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REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEE

—ON—

LITERATURE

Adopted by the Executive for Submission to  
the National Council.

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Adopted by the National Council of Women of Canada, at the Annual  
Meeting at Montreal, May, 1896, and ordered to be  
printed and circulated.

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**PRICE, 25 CENTS PER DOZEN.**

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## REPORT.

Your Sub-Committee, having received the reports of the different Sub-Committees appointed by Local Councils throughout the Dominion to investigate as far as possible the extent to which various localities have suffered from the circulation of impure literature and pictures, as reported at the last Annual Meeting of the National Council, beg to report as follows:—

First: Nearly all the Local Councils report that there is little or no evidence of impure literature reaching school-children at the schools themselves.

Secondly: That there is doubtless a considerable amount of prohibited and impure literature circulated in insidious ways. Your Sub-Committee is informed that names of boys and girls are procured from school pass lists published in newspapers, from lists of names attending social parties, or in some other way, and that specimen papers etc., are then sent by mail to these children or young people, offering a free supply to them in return for lists of other names. Your Sub-Committee is informed that parents have, in several instances, found such communications in their children's pockets. Packets of such prohibited papers and other literature appear also to be brought into this country through the medium of steamers plying between the U. S. A. and Canada on the two seaboard and on the lakes. It appears from the reports sent in that prohibited papers are often to be found in barber's shops in many towns, and your Committee is also informed that in some cases they can be obtained from night porters on sleeping cars and at some newstands; and there are no doubt other methods and sources of distribution.

Your Sub-Committee begs to append to this report the names of the prohibited papers, and recommends that the Local Councils should draw attention to the names of these papers which are generally of so innocent and misleading a character as not to awaken alarm.

Your Sub-Committee have been informed of one instance where a large number of one of those papers were sent to

be distributed as religious papers. Your Sub-Committee's attention has been drawn to the fact that on one of our railway lines, little pictures and booklets of an offensive character have been surreptitiously offered for sale, and recommends that the attention of the railway authorities be drawn to the matter, whenever any traces of the circulation of such literature on the cars is discovered.

Another method of distributing this literature is to send samples of it and advertisements of cards and books along with small articles such as knives, photographic and printing outfits, rulers, etc., for which young people send, in answer to advertisements of these articles at low prices.

In certain localities it has been found that boys make a practice of making collections of the pictures sold with cigarette packets; some of these pictures are unobjectionable, but others are of a different character, and prizes have been given for the largest collection of the cigarette cases.

As the law stands at present, neither those who manufacture these pictures nor those who circulate them can be touched. When the boys who buy the cigarettes are under the age of 18, the sellers can be prosecuted for selling cigarettes or tobacco to them, and in this way several prosecutions have now been put in hand and convictions obtained.

One of the Councils reports that the result of their investigations leads them to believe that a far greater amount of objectionable literature is being circulated amongst children than the general public has any idea of, and that many parents and teachers have had sundry painful proofs of the truth of this assertion.

It is known that agents are employed here and there for the dissemination of this literature, one instance being that of a man arrested last year at Dereham, Ont., and proved to have sold 60 copies of a vicious book to boys and girls.

Some of our members have also had brought before their notice some catalogues descriptive of books of a most deteriorating character, which have been sent by post into this country and into the United States by a Mr. Carrington, now living in France.

In another case, one of our Councils has come upon traces of a Club of young men existing for the purpose of obtaining this sort of literature. Instances have also been given us of innocent looking card games being sold by travelling pedlars

and through other means, which on being held up to the light revealed objectionable pictures and words.

Penknives have been found to be given to boys in the street by unknown parties having pictures inserted in a glass at one end. These cases are quoted for the warning of parents.

All the Local Councils dwell on the prevalence of cheap, trashy, sensational literature, and its popularity amongst the young, and urge the necessity of supplying cheap, healthy literature, and of fostering a taste for it.

One Local Council points out that the people in the western parts of the Dominion, especially in the smaller places, are largely dependent on the selection of books made by the News Companies and wholesale book stores who send consignments for distribution amongst the stores in the towns and villages, and that of late years there has been a preponderance of such works as those by Zola, etc., and this Council suggests that a representation on this subject might be made to the heads of the firms who distribute the books.

To sum up, your Sub-Committee begs to make the following recommendations :—

1. That the Government be requested to amend Section 179, of the Criminal Code by omitting the words "public" and "publicly" in sub-sections (a) and (b) on the ground that sales of books and papers of the character objected to can now be made privately without any penalty being imposed; and further, that a clause be added imposing a penalty on the manufacture and circulation of such books, papers or pictures.

2. That all Local Councils take steps to warn parents of the danger that exists for their children in the possibility of such communications as have been referred to, or specimens of impure literature or prohibited papers being addressed to them. A list of the prohibited papers should be furnished when desired.

Parents and others should be urged to be on their guard in this matter, and if they discover any such literature coming to their homes, to send it, and the wrapper or envelope in which it was enclosed, to the President of the Local Council,

NOTE.—Since the above recommendation was drawn up, an opportunity has occurred for its submission to the Minister of Justice who, after laying it before the Privy Council, accepted two out of the three suggestions made for inclusion in a Government Bill, viz. : That the private as well as the public sale of all such books and pictures be made an offence, and that their manufacture also shall involve a penalty.

or to some one in a responsible position, in order that further steps may be taken to trace whence such communications come, and to lead to their suppression.

3. That Local Councils be urged to keep before parents the duty of themselves instructing their children in simple physiological facts, basing such instruction on plant life and other lessons in nature, which knowledge thus imparted will prevent them from endeavouring to get information through impure sources.

4. That all Local Councils and National Societies should make an earnest effort to promote the circulation of cheap, attractive, healthy literature, and to make it popular, especially amongst the young people.

Amongst other methods of attaining this object may be mentioned :

(a) The establishment of Libraries.

These may take the form of:—

1. School Libraries. Such libraries attached to every school by the Government of each Province, containing carefully selected books, would probably best meet the special need urged on your Sub-Committee by the reports of the Local Councils. Such libraries could be made a mighty engine for good in the hands of wise teachers, who could thereby guide the reading of those under their charge, and direct it into helpful and stimulating directions.
2. Public Libraries under the Public Library Act of Canada. This act can be put in motion by one hundred ratepayers signing a petition to the City Council, who can then frame a bye-law and submit it to the consideration of the citizens as a whole.
3. Libraries formed by voluntary effort or in connection with literary societies, Sunday School work, etc.

(b) Home reading and Chautauqua circles.

(c) The establishment of magazine and book-clubs with competitions and prizes for essays, etc.

(d) The circulation of lists of books which will interest and amuse young people, and at the same time cultivate and refine their tastes. Some such lists have been prepared by one or two of our Local Councils for this purpose, and will be appended to this Report.

- (e) Debates and discussions in our Local Councils and in the Societies affiliated with them concerning the current literature of the day, giving guidance to parents who have no leisure to examine such literature for themselves.
- (f) Efforts similar to those already undertaken by branches of the Women's Art Society, who have by the kindness and co-operation of newspaper proprietors been enabled to introduce bright illustrated stories and articles into some of the weekly issues of papers which are much read.

The President of the National Council will hold herself ready to give any assistance in her power to Local Councils and National Societies desiring information as to the organization of such efforts.

It is hoped that every Local Council will appoint a Standing Literature Committee to watch over every aspect of this question and one which could at the same time act as a Press Committee for each Council.

Your Sub-Committee cannot conclude without acknowledging the indebtedness which those members of the Local Councils, who have undertaken this enquiry, feel that they owe to those who have helped them to gain the information sought for, and their thanks to those officials, whether of the Post-Office, Customs or other departments, who have shown by their interest and co-operation their desire to do all in their power to enforce the law and to stem the evil complained of.

Your Sub-Committee rejoices to be able to report that every effort made to suppress the circulation of deteriorating literature will receive the most hearty support from our neighbours in the United States.

The President of the Society for the Suppression of Vice has written to one of the Local Councils stating that tons of this literature destined for Canada have been destroyed, and that any objectionable papers or communications which are detected and which are sent to him will be carefully investigated.

The President of the National Council of Women of Canada has had an opportunity of personal conference with Mrs. Lowe Dickinson, President of the National Council of the U.S.A., who is ready to carry out the pledge made on behalf of the American Council by Mrs. Foster Avery at the last Annual Meeting.

Mrs. Lowe Dickinson has kindly undertaken to form a

Committee who will draw up a statement concerning the different laws touching this subject as they exist in each State of the Union for the use of our Council, and will be ready to take any further action that may be required.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

↳ Signed on Behalf of the Sub-Committee.

(Signed) ISIBEL ABERDEEN.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS WHOSE TRANSMISSION  
BY MAIL IN CANADA IS PROHIBITED.

The Home.....	Boston, Mass.
The Yank.....	Boston, Mass.
The American Nation.....	Boston, Mass.
The Welcome Friend.....	New York.
The Merry Maker.....	New York.
Modern Stories.....	New York.
Music and Drama.....	New York.
The Truth Seeker.....	New York.
The Hearthstone.....	New York.
Fox's Weekly.....	New York.
Hours at Home.....	New York.
The Metropolitan and Rural Home	New York.
House and Home.....	New York.
The Home Circle.....	New York.
Our Country Home.....	New York.
The Illustrated Record.....	New York.
The Home and Fireside.....	New York.
The Standard.....	New York.
The Detective Library.....	New York.
The Chicago Despatch.....	Chicago, Ill.
The Climax.....	Chicago, Ill.
The Household Guest.....	Chicago, Ill.
The Chicago Mascot.....	Chicago, Ill.
The Breeze.....	Augusta, Me., U.S.A.
The American Farmer.....	Portland, Me.
The Illustrated Monthly Fireside Gem.....	Waterloo, Me.
The Rambler.....	Bridgeport, Conn, U.S.A.
Modern Money Maker.....	Minneapolis, U.S.A.
The American Agent.....	Bóyleston, Ind.
The Advance.....	Passumpsic, Vt., U.S.A.
Young America.....	Washington, D. C.
The Agent's Guide.....	New York, U.S.A.
The Agent's Herald.....	Philadelphia, U.S.A.
The American Cottage Home.....	Jersey City, U.S.A.
The American Fireside and Farm.	Jersey City, U.S.A.
The American Homestead.....	Jersey City, U.S.A.
The American Household Journal.	Jersey City, U.S.A.

Cheerful Moments..... Boston, U.S.A.  
 Detroit Sunday Sun..... Detroit, U.S.A.  
 Detroit Sunday World..... Detroit, U.S.A.  
 Git Blas (Illustré)..... Paris, France.  
 The Household Companion..... New York, U.S.A.  
 The Illustrated Companion..... New York, U.S.A.  
 Illustrated New York News..... New York, U.S.A.  
 Krums of Komfort..... New York, U.S.A.  
 Mercury..... New York, U.S.A.  
 The Plain Dealer..... Moncton, N.B.  
 The Police Gazette..... New York, U.S.A.  
 The Police News..... New York, U.S.A.  
 The Welcome Visitor..... Augusta, Me., U.S.A.  
 Youth and Home..... Cadiz, O., U.S.A.  
 The Hornet..... Moncton, N.B.  
 The Home Treasury..... Augusta, Me, U.S.

THE FOLLOWING PAPERS HAVE BEEN ON THE PROHIBITED  
 LIST FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT HAVE BEEN REMOVED  
 ON THE PUBLISHER PROMISING TO OMIT THE  
 OBJECTIONABLE MATTER IN FUTURE.

The Rural Home..... New York, U.S.A.  
 People's Home Journal..... New York, U.S.A.  
 The Saturday Blade..... Chicago, Ill.  
 Farm and Home..... Chicago, Ill.  
 The Illustrated Sun..... Chicago, Ill.  
 Good Stories..... Augusta, Me.  
 Daughters of America..... Augusta, Me.  
 The National Farmer and HomeAugusta, Me.  
 Magazine.....  
 The Illustrated Family Herald..... Augusta, Me.  
 Happy Hours..... Augusta, Me.  
 Sunshine and Youth..... Augusta, Me.  
 Golden Moments..... Augusta, Me.  
 The Home & Fireside Magazine...Portland, Me.  
 People's Illustrated Journal &  
 Practical Housekeeper..... Portland, Me.  
 The Housekeeper..... Minneapolis, Minn.  
 The Sunday World..... Detroit, Mich.  
 People's Journal..... Washington, D.C.  
 The Public Herald..... Philadelphia, Pa