

(Circular.)

INSTITUT CANADIEN.

This Institution was founded in 1844, when the French Canadians had not a single library in the City of Montreal, nor a place where they could read either books or newspapers or meet together. In 1852 it was incorporated under the name of the "INSTITUT CANADIEN."

Some time after, manifestations of ill-will on the part of the clergy were noticeable, and the clergy began to establish libraries and lecture rooms of their own, which they had never thought of before. However, the success of the *Institut Canadien* was so marked, that in 1857, not less than 700 members were contributors to its maintenance.

In 1858, the clergy determined, if possible, to destroy the INSTITUT. They had already three powerful institutions of their own, —the Sulpicians had formed the *Cabinet de Lecture* and *Cercle Littéraire*, and the Jesuits, *l'Union Catholique*, where members had access to libraries and reading rooms gratuitously or at trifling cost. They attempted at first to induce the members of the INSTITUT to exclude from their number those who did not profess the Catholic religion, and then to exclude from their reading room the *Witness* and the *Semeur Canadien*. After protracted debates, which lasted several weeks, the victory remained with those members who were desirous of maintaining the integrity of their Constitution in regard to equality of creeds and origins, and their liberty of reading all organs of public opinion. Then a system of calumny was organized in order to represent the library of the Institution as containing several books of an immoral character, and finally some leaders, in the interest of the clergy, circulated through the city a written declaration containing those calum-