

astray,—a dread of interference with your freedom, which nobody threatens,—or, the dulness of our fair city. Rather let me urge on you to join in a movement in the right direction, in the firm conviction you are thus consulting the best interests of the young men of our city, the welfare and peace of the community generally, and the conscious satisfaction you will feel in your own hearts, that whether clerks abuse the privilege or not, you have permitted them the opportunity of acquiring useful knowledge—that you have countenanced and not retarded one part of the progress of the age, which in Great Britain has received the support and countenance of the great, and the wise, and the good; and which has in no way by experience falsified the expectations of its promoters and advocates, but on the contrary, has more than realised the most sanguine expectations of both, and now most extensively, and I may say nearly universally, in the largest cities and towns of the British empire, become an established practice, not again to be altered.

And why should Montreal be behind any city? Montreal is not, will not, and shall not be behind any city. Even now she is by far the first in Canada, and much before many of equal population elsewhere; but she is sadly behind others in many respects. We make no boast of our pre-eminence, for it is not disputed; we make no claim, for no one denies us the position. But we are behind, so long as we do not avail ourselves of all our advantages. I must say it, but I say it with all possible respect, that all retail shops that keep open after eight, are behind the age: they are behind in the march of progress; and if the prosperity and progress of our fair city were left in their hands, it would keep behind too. It is our interest, and it is