

## Public Libraries

Under the Act passed at the last Session of the Legislative Assembly every Free Library and every Library known as a "Mechanics' Institute" will be known by the name of "Public Library." It is expected from this change that the public generally will consider a Public Library under its new designation as something in which they have a right of use that did not pertain to a Mechanics Institute. The Act consists of three parts: Part I. refers to Public Libraries that have or may be established under a by-law of the municipality by which provision has been made for suitable buildings and for an annual rate of taxation for the maintenance of the Library. In this part of the Act there has been no change.

Part II. of the Act provides for transfer of the public Library (formerly Mechanics Institute) to a municipal Council with a Board of Management, composed as in the case of a Public Library (Section 3, Part I). This transfer is optional with the Board of Management of the Public Library (formerly Mechanics Institute) and the Municipal Council concerned. If both parties are agreed, the change can be effected, and the Library would be open to the public free of charge. It is expected that many Public Libraries (formerly Mechanics Institutes) will make the transfer in hope that by placing the Library under the control of a Board appointed by the Municipal Council, the Municipal Council will give substantial aid to support it. So long as a Library is open to members only, and these very often few in number a Municipal Council can hardly be expected to give aid to the extent it would, if the Library were open to the whole of the people of a Municipality.

4. Section 12 provides for Municipal aid to Public Libraries which have been established by the transfer of Mechanics Institute. It is not necessary to levy a special rate, but it is lawful to pay an amount equal to the Government Grant, or any other sum which the Municipal Council may deem expedient, as part of the general expenses of the municipality for the support of the Library.

5. Section 14 provides for the amalgamation of Teachers Institute Libraries, which will no doubt increase the educational advantages to be derived by the Public Libraries.

6. Section 15 allows Farmers Institute, to affiliate with public Libraries, thus providing means for obtaining an increased knowledge of all the sciences relating to Agriculture.

7. Part III. of the Act that deals with Public Libraries that prefer to maintain their own organization and to limit the use of the library to membership. The officers formerly known as a Board of Directors are to be called a Board of Management uniformity of nomenclature being desirable. The President of the Board to be elected as usual on all Boards of Management: the other officers, viz., Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian, may be appointed by the Board. These last mentioned officers need not be members of the Board of Management. Full power is given to the Board to make all necessary regulations for the management of Library, Reading Room and Evening Classes (Section 18.)

8. Greater liberty is allowed in regard to membership. By Section 17 (3) young persons twelve years of age may enroll themselves as members of the library; but no Public Library having members shall be entitled to a share of the Legislative Grant which does not possess a membership of one hundred persons of whom fifty shall be over twenty-one years of age. In the election of a Board of Management the word "member" shall only mean such persons as are twenty-one years of age. It is expected that by allowing young persons twelve years of age to become members of the Library, that a greater interest will be developed in the use of the Library, while the limitation of the voting power to those over twenty-one years of age will secure the efficient management of the Library. Boards are allowed to fix the fees for membership, or to dispense with fees altogether as they may deem expedient.

9. A change has been made in the basis on which the Government Grant is hereafter to be paid. Section 19 (1) provides that the sum of one dollar will be allowed for every dollar expended on books, but so as not to exceed \$200 in the case of cities, \$150 in case of towns, and in all

other cases \$100—not more than twenty per cent, thereof shall be expended for works of fiction. (2) A further sum of one dollar will be allowed for every dollar expended on newspapers and magazines for the purpose of a Reading Room, but so as not to exceed \$50 for each Reading Room. There is no change in the Act in regard to Reading Rooms. (3) The sum of \$3 will be allowed for every pupil where evening classes have been established under the Act for classes of twenty-five pupils and under, with an additional allowance of \$1 per pupil over the number of twenty-five, but so as not to exceed \$100 for evening classes.

10. Evening classes are hereafter to be limited to technical subjects as set forth in the Regulation. As the Education Department now gives an annual grant for evening classes in the Subjects of the Public School course it was not deemed necessary to duplicate this work.

11. The new Regulations require the Board of every Public Library receiving Government aid to place over the door of the Library, or in some other conspicuous place, or a sign with the words "Public Library," in letters sufficiently large to be readily seen by the public.

12. At the next annual meeting to be held on the first of May, (1) Members should elect a Board of Management, (2) The Board should elect a President (who must be a member of the Board) and appoint officers, (3) The Board should instruct the Librarian to keep a record of the names, ages and employments of the members in a book to be supplied gratis by the Education Department.

Books specially imported for the *bona fide* use of incorporated Mechanics Institutes and Free Libraries are now free of duty see Canada Customs Tariff [clause 518] 2894.)