid of any school in which any book is used that has been disapproved of by the Council, and public notice given of such disapproval.'

"The Council of Public Instruction, in the discharge of the responsibility thus imposed upon it, has adopted, among the general regulations for the establishment and management of public school libraries in Upper Canada, the following rule :—'In order to prevent the introduction of improper books into libraries, it is required that no book shall be admitted into any public school library established under these regulations, which is not included in the catalogue of public school library books prepared according to law ;' and the principles by which it has been guided in performing the task of selecting books for these libraries, are stated in the following extract from the minutes of its proceedings :

"The Council regards it as imperative that no work of a licentious, vicious, or immoral tendency, and no works hostile to the Christian religion, should be admitted into the libraries*

"2. Nor is it in the opinion of the Council, compatible with the objects of the public school libraries, to introduce into them controversial works on theology, or works of denominational controversy ; although it would not be desirable to exclude all historical and other works in which such topics are referred to and discussed, and it is desirable to include a selection of suitable works on the evidences of natural and revealed religion.

"3. In regard to works on ecclesiastical history, the Council agree on a selection of the most approved works on each side.

*The first and part of the second of these paragraphs have been adopted verbatim in the new School Law and Regulations of New Brunswick relating to public libraries.

"4. With these exceptions and within these limitations, it is the opinion of the Council that as wide a selection as possible should be made of useful and entertaining books of permanent value, adapted to popular reading in the various departments of human knowledge ; leaving each municipality to consult its own taste, and exercise its own discretion in selecting such books from the general catalogue.

"5. A want having been felt by Local Superintendents, and other local school authorities, of a judicious selection of standard works of fiction for the public libraries, it has been represented to the Council of Public Instruction that such a selection would, to a great extent, supersede the use of pernicious literature in the country, and would conduce to the elevation of literary taste, while the strong desire that is felt for light literature for the leisure hour could thus be innocently gratified. The Council acceded to the wish thus expressed in 1868, and have authorized a selection of works of fiction to be placed on the catalogue.]

"6. The including of any books in the general catalogue is not to be understood as the expression of any opinion by the Council in regard to any sentiments inculcated or combated in such books ; but merely as an acquiescence on the part of the Council in the purchase of such by any municipality, should it think proper to do so.

"7. The general catalogue of books for public school libraries may be modified and enlarged from year to year as circumstances may suggest, and as suitable new works of value may appear.'

"The catalogue above referred to, and of which I enclose a copy, affords ample proof of the intelligence and liberal spirit in which the principles above stated have been carried out by the Council of Public Instruction. The Chief Superintendent observes, that in the case of the libraries established up to the present time, the local authorities have, in a large number of instances, assigned the task of selecting books to the Chief Superintendent ; that in some they have, by a committee of one or more of themselves, chosen all the books desired by them, and that in others they have selected them to the amount of their own appropriation, requesting the Chief Superintendent to choose the remainder to the amount of the apportionment of the library grant. The Chief Superintendent recommends the last as a preferable mode. The total number of volumes issued from the Educational Department to public libraries in Upper Canada, from November, 1853, when the issue commenced, to the end of August last, was 62,866. [And to the end of 1860, 237,648—or, including those sent out as prizes, &c., &c., 491,561, or nearly 700,000 volumes—nearly ten times the number sent out in Lord Elgin's time.]

REGULATIONS FOR THE SUPPLY OF LIBRARY AND PRIZE BOOKS, MAPS AND APPARATUS, TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

These regulations are as follows :—

"1. The Chief Superintendent will add one hundred per cent. to any sum or sums, not less than five dollars, transmitted to the Department by the Municipal and School Corporations, on behalf of Grammar and Common Schools ; and forward Public Library Books, Prize Books, Maps, Apparatus, Charts, and Diagrams, to the value of the amount thus augmented, upon receiving a list of the articles required. In all cases, it will be necessary for any person, acting on behalf of the Municipal or Trustee Corporation, to enclose or present a written authority to do so, verified by the corporate seal of the Corporation. A selection of Maps, Apparatus, Library and Prize Books, &c., to be sent, can always be made by the Department, when so desired.

"2. Catalogues and forms of Application will be furnished to School authorities on their application.