

PUBLIC LIBRARY.

For the information of those interested in this department a short account is attached, as an appendix to this report, setting out the early history of the institution since its establishment as a Mechanics' Institute in the year 1859, and its transfer to the Board of Governors in the year 1873.

Reference Department.—A tender for the erection of a gallery at a cost of £249 has been accepted. The work is now well advanced, and its completion may be looked for in five or six weeks. Much-needed additional space for books will thus be provided. In the meantime during the progress of the alterations it has been necessary to close the room to visitors. The new catalogue has been in the hands of the printer for some months. The contractors are making good progress, but it is anticipated that the end of the year will have arrived before the volume is ready for issue. The *Quarterly Review* has been added to the magazines placed on the table, making the total number in this department eighteen. Since July, 1896, 481 new volumes have been added, making the total number of books 10,178. The thanks of the Board have been given to various donors of fifty books and pamphlets. It is satisfactory to note that no instances have occurred, so far as has been ascertained, during the year of the mutilation or theft of books in this department.

Circulating Department.—In July of last year the Chairman, in his annual statement, reported a very valuable bequest to this department under the will of the late Mr. James Gammack, of Springston, who died in May, 1896. The trustees of the estate have not as yet found themselves in a position to make any payment towards the support of this department. This portion of the institution was closed for the annual stock-taking from the 4th to the 9th January. As a result it was found that only eighteen volumes were finally unaccounted for. The alterations now proceeding have permitted of an extra book-case being available, and other extra shelving has been provided, making space for about two thousand volumes. Printed catalogues are issued every six months, and have been completed to 31st December last. The *Windsor Magazine* and *Black and White* have been added to the already large number of magazines and newspapers subscribed for. The total in single copies amount to thirty-six; in some cases, however, three and four copies of the most popular are ordered; 164 volumes have been taken off the shelves as being no longer fit for use. The total number of volumes in this department is 16,842. The subscribers now number 1,570.

Reading-room.—This department was closed from the 4th to the 9th January. The walls were distempered and the woodwork painted. The room is much too small to fully meet the growing wants of the community. The following newspapers are filed: English, 6; Irish, 1; Scotch, 1; American, 1; Australian Colonies, 9; New Zealand, about 40; 15 magazines are placed monthly on the tables.

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE.

Members are aware that the School of Agriculture has been under the control of the Board of Governors since the endowment was set aside in July, 1873. During that month the Chairman, Mr. Joshua Strange Williams, reported that over 100,000 acres of Crown lands comprised the endowment of the school. One of the earliest proposals in the direction of carrying out the objects for which the reserve has been intrusted to the Board was to take steps to establish an agricultural school and experimental farm. Offers were invited from persons willing to sell land for farming purposes, the object being to obtain a variety of soils, from light and even shingly land to the richest swamp. It was proposed to give lectures on agricultural chemistry, natural history, including botany and animal physiology, geology, veterinary surgery, land-surveying, architectural and mechanical drawing, and other sciences directly connected with agriculture. In this connection it may be mentioned that the first professorial chair established by the Board of Governors was a chair of chemistry. This action was taken with a view to make provision for the teaching, amongst other subjects, of agricultural chemistry. In March, 1878, Mr. W. E. Ivey was appointed to take charge of the institution. The director ably discharged the varied duties of his office until his death in April, 1892. The Board recorded its high appreciation of the services rendered by him to the college and to the colony. Attached to this report will be found a summary of the work done, together with a statement of the receipts and expenditure for the year ending the 31st December last. After this date the administration of the institution was taken over by the new governing body, as laid down under "The Canterbury College and Canterbury Agricultural College Act, 1896." All the endowments belonging to the School of Agriculture are now vested in the corporation of the Canterbury Agricultural College. Any question arising with respect to these and any properties will be decided by the Supreme Court. The further question as to a sum of £7,954, alluded to in the report of the Royal Commission on the School of Agriculture, dated 28th February, 1889, is also referred to the decision of the same authority. The valuation of live-stock, grain, implements, &c., taken over by the new management as at 31st December, 1896, amounted to £4,986 13s. 9d. The area of the farm at Lincoln has been gradually increased from time to time, as circumstances permitted. Purchases were completed at the following periods:—

| | A. | R. | P. |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| September and October, 1877 | 83 | 0 | 0 |
| April and July, 1878 | 171 | 2 | 38½ |
| August and November, 1879 | 247 | 2 | 0 |
| July, 1881 | 160 | 0 | 0 |
| January, 1896 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| Total acreage | 712 | 0 | 38½ |

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL SCIENCE.

The professor in charge reported:—

"At the University examinations of 1896 five candidates sat for examination, all of whom passed in their respective years. The record of the department has thus been preserved intact, no student having as yet failed in a technical subject at any University examination. At the annual