

with all our tenants, until the Circulating and Reference Libraries and Reading Rooms now occupy the entire building, with branch Libraries in different parts of the city." A point which I think worthy of note is the advantage to men out of work. I will quote again from Mr. Ward's report : "During the winter season a considerable number of unemployed persons, glad to obtain shelter and rest, frequent the reading rooms, occupy the halls, and prevent legitimate readers from obtaining that free and ready access to the periodicals which they should have. To meet this required want and to afford a resting place for this class of persons, it has been resolved to open for the winter months a special room for their accommodation." This phase of the work seems to have been felt in all large cities. In the report of the Manchester Free Libraries the writer says : "It would seem that these rooms, in times of great social pressure, become potent factors in the prevention of absolute idleness and evils arising from time mis-spent in places of evil repute."

From these reports I glean that the Free Public Library has been in the past and is now a great factor in the prosperity and progress of the people wherever they have been formed.

Sir John Lubbock, a practical politician as well as a scientist, believes that money expended for Free Libraries is more than returned by the reduction in poor rates and police rates, and that it is much more satisfactory to spend money on school and books than on prisons. In short, it is the almost universal opinion of those who have given thought to the subject that a Free Library is just as indispensable to the mental health of a city as are pure water and good sewers to the physical health.

Time precludes my going into the subject more fully. In the many reports which I have looked over I find there are more savings banks, greater prosperity all round, in cities in which there are Free Libraries, and as an adjunct to the Free School it is indispensable. To my mind, this is the strongest point in its favor, but to go fully into this part of the subject would require a paper in itself.

At a meeting of the Trades and Labor Council of this City it was resolved to place this matter before the citizens of Ottawa.

In last year's report from Toronto of the Public Library I noticed that the circulation of books has increased 93,349 over that of 1893, and that works of fiction average 46 per cent. of the whole.

It is intensely interesting to note the influence of "the one man" in the growth and development of this great movement. The last quarter of the 19th century will go down in history as the age of Electricity and Free Libraries.

Who among our wealthy men, some I believe, millionaires, will immortalize himself by founding the first Free Public Library in the City of Ottawa ?