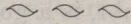


not of their own guild, especially when Capital Ward could supply a score of civil servants worthy of seats at the council board.

The duties of citizenship in Ottawa are becoming more pressing every year. It is gratifying to note that the men who should direct public opinion are coming to a sense of their responsibilities.



### VOTE FOR THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

At the municipal elections in January, the electors of Ottawa will be asked to decide if the public library is to be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Provincial Library Act, or remain as at present under the special Act secured when the library was established half a dozen years ago. The local newspapers have explained at length the effect of the proposed change from the special to the general act, and have unanimously endorsed it. Probably most of our readers are familiar with the general terms of the two acts, but it will do no harm to briefly recapitulate. The special Act, under which the public library is now administered, provides a board of eight aldermen and three citizens. The aldermen are selected, not because of any fitness for the government of a public library, but simply because they represent eight different wards. The citizens members as often as not have been ex-aldermen. But even this aldermanic board has no actual power to act. Being simply a committee of the city council, their recommendations must go before the council, where they may be thrown out without consideration.

The Provincial Act, on the other hand, provides a board of eight members, three appointed by the city council, three by the public school board and two by the separate school board, and the appointing bodies are forbidden to put their own members on the library board. Members of the city council, or of

the two school boards, cannot therefore be members of the library board. The result is that men are selected for that board who have special fitness for such a position. For instance, in Toronto the public library has had the benefit of the scholarship and ripe experience of such men as Sir Glenholme Falconbridge and Judge Kelly, the latter having been a member of the board for a great many years, and having acquired the reputation of an authority on all questions of library administration. Continuity of service is also a most important factor in the efficiency of a public library board. Obviously a man who has given time to the study of library problems becomes more valuable with each year that he serves on the board. The Provincial Act makes provision for such continuity of service. Under the special Ottawa act it is practically impossible, as the aldermen are appointed annually, and many drop out at each election.

The special act provides a fixed annual appropriation for the maintenance of the library, ignoring the fact that like any other public institution it must grow as the city grows, and needs an increasing income as its activities expand. The Provincial Act provides a flexible income, increasing as the population and wealth of the city increases, and based on the taxable assessment. There are many minor differences between the two acts, but these are the vital factors. The proposal before the electors of Ottawa is simply to discard the principle of aldermanic control of an important educational institution, and substitute therefor government by a competent, independent board, under the provisions of the Provincial Libraries Act, the same act which controls all the other libraries in Ontario. *The Civilian* confidently appeals to all civil servants to vote at the municipal election in favour of bringing the Ottawa Public Library under the Provincial Act.