

The Annual Report of Library and Reading-Room Committee.

GENTLEMEN,—The work of the Library and Reading-Room Committee this year has fallen into three sections : 1st, to supplement the work of the Special Committee on Library arrangements and fixtures ; 2nd, to select books for year and periodicals for 1900; and 3rd, to issue a new catalogue. In the discharge of each of these duties the Committee has spent a great deal of time.

The Committee is able to report that the Library is now in good working condition. New shelving has given largely increased accommodation. The Library is fairly supplied with appliances for its work. A receiving wicket has been conveniently placed, catalogues have been placed in the Reading Room, and full directions as to the use of the book cards provided. The work of the Library, especially the receiving and issuing of books, can now be carried on rapidly and easily.

In the selection of new books the Committee has taken especial care. Lists of books are made monthly by the Secretary from lists sent in by members of the Committee and of the Board, from suggestions by the public, from notices in the leading English and American reviews and from announcements of the principal English, American and Canadian publishers. These lists are typewritten and sent to each member of the Committee some days before their regular meeting. The Committee make their selection from the lists, and their report is sent to the Board for their approval or revision. Over 1500 books have been considered by the Committee this year and 616 books have been placed on the shelves. The Committee have endeavored to pay due regard to all classes of readers and gladly welcome suggestions from any interested in books. In the selection of the periodicals for 1900, the Committee have endeavored to recognize our growing relations with the Mother Country and with the U.S., and have accordingly placed on the tables the Spectator and the Outlook, two great English weeklies, and the N. Y. Herald, a leading American daily. They regret that the cost of an English daily is so great as to be prohibitive.

The new catalogue has occasioned considerable labor. The first question that arises in a library like ours is to determine the kind of catalogue, whether it is to be a dictionary or a classified catalogue. The Committee has endeavored to combine both features. The History and Voyages selections are classified according to continents and sub classified as to countries. Science and General Literature are partly classified and partly alphabetical. Biography, Miscellaneous and Fiction are alphabetically arranged. Juvenile Boys and Poetry are alphabetically arranged by authors. Juvenile Girls and Little Ones, Religion and Reference, are arranged consecutively. The documents, reports and pamphlets have been carefully classified and sub classified. The general principle has been to make a catalogue that will be simple for the reader who wants fiction only or mostly, that will tell the more studious reader what the Library contains on a given subject, and that will be educative, especially to junior readers. Your Committee trust that they have done something to secure these ends.

The Committee call special attention to the Juvenile department. Believing that the Board of a Public Library has a grave responsibility in the matter of juvenile literature, the Committee has endeavored to form a Juvenile department that will counteract the pernicious reading so widely circulated among our boys and girls. The Library contained many books of interest to the juniors, but they were scattered through Fiction, Voyages, General Literature and Miscellaneous and other departments. These have been gathered into one section, and a large number of the latest juveniles added. These, again, have been arranged in three departments, so that now we have 228 Boys, 37 Girls and 25 Little Ones. This last class is intended for little folks of from 4 to 10 years of age, and has been found to be very popular. The Committee wish here to publicly thank the business men and others whose advertisements materially lightened the cost of the catalogue.

The report of the circulation, the membership and the cash receipts from the Library are herewith given in detail. These statistics will be found gratifying, and serve to show how great a hold the Library has already gained with the town, and indicate in some way its future possibilities. Two especially encouraging features are the membership among the children and the membership in the township, among the farmers and others.

J. E. HARDING, Chairman.
E. A. HARDY, Secretary.