

## The Elmira Public Library.

THE nucleus of the Elmira Public Library, which now has 103 members, contains over 3000 volumes valued at \$2063, and which enjoyed a circulation of 2558 books during the last year, was laid as early as the year 1885. In the winter evenings of that year a number of the young men of Elmira met and discussed the advisability of organizing a Society, the objects of which were to be, principally, the study of German and English literature, debating and entertaining and the dissemination of reading matter amongst its members. The organization was duly effected and a membership of 18 or 20 enrolled. Mr. Geo. Klinek was elected President, Mr. William Weidenhammer Vice-President, and Mr. Hy. Delion, Secretary. The rooms now occupied by The Signet printing office, were secured for the meetings. There being no funds at hand, it was decided that a Library be commenced with the books in possession of the individual members, each placing his stock at the disposal of the Society, for circulation. The first call for these books brought eight volumes. These were labelled and put into circulation.

The Society prospered and did good work, gradually installed a little furniture, and added a few books to its library. With the funds derived from the proceeds of a series of well patronized public entertainments, given by the Society, suitable books were purchased and book cases procured. An organ was purchased and used to enliven the weekly programs of the Society. After an existence of about three years, the value of the Society's library amounted to about \$60.00.

Liberal aid to Libraries, from the Government, being then available, a proposal was made to further augment the usefulness of this Library, by presenting it towards the establishment of a "Mechanics' Institute," a name by which these institutions were then known and under which

they received very liberal aid and encouragement out of a special fund, provided by the Ontario Government, for that purpose.

A meeting of citizens was called, a subscription list circulated and finally, in the year 1888, a Mechanics' Institute was formally organized, with 102 members. The first officers were Geo. Klinek, President, D. Bean, Vice-President, and A. Werner, Secretary. The Germania Society's rooms, furniture and outfit were secured, and the library of the Germania Society, together with a number of new volumes, were placed on the shelves of the book room. A Reading Room was established and the Elmira Mechanics' Institute began

to flourish. A live interest was maintained by the citizens. Advantage was taken of the Government grants to evening classes. The evening art classes taught by Messrs. D. Bean, Geo. Klinek and J. A. Harper, respectively, were well attended and unusually successful. The Bronze Medal given for the highest stage of proficiency in these subjects, throughout Ontario, was taken by Elmira pupils three years in succession. Later, less attention was paid to evening classes and the Institute gradually relapsed to its function of distributor of reading matter. The Reading Room, in connection, is well provided with the leading newspapers and periodicals and enjoys a good patronage. Thus far, private subscription fees have supplied the funds required to uphold the con-

ditions upon which the Government grant depends. The time, however, when the maintainance of this useful institution will be made one of the duties of the municipality, seems not far distant.

The Government grant this year amounts to \$233.10, less any necessary pro rata reduction. The officers for the present year are:

President—A. H. Erb.

Secretary—Frank A. Kerr.

Treasurer—D. D. Ratz.

Directors—S. H. Ratz, W. H. Otto, W. M. Behrens, C. W. Schierholtz and Geo. Klinek.



Interior of Elmira Public Library.