

right direction. A very large and valuable collection of books at reasonable prices was secured; and the commission to agents saved by buying directly, paid the expenses connected with his visit twice over. The special knowledge of the English book market possessed by the Librarian, owing to his having been actively engaged in the book trade in London for some years before he became an Officer of the Board, contributed largely to this successful result. As will be seen by the catalogue now in the printer's hands, most of his purchases were of books not obtainable in this country. It would be a prudent policy on the part of the Board, it is submitted, to have the Chief Librarian make a purchasing trip to England every three or four years. The opportunity thus afforded of personally inspecting the treasures on the shelves of English booksellers,—the certainty of much closer buying,—the saving in commissions and other charges, will repay many times the outlay for travelling expenses. It is becoming every year more the practice of the large Libraries both in England and the United States to send personal representatives to the book markets, and thus hundreds of valuable books are secured by these gentlemen before their existence is chronicled in any sale catalogue, and even when catalogued, they are frequently snapped up long before the catalogues reach this country. So well known is the necessity for prompt action that on several occasions we have barely secured some of our most valued purchases by the use of the cable.

The circulation of books in the various Branch Libraries has improved during the year, but the success of the Dundas street Branch has far exceeded the most sanguine expectations. It promises soon to become one of the most successful of the Branches.

During the year the question of providing better and safer quarters for the books in the Reference Department has been considered, and a set of plans were prepared for a Reference Library building, which would serve not only as a repository for the books, but also provide suitable and quiet reading rooms for students and others requiring to consult the books in that department. Again, owing to the large annual additions to the books in the Circulating Library, our space for satisfactorily shelving these, is becoming more and more contracted, and the only solution of the increasing difficulty will be the removal of the books in the Reference Department, and the giving up of the space at present

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