

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

The Ottawa Public Library has apparently reached a critical stage in its career. Thanks to the enthusiasm of one or two men, it has been brought to a high state of efficiency and public usefulness, but this has been done under the wearing handicap of aldermanic control. It appears from a statement in one of the local newspapers that the institution is governed, under a special act of the legislature, by a board of nine aldermen, with three citizens. It stands absolutely alone in this respect, all the other libraries of the province being administered under the general Library Act of Ontario, which provides an independent board, appointed by the council and the two school boards, but not subject to their control. It is common knowledge to many of us that this provincial act has been conspicuously successful in other Ontario towns. It has brought upon the library boards many of the ablest men of the province, — judges, lawyers, clergymen, men of scholarship, and also men of business ability. One man of this class was for years a member of the Ottawa library board, Dr. Otto Klotz, and a great deal of the library's success has been due to his scholarship and enthusiasm.

The service is glad to know that so much can be said in the way of good citizenship of one of their number. The aldermanic influence, however, was supreme in Ottawa, and consequently the library has lost the ablest member of its board. For some time there has been a growing feeling that the library should be relieved from the incubus of its special act, and brought under the operations of the Provincial Act; and this movement has been brought to a head by the recent treatment of Dr. Klotz. The friends of the library feel that the time has come for taking a decided stand, and all who have at heart the welfare of the institution should give their warmest support to the movement. Civil servants, individually and collectively, have every right to interest themselves in the matter. As citizens of Ottawa they cannot remain indifferent to the welfare of an important civic institution; as readers and students they are directly affected by the success or otherwise of the library; as a body they are bound to support a movement which must result in a very great increase in its efficiency. It is to be hoped that the Civil Service Association will take an early opportunity of putting itself on record as warmly favouring the transfer of the Ottawa library to the Provincial Act.

The Western Ontario Customs Mutual Benefit Association

The following is a list of the officers and members of this association to date:—

- Geo. Hess, President, Stratford.
- A. Farrow, Vice-President, Goderich.
- F. G. Neelin, Secretary-Treasurer, Seaforth.
- E. O'Flaherty (Chairman), Stratford; D. McPherson, Stratford; J. W. Cull, Mitchell; Geo. Smith, Southampton; J. McPherson, Kincardine, Executive Committee.
- H. E. Wilson, St. Mary's; Jno. Wiseman, Clinton, Auditors.
- A. M. Lyson, Warton.
- W. Robertson, Hanover.
- R. Hutchinson, Listowell.
- H. Davis, Wingham.
- D. Grant, Preventive Officer, Goderich.
- G. Goetz, Preventive Officer, Stratford.