

orthwith, relieve Canada from the question-
able and anomalous position she now occu-
pies in regard to the question, and would
be a matter of sincere gratification to every
friend of literature and every lover of justice
and fair play.

A PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR ONTARIO.

It is very much a matter of regret that the
Capital of the Province—notably characterized,
as it is, as the seat of the professional and educa-
tional institutions of the country, as well as the
seat of the Provincial Legislature and the empori-
um of the commercial interests of Ontario,
should be without so important an institution as
an incorporated PUBLIC LIBRARY belonging to
the Province, or belonging to and *free* to the
people.

Toronto now boasts a much larger resident
professional population than any city in the
Dominion, while its temporary residents of stu-
dents—in Arts, Law, Divinity and Medicine—are
very numerous. Hence, besides the claim
that Toronto has as the prominent and central
capital of the Province, where historians, annal-
ists and antiquarians may naturally find the
records and historic material of the past and
rapidly passing time, Toronto has immediate and
pressing necessity in the requirements of her
large professional and intelligent population, and
of the thousand students that throng her places
of learning, for the establishment of a grand free
Library of Reference, comprehensive of all the
branches of knowledge and study.

Since the removal of the General Government
Library to Ottawa this want has been very much
felt in Toronto, and unfortunately our Provincial
Administration is disinclined, at least at present,
to make any move towards supplying this want.

The various existing Libraries in our midst do
not, by any means, fill this lack. They are
small and special in their character, and being so
scattered over the city are inconvenient for refer-
ence. The best of these, the University of
Toronto library, though more general and impor-
tant in its character than any other we have, is
distant from the thoroughfares of the city, and
is appropriated to its educational and scholastic
uses. The same may be said of the special and
almost private libraries of Trinity College, Knox
College, and the Canadian Institute; while that
of Osgoode Hall, though more liberal in its
scale, is almost entirely devoted to the literature
of the legal profession. The Board of Arts
library is important, but, again, special in its
class. The Mechanics' Institute library is very
good in its way as a lending library and reading
room, and is deserving of the hearty support of
the public; but, in none of these, have we what
is wanted—a GREAT PUBLIC REFERENCE LIBRARY
—of the character of the Boston or Manchester
Free Libraries—one commensurate with the
wants of the people and fitly representative of
the wealth and intelligence of the city.

In considering how this manifest want may be

supplied, and how the boon of such an institu-
tion as we have indicated may be had for the
people, we may be permitted to hint to the Pre-
mier of our Local Government that an appropri-
ation to the extent, at least, of a sum sufficient
to form the nucleus of such a library might be
made a legitimate and commendable charge on
the revenue of the Province; or, if not admitted
as a direct charge to the Province, then as a
charge against the amount, some \$20,000, due
to the Province by the Dominion Government
as its proportion of the general library assumed
by the Ottawa authorities at Confederation.

We commend the consideration of this to our
local Administration and parliament at its next
session, and we would urge that early action may
be taken in this important matter. Failing,
however, the sources alluded to from whence the
amount necessary to the erection of a suitable
building for, and the establishment of this library
may be obtained, may we be allowed to remind
our "moneyed men" and "merchant princes" of
Toronto of the many noble benefactions of the
great merchants of England and the States which
have taken the shape of princely contributions
towards the formation of public libraries. These
noble gifts to the people are to be met with in
many of the cities of England, and, while being
monuments to the enlightened liberality of their
donors, they are, at the same time, productive of
the greatest benefit to the masses. In fact, this
custom of founding and endowing libraries is so
characteristic of the English people, that the
British Museum itself, though national property,
is but the aggregate of the donations of collectors.
Many of these grand collections, the Cottonian
Library, the Harleian Library, the Sloan Museum,
the Townley and Elgin Marbles, the Arundel
Collections, the Lansdowne Manuscripts, &c.,
&c., have been transferred to the custody of the
nation; but very many are the testamentary gifts
of collectors; and, it would be a curious and
noble chapter in the history of these benefactions,
to have fully narrated the immense sums donated
to the service of the people in the various founda-
tions for this purpose.

Who among us will follow the worthy example
of England's wealthy men, and provide for the
intellectual necessities and recreations of our own
people by founding a library such as we have
indicated as being the pressing necessity of the
hour?

CANADIAN LITERATURE AND ITS ESTIMATE.

The prevalent habit among the people of speak-
ing contemptuously of our native literature is a
bad and senseless one; and equally reprehensible
is the thoughtless indifference of even reading
people to anything that presents itself from the
native press, no matter what the subject. So
marked is this inconsiderate disregard for and
lack of interest in Canadian publications, outside
the issues of the newspaper press, that we can
hardly point to a single instance of a successful