

"The plan of providing such district school libraries, adopted by the Parliament of Canada West, is undoubtedly the wisest that has yet been acted upon. It is in short this:—The Parliament by vote appropriated a specific sum to purchase a suitable number of books, charts and articles of apparatus for schools and school libraries. This sum was expended under the direction of the Superintendent of Public Education, and a large Depository of excellent and select books for the reading of youth and older persons was made at the Office of Education. Whenever any school district or municipality wishes to form a library, it may send to the office of the General Superintendent a sum not less than five dollars, and the Superintendent adds one hundred per cent. to the sum, and returns, at cost price, such books to the district as may, by a committee or otherwise, have been selected from the printed catalogue of the Depository. Thus the books that go into libraries are books that have been well examined, and contain nothing that is frivolous, or that could poison the morals of those who read them; the libraries purchase them at the wholesale price, and, of course, can obtain a much larger amount of reading matter for their money than as though they had each made the purchase direct from the booksellers for themselves, and at the same time they are stimulated to do something for themselves as well as to ask that something may be done for them. It is believed that some such plan might be carried into effect in our own State greatly to the profit of the whole community."

In regard to the State of New York, the Chief Superintendent (Dr. Ryerson) in his *Special Report* to the Legislature in 1858, says:—

"The unsatisfactory working and declining state of the public school library system in the State of New York, as detailed in a preceding page, is a sufficient illustration of the fruits of what is demanded by the bookselling assailants of our public library system, in a country where the private book trade is much more extended in its supplies and operations than in Upper Canada."

"Whether, therefore, our system of providing public libraries, as well as maps, globes, and other school apparatus, be considered in regard to the higher or lower grounds above stated, the conclusion is that which was expressed by the President of the American Association for the Advancement of Education at a late anniversary of that noble society, as quoted by the Earl of Elgin in a speech at Glasgow, after his return from Canada. The report says:—'The President made some remarks on the difficulty in the United States of procuring proper libraries for schools, keeping out bad books and procuring good ones at reasonable rates, and he strongly recommended the system adopted by the Education Department at Toronto, Canada West.'"

Examples of the practice in other States, and in Nova Scotia, Australia, etc., (which are in the main similar to that in our own Province), will be found on pages 40 and 43 of the *Special Report* just quoted, and pages 100 and 101 of the *Journal of Education* for June, 1867.

AMERICAN REASONS FOR PREFERRING OUR DEPOSITORY SYSTEM TO LEAVING THE MATTER IN THE HANDS OF "THE TRADE."

Previously to quoting the reasons and warnings of the American Educationists, we desire to refer briefly to an incident of the Perth library case (which case has given rise to the recent discussions on this subject.) The Board of Trustees at Perth had ordered several of Lever's novels, which the Council of Public Instruction and the Department had refused to sanction for introduction into our schools. The *Perth Courier* and *Toronto Globe** both assailed the

Department for refusing to send the books asked for by the Perth Trustees, on the ground that they were quite as competent as the Department to decide what kind of books should be placed in the school library. To this, Dr. Ryerson replied as follows:—

"Among the most serious charges made by one of the principal complaining parties is this:—That the Department has refused to supply them with Lever's novels, including stories of such rollicking, drunken heroes as 'Harry Lorrequer,' 'Charles O'Malley,' 'Jack Hinton,' &c. The Council of Public Instruction, believing that there are too many of such characters in the country already, without increasing their number, refused to sanction the spending of public money to buy and circulate books to eulogize and applaud them, and to place such books in the hands of our youth."

As to the evils, even in our own Province, of placing works of a doubtful kind in the hands of youth, we refer to the painful cases on this subject mentioned in the *Journal of Education* for April, 1831, and the further illustrative papers on the subject in the *Journal* for November, 1865.

The *Globe* of the 30th March says:—

"The complaining parties have dared to question the propriety of that *index librorum prohibitorum* which this Canadian Pope has instituted. Some rebellious spirit has asked for Lever's novels, and the soul of Dr. Ryerson revolts at the idea of supplying stories of such 'rollicking, drunken heroes' as Harry Lorrequer, Charles O'Malley and Jack Hinton. * * * *

"The absurdity of this literary dictatorship is too gross to escape ridicule, and the sooner it is done away with the better."

And now what is this "literary dictatorship," thus denounced by the *Globe*? Why, it is that "The Council of Public Instruction 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."

CAUTIONS AND WARNINGS OF AMERICAN EDUCATIONISTS.

We have already cited the opinion of two prominent American authorities in favour of the Depository system adopted in this Province. In the *Journal of Education* for June, 1867, will be found regulations similar in effect to those in this Province, which have been adopted in Michigan, Maryland, Nova Scotia, and Australia.

We will now quote the following extracts from the Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Michigan on this subject. He says (after speaking of some other difficulties in carrying out their library system):—

"But a worse evil grew up in the systematic plans of peddlers to palm upon the libraries a mass of cheap, trashy, and often pernicious literature. One or two wealthy booksellers kept their peddling agents traversing the State, and many are the tricks by which they boasted that they cajoled the Inspectors. A few libraries were well selected and well kept; but so valueless for public good, and especially for the education of the young, had the great majority become, that all intelligent friends of education desired a change."

These "wealthy" and other "booksellers" here mentioned were determined, however, not to permit their "trade" to be interfered by State authority, and their next course of action in the interests of "the trade" may be best gathered from the following notice, which the State Superintendent found it necessary to issue to the Schools:—

"CAUTION.—School Officers are especially cautioned against travel-

* It is worthy of note that the editors of two of the papers which have attacked the Depository are *non-interferers*, while a third is closely allied to a prominent publisher. The other two could not, of course, take sides against those who are constantly sending advertisements to their paper.