



FOUNDED 1840

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

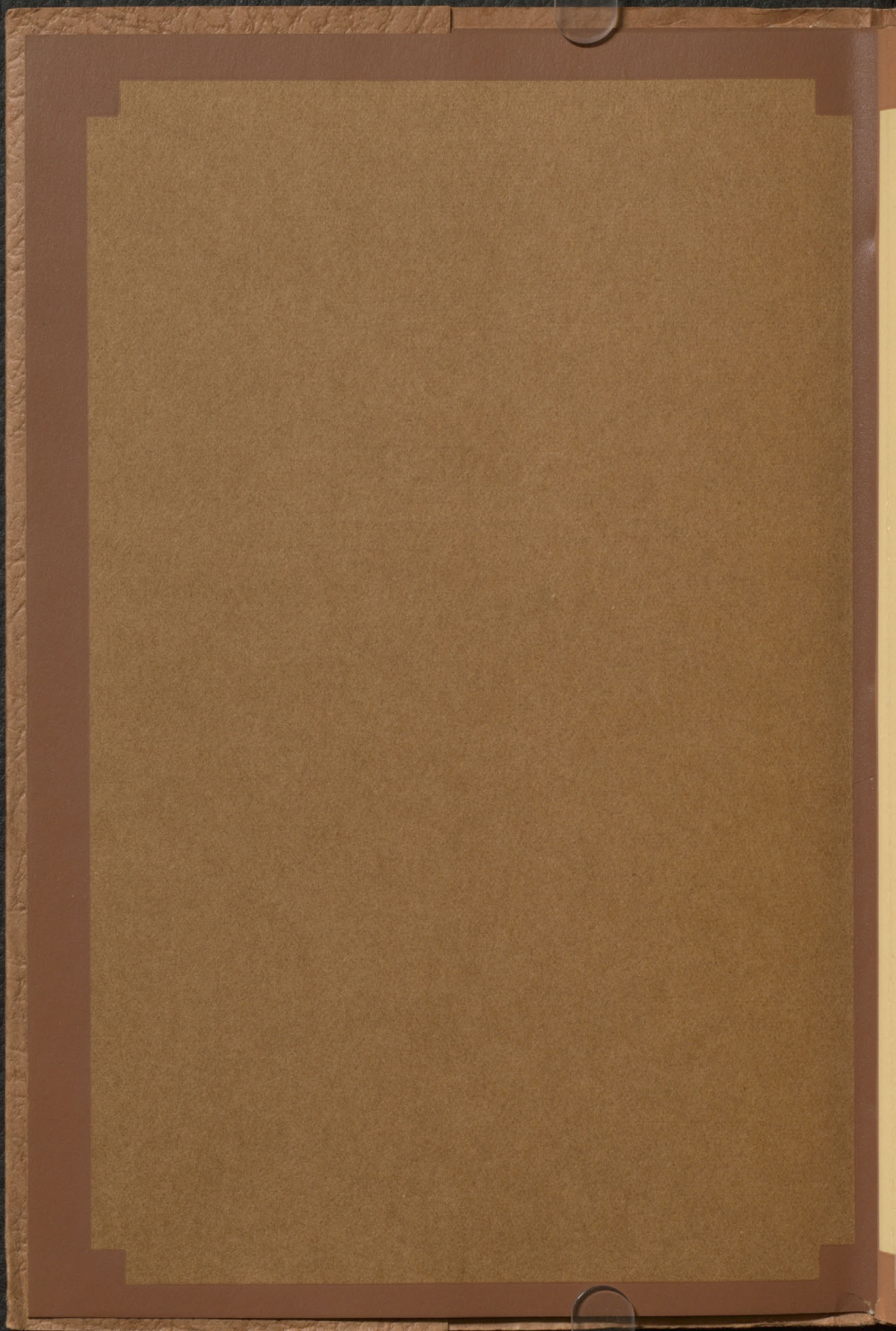
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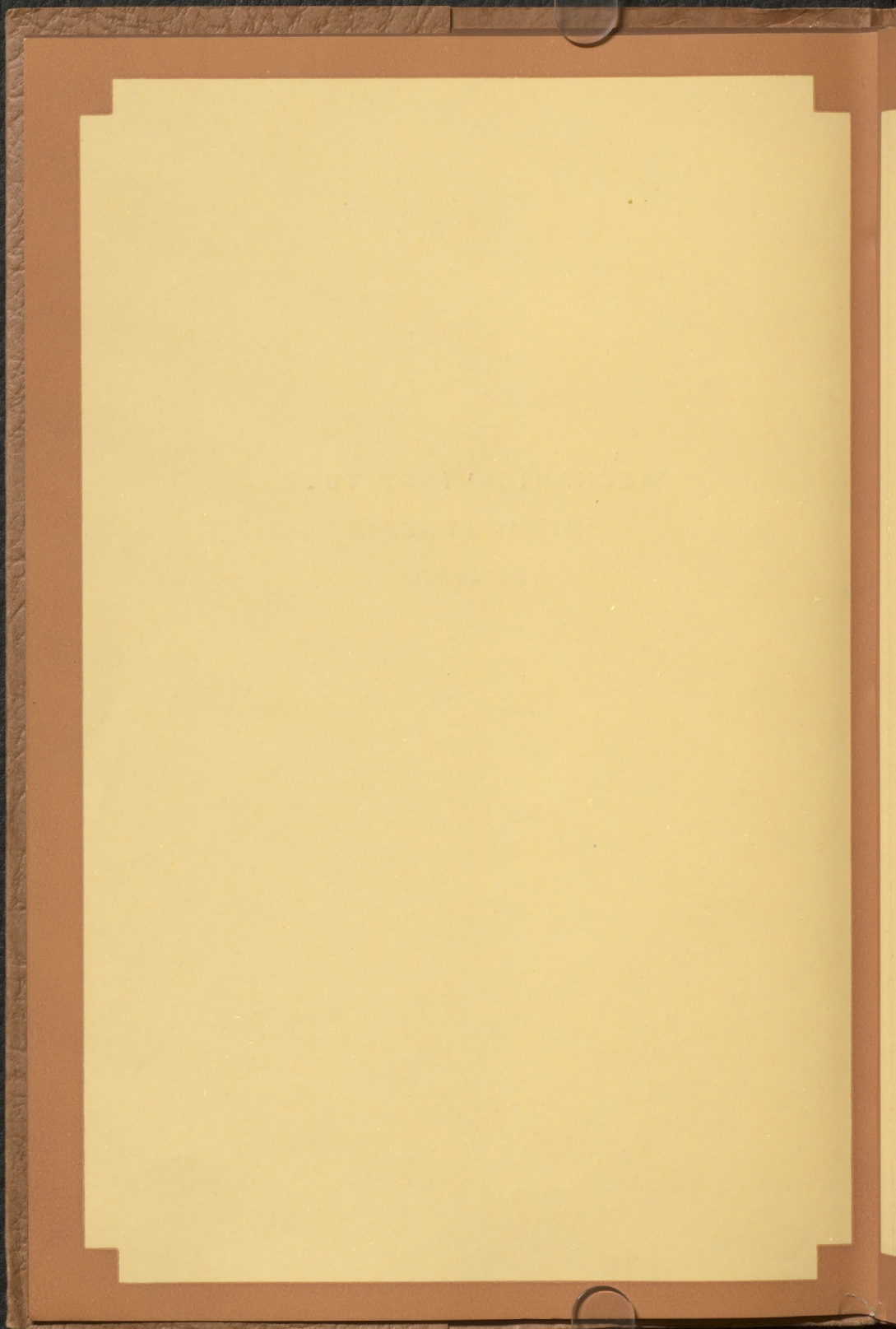


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THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTE
OF MONTREAL
1840-1940



THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTE
OF MONTREAL



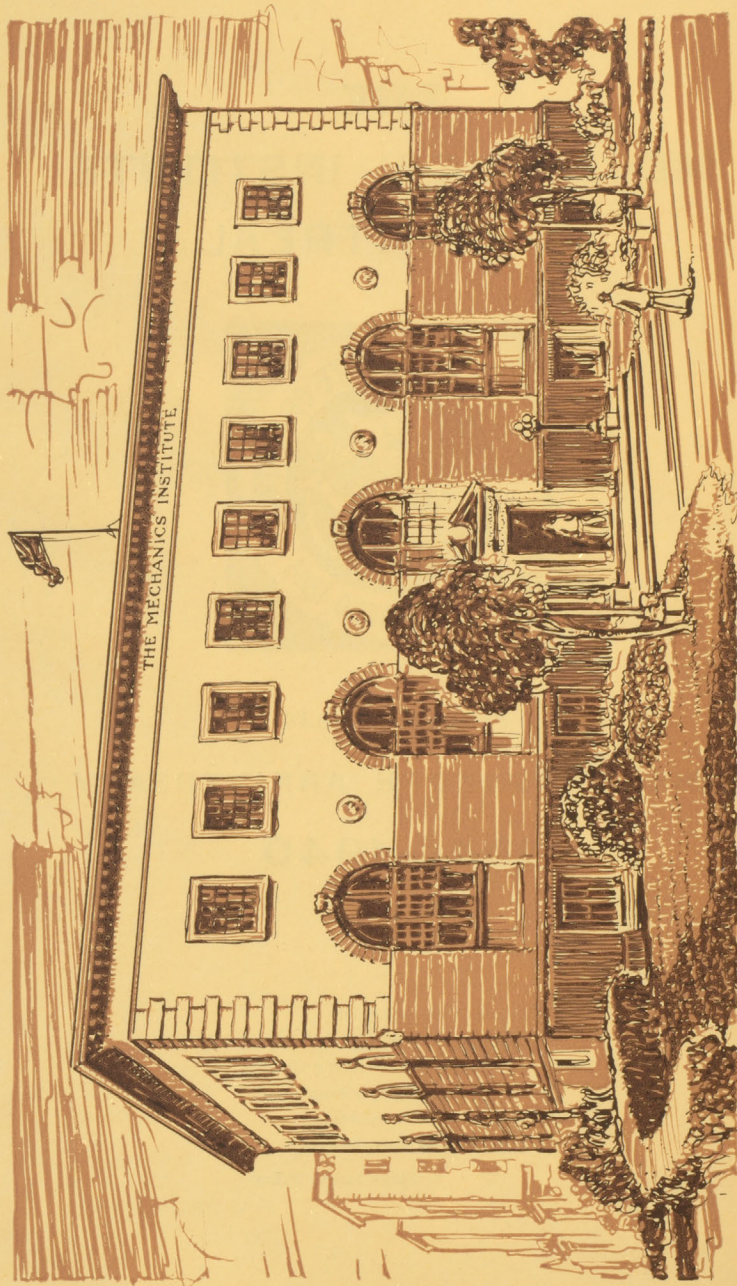
FOUNDED 1840

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

1840-1940

*We live in deeds, not years:
In thoughts, not breaths:
In feelings, not in figures on a dial,
We should count time by heart throbs.
He most lives who thinks most,
Feels the noblest, acts the best.*

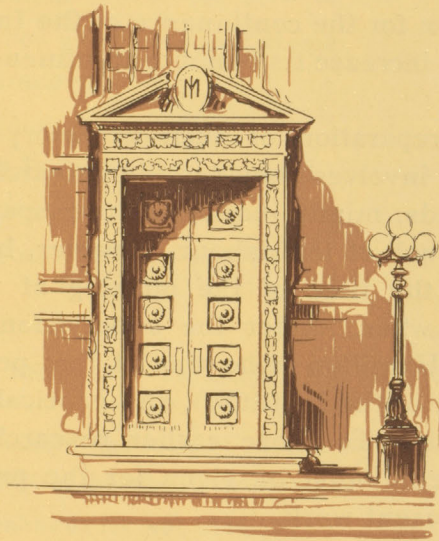
—Philip James Bailey



THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL
1200 ATWATER AVENUE, WESTMOUNT, P.Q.

F O R E W O R D



AS The Mechanics' Institute of Montreal completes its first century, it is fitting that some record be presented of its long history, early struggles, achievements, and present position of usefulness.

The Institute's progress has paralleled that of the community which it has served, and a study of its growth provides many interesting sidelights on the development of Montreal. This is one of the oldest institutions of its kind in the city, and one of the few which can boast a consistent record of uninterrupted service in the cause of education. It is a record of which our members and friends may be proud. We hope

FOREWORD

that this brief survey will prove interesting to them, and that they may find in it a source of inspiration for the continuance of the Institute's efforts to increase its beneficent influence in the future.

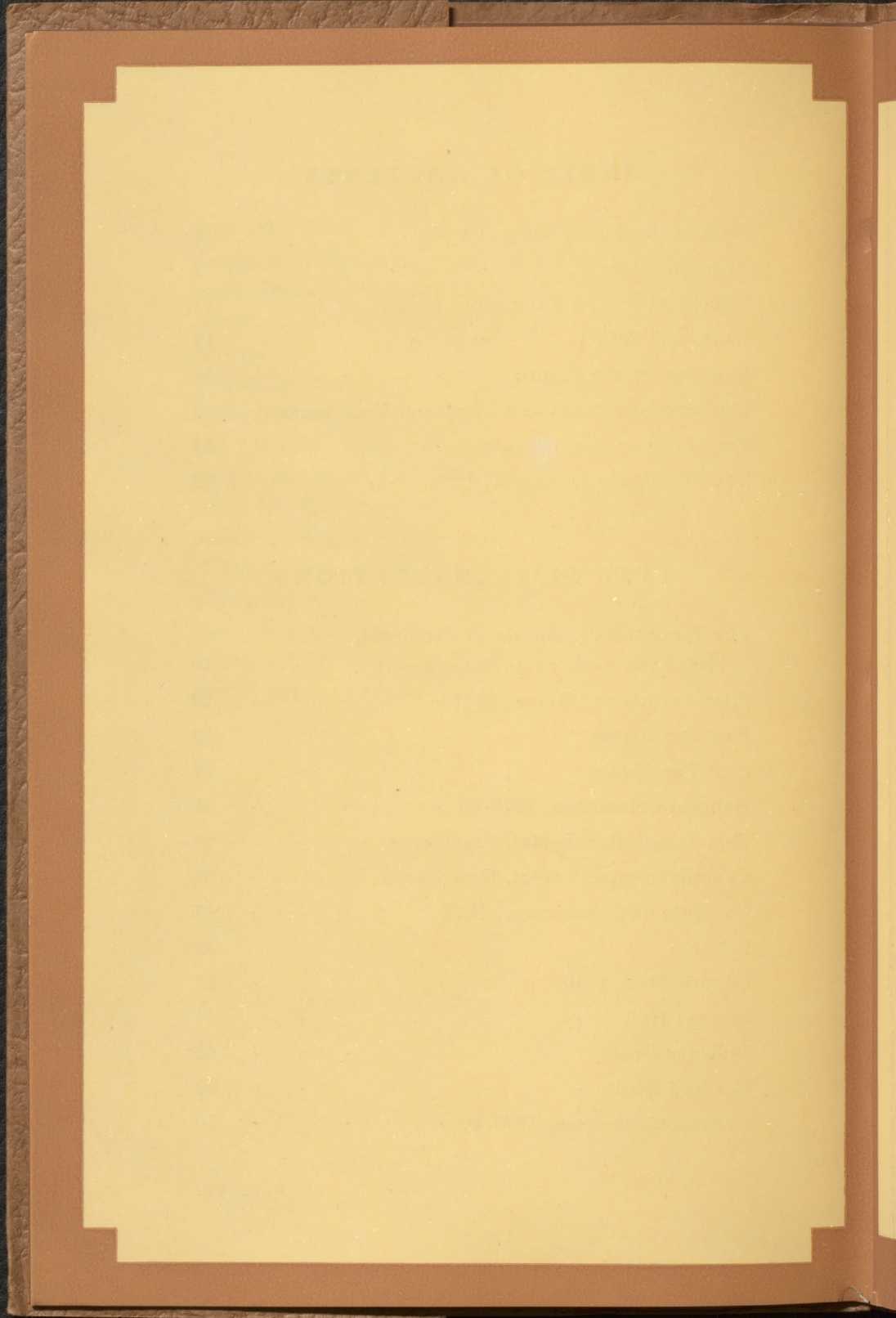
The preparation of such a history as this naturally involves considerable research among old records, minute-books and newspaper clippings. Much of this labour, however, had been done at the time of the opening of the new building when, under the supervision of Mr. William Hamilton (who was at that period the Librarian of the Institute), an historical booklet was issued. To those earlier research efforts much credit must be given for the production of the present work.

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THE CENTENARY OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL



THE BIRTH OF THE INSTITUTION

THIS YEAR—1940—The Mechanics' Institute of Montreal completes a century of continuous service, during which it has been an important factor in the development of Montreal and in shaping the careers of thousands of Montreal citizens. Famous, in successive eras, as a training centre, as the city's most popular public auditorium, and as a library noted for the excellence of its technical and other reference books, the Institute has served its community through 100 years of changing conditions in such a way as to maintain the ideals of those public-spirited Montreal citizens who established its permanent foundation in 1840.

Yet the actual history of the Institute must commence even earlier still, for it was in 1828 that a group of thoughtful, far-seeing Montrealers organized "The Montreal Mechanics' Institution" from which the present Institute is directly descended.

MONTREAL 1828 Montreal in those days was but a small city of less than 30,000 inhabitants, its prosperity founded chiefly upon the fur trade. It stretched for about a mile and a half along the river. Instead of the present Craig Street there ran then the little Craig Creek crossed by wooden bridges which led to the farms and fields bordering the community. The principal thoroughfare was St. Paul Street, a bustling business centre; here many of the merchants

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

and their clerks lived above the shops. Notre Dame, on higher ground, was considered slightly more genteel; while only an occasional shop modified the predominantly residential character of St. James, now the site of towering office buildings. Only the main thoroughfares were lighted, and the duties of the thirty or more night watchmen included trimming and lighting the lamps as well as guarding the property of the citizens. The water cart was a familiar vehicle on the city streets, since, though a primitive waterworks had been established, the residences on the higher levels had still to depend upon water carriers from the river.

One has only to visualize that little semi-primitive community of 100 years ago to appreciate the tremendous advance of the modern commercial and industrial metropolis, and to realize what an influence for progress has been exerted by such organizations as The Mechanics' Institute.

In the late 1820's an increased flood of immigration was enhancing the prosperity of the province and stimulating the creation of many new enterprises in Montreal. Montreal's leaders were taking full advantage of the business opportunities presented, but at the same time they did not neglect to build for the future by sponsoring the cause of education.

At that time, instruction to the English-speaking children was given mainly by Private Academies ("conducted in general by able teachers"). McGill University had received its charter in 1821, but, because of protracted litigation, did not commence classes until 1829—one year after the organization of The Mechanics' Institution. Indeed, until that time, practically the only society devoted to the higher sciences was the Montreal Medical Institute (organized 1823-24), which was to become McGill's Faculty of Medicine—and its teaching was of course restricted to its own specialized field.

ORGANIZING THE It was, therefore, an important day in
"INSTITUTION" the development of Montreal, as it was in the careers of thousands of ambitious young

BIRTH OF THE INSTITUTION

Montrealers of the period, when, on November 21st, 1828, a number of thoughtful citizens, representative of the industrial, commercial and professional classes, met at the home of the Reverend Henry Esson, Minister of the old Scotch Church in St. Gabriel Street, to discuss the formation of an institution devoted to instruction in the higher arts and sciences. It was not strange that the Reverend Esson should be a prime sponsor of the movement, for he was "an exceptionally gifted man . . . easily the leader in the best Montreal circles of the period."*

The "Aim and Objects" of the projected society, as enunciated by him, were "to see to the instruction of its members in the arts and in the various branches of science and useful knowledge."

Though these are rather vague and broad terms, it seems certain—both from the fact that it was unanimously agreed to call the new society "The Montreal Mechanics' Institution," and from the policy of instruction which was adopted—that the Montreal society was inspired by those Mechanics' Institutions which were then being organized in all the principal centres of England and Scotland. Originating in Glasgow in the early years of the century, the idea had been actively sponsored by the great educational reformers, including Dr. Birkbeck and Henry (later Lord) Brougham, who in 1823 had established the London Mechanics' Institution. This was a non-political, purely scientific society where men could come together for technical education and study the progress of machinery and the application of science to industry.

The objects of the Montreal Institution were similar; it too was non-political, its membership being unrestricted by any questions of creed or nationality. From the beginning it had the active support of many of Montreal's foremost citizens, men who by their interest in such causes proved they were citizens of

*Dr. Robert Campbell, "History of the Scotch Church, St. Gabriel Street."

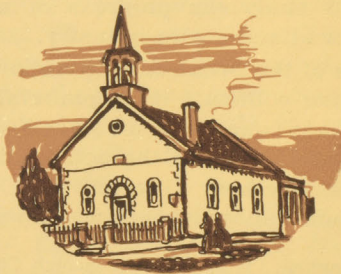
THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

broad vision who had the welfare of their city and its future at heart. The importance which they attached to the work of the Institution may be gauged by noting the calibre of the men elected to its first executive. Sir James Kempt, the newly-appointed Governor of Lower Canada, was chosen as Patron. The President was the Hon. Louis Gagy, Sheriff of Montreal. Elected as vice-presidents were: the Hon. John Molson, one of the most famous of Montreal merchants and the historic pioneer of steamboat navigation; the Hon. L. J. Papineau, the great French-Canadian leader, then Speaker of the Assembly, in which he represented Montreal West; and the Reverend Henry Esson.

Books and scientific apparatus were procured, and though the records of these early years are vague, it is evident that the Institution was performing a valuable service in imparting useful knowledge to its members, since one of the first steps taken in the new era succeeding the Rebellion was its re-organization.

Ordinary life in Montreal was seriously disrupted by the political troubles of 1835-40, and it became necessary to suspend the activities of the Institution; the last meeting of the original society being held on March 24th, 1835.

Its usefulness had been abundantly proven, however. The seed had been planted which was to develop through one hundred years of service into the splendid Institute of to-day.



RE-ORGANIZATION



By 1840 the "Old Order" in Montreal was ending. The Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada were united. There was a rapid recovery from the economic distress and political troubles of the past decade, and the tide of immigration had again set in. A new Act of Incorporation remodelled the city's government; a regular police force was formed; and a Board of Trade was being organized. Work was resumed on the city's first line of docks; the completion of the Welland Canal was being undertaken, and plans made to enlarge the Lachine Canal—all aiming at the improvement of water communications upon which Montreal's importance as a centre of trade was based. At the same time a new era in transportation had begun, for the first steam railroad in Canada was being successfully operated between Laprairie and St. Johns.

It is significant that among the many enterprises then being promoted to foster the development of the city, one of the earliest to receive attention was the re-establishment of the Mechanics' Institution. Increasing commercial and industrial activity indicated anew the need for adequate training in the practical sciences, such as the old Institution had provided. Consequently a public notice was issued, asking all those interested to attend

**ORGANIZATION
MEETINGS**

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

a meeting at the schoolroom of Mr. John Bruce on McGill Street, February 7th, 1840, to consider ways and means of re-establishing the Institution. Mr. Bruce's was "a school in which a number of our prominent citizens received their first rudiments, and some their only education." It was one of the most popular meeting-places for various societies and congregations; but few gatherings within its walls could have had such enduring and far-reaching results as had that which decided to continue the interrupted work of technical and scientific education.

The Chairman of the meeting was Mr. John Redpath, an outstanding contractor and industrialist, recognized as one of Montreal's first citizens. Mr. Joseph Fraser acted as secretary, and preliminary arrangements were made for organizing a society which might be united with and carry on the work of the original Institution of 1828. A committee was appointed to formulate a Constitution and By-Laws and to ascertain the state of the old Library and of the apparatus which had been previously used. At a second meeting, held in the same room on February 25th, a provisional committee was appointed to carry on the operations of the old Institution.

That interest in the re-organization was intense and that the sponsors were determined to commence the courses without delay is shown by the holding of two meetings in March. On March 10th the members-elect approved the Constitution and By-Laws, and agreed upon a scale of fees as follows:

Life Members: £5 in cash, or £7, 10s in books or apparatus.

Annual Subscriptions: 15s.

Quarterly Subscriptions: 3s. 9d.

Sons and apprentices of Members to be charged a quarterly fee of 1s. 3d.

Re-organization details were completed at the meeting of March 16th, held in the Free School Room, corner of St. Joseph and St. Henry Streets. The course

RE-ORGANIZATION

of study as formulated by the Mechanics' Institution was to be followed by the new organization, which it was unanimously decided to call "The Mechanics' Institute of Montreal." Officers were elected, with Mr. John Redpath becoming President. Vice-presidents were Mr. Benjamin Holmes, cashier of the Bank of Montreal, and Mr. Joseph Fraser, who had been one of those chiefly responsible for the success of the re-organization proceedings. Mr. Robert Scott was elected Treasurer; Dr. A. Hall, Corresponding Secretary, and Mr. Eben Wedenhall, Recording Secretary. Four trustees, three auditors and a committee of twelve were also elected.

The first duty of the officers was to arrange for the purchase of the books and apparatus of the old Institution, and frequent meetings were held with those still in charge of this property, which arbitrators finally valued at £44, 16s. 6d. The Secretary was then instructed to issue annual tickets for the current year to cover the amount to members of the old Institution. The amalgamation was at last consummated on June 1st, 1840, by which time The Mechanics' Institute of Montreal had already recommenced the important work of the old Institution.

During May the Institute, using the building of Mr. Mullins on Commissioners Street, had begun classes in technical subjects for the benefit of the sons of the members.

COMMENCEMENT OF CLASSES The value of similar courses for the apprentices and workmen employed in the city's various industrial enterprises was at once realized. Accordingly, night classes were established for those who were unable to attend during the day. In these classes the original subjects taught were: reading, writing, arithmetic and French; and architectural, mechanical and ornamental drawing. Thus the workman was able to obtain an elementary education, and at the same time complement the practical experience of his daily work with the theoretical know-

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

ledge so necessary to him if he were to advance in his career and play a worthwhile part in the industrial development of his community. The world was then rapidly being industrialized; important technical inventions were being given practical application. The pioneering work of the Institute at that time thus became a vital factor in promoting the progress and prosperity of Montreal.

Another aspect of this early activity has perhaps never been fully appreciated. The founding of the Institute and its establishment of night classes for workmen was one of the first organized efforts in Canada to extend the benefits of practical education to adults. Only in recent years has the idea which the Institute represented won Dominion-wide acceptance with the foundation of the Canadian Association for Adult Education.

Those pioneer classes, of course, operated under many difficulties. Indicative of the conditions existing at the time is an interesting item in the minutes for March 29th, 1841: "Mr. Hose laid on the table a sample of wax candle and was authorized to purchase 20 lbs. for the use of the Institute."

However, the sincere desire of the student-workmen to improve their skill and knowledge, and the zeal and ability of their instructors assured the success of the classes, and for thirty years they formed one of the most valuable contributions of The Mechanics' Institute to the development of Montreal. On the other hand, the day classes for the sons of members were only conducted for a few years, since the merits of public school education increased to such an extent as to render this phase of the Institute's work unnecessary.

Expansion of the society's educational activities to embrace the cultural as well as the practical had been seriously considered during the first year of its existence. Almost immediately after the re-organization many members, fully conscious of the importance of

RE-ORGANIZATION

the work to be done and enthusiastic to promote it to the full, suggested consolidating their efforts with those of other societies devoted to the advancement of learning. So enthusiastically did they agitate for such amalgamation that a special meeting was held on November 17th, 1840, to consider the advisability of forming a national social institution along the lines proposed by Mr. Alexander Vattimore, the distinguished philanthropist. He envisaged a union with the Natural History Society (which dated from 1827 and had assembled an interesting museum collection) and the Mercantile Library (which had just been organized that year, 1840) to combine in one central body the facilities of the several institutions for advanced study and scientific investigation, and to inaugurate at a convenient location a museum of natural history, an extensive library, and a gallery of painting, sculpture and models.

The idea naturally appealed to many and was given serious consideration, but the members finally decided not to support it. Such an advance into the realms of the higher arts and sciences, it was felt, might tend to defeat the most important purpose of the Institution—the practical training of workmen and apprentices. That object, it was decided, would be best attained by concentrating the Institute's main interest and effort upon the course already mapped out for it.

MECHANICS' FESTIVALS

The Institute did, however, soon extend its activities within its own sphere. The idea of holding an annual Mechanics' Festival met with enthusiastic approval, and the first of these was held in the hall of St. Anne's Market on February 16th, 1843. These Festivals were really diminutive industrial exhibitions, with the addition of vocal and instrumental music and addresses. They not only attracted the interest of most of the city's mechanics, but were largely patronized by the citizens generally. Thus, they served to keep the aims of the Institute prominently before the public, and created a

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

most favourable impression of the work which was being accomplished. For example, the Secretary's report for the annual Festival of 1846 refers to it as "an entertainment which has contributed to the hitherto well sustained character of The Mechanics' Institute, and had tended to impress upon the mind of the public the dignity and importance which they consider is due The Mechanics' Institute of Montreal. For style and extent, it certainly has never been surpassed in this city."

For many years these Festivals were held in the old Bonsecours Hall, and later in the Institute's own Hall, where they were largely attended and continued to reflect great credit upon the achievements of the members.

INCORPORATION AND A PERMANENT HOME

INCREASING attendance soon made it necessary to seek larger quarters for the Institute's classes, and at the same time suggested the advisability of erecting a permanent home for the Institute.

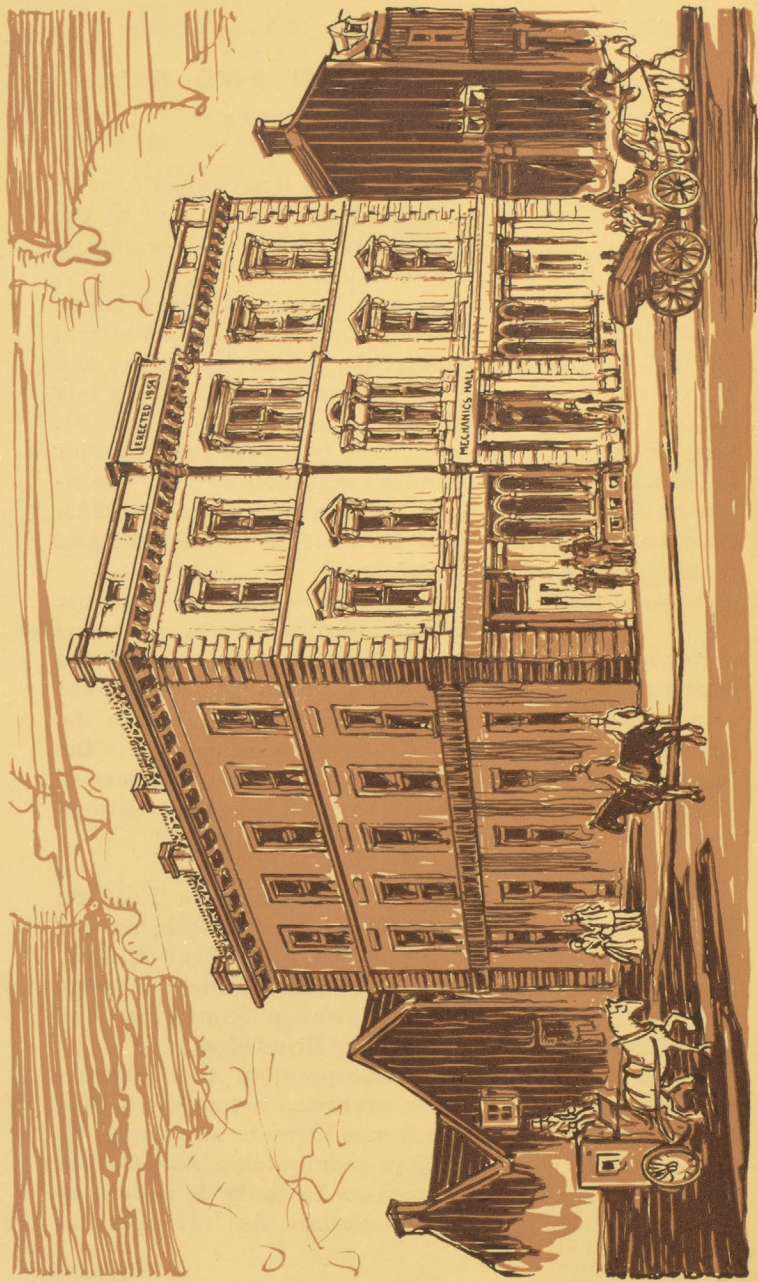
In May, 1843, classes were transferred to a house in St. Urbain Street formerly occupied by the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society. An option was given the Institute of purchasing this property and adjoining lots for £1,500 currency by the owner, Mr. Alex. M. DeLisle, but this was not taken up. Next year another move was made—to premises occupied by Mr. Thornton on Fortification Lane. It was here that, in 1845, illuminating gas was first installed in the lecture and reading rooms of the Institute.

INCORPORATION In the same year—1845—the Institute was incorporated, papers being issued under an Act of the old Parliament of Canada, In the petition asking for the act, it was stated that, "a number of persons had associated themselves together in the year 1828 with the object of affording instruction in the principles of the Arts and in the various wonders of science and useful knowledge necessary or advantageous to the Associated in their pursuits in life."

The original incorporators were :

John Ostell, Thomas W. Guin, William Foatner, William Telfer, Charles Garth, Andrew Cowan, George Dickenson, John Fletcher, William M. Muller, John Lambert, John Hilton, James Morice, William Watson, Charles Shrimpton, Donald McNevean, James Turners, John George, and Joseph Busby Brindsdon.

Three years after the incorporation the Institute moved again—this time to premises belonging to Mr. Berthelet on Great St. James Street, adjoining the Ottawa Hotel; but by 1854 membership had further increased to such an extent as to make it necessary to seek still larger accommodation. An arrangement



FIRST PERMANENT HOME
ERECTED 1854

INCORPORATION AND PERMANENT HOME

was made with the Mercantile Library Association for joint occupancy of the building at No. 8 Great St. James Street, and here the Institute moved in May, 1854.

SELECTING A SITE

By this time, however, the members' hopes for a building of their own were being realized. Careful consideration had been given to the selection of a conveniently-situated property which would be large enough to allow for the extension of the Institute's facilities as its membership continued to increase. In 1843 interest was aroused, as has been noted, in the property then occupied by the Institute on St. Urbain Street, as well as in a lot on Craig Street which Mr. J. Torrance offered for £1,000. There were opportunities in 1844 to secure the Congregational Church on St. Maurice Street and the Baptist Chapel on St. Helen Street. No definite decision to purchase was made, however, until 1852. In that year two properties on Bonaventure Street were considered, One of these was offered by the Hon. Charles Wilson and Mr. J. J. Gibb for £1,500; the other, in which Mr. Gibb was also interested, could be obtained for £800. Finally the former, located at the corner of Bonaventure and Commissioners Square (now Victoria Square), was selected.

Three architects who were members of the Institute, Messrs. Maxwell, Mayor and Hutchinson, agreed to prepare plans and specifications for a building on this corner. When this had been done, an unexpected difficulty arose. The proprietor could not give the customary warranty deed, and the former proprietor declined to ask his wife to sign a renunciation of her right of dower—so in the end the property was not purchased.

Finally it was found that the building at the corner of Great St. James and St. Peter Streets could be purchased from Mr. Richard Tate for £2,400. This was considered to be the most suitable location to be had at the time. As the parties were minors, it was sold at

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

the Church door (according to the old custom in such cases), and bought by the Institute, which at last, after much effort and disappointment, was in possession of a lot of ample size to accommodate the type of building which would meet its needs.

Alterations in the original architectural plans to adapt them to the new site were made by Messrs. Hopkins and Nelson who retained as far as practicable the style of front and details of interior arrangement which had been previously approved, and accepted as their fee Life Membership in the Institute.

Contracts were immediately let, and in the autumn of 1853 construction of a permanent home for the Institute was begun.

BUILDING FUND Meanwhile the Institute was gradually accumulating a Building Fund. A special appeal had been made to the members and to the public generally, and their response indicated the esteem in which the Institute was held by Montreal's foremost citizens. Many, indeed, had already shown their interest in a practical fashion during the past decade. In its first year of existence the Institute had received generous donations from the Hon. George Moffatt, Hon. Peter McGill, Mr. John Molson, Mr. Stanley C. Bagg and Mr. John Redpath, who were made Life Members. For several years a grant of £50 was made by the Governor and Council of the Province. In 1847 Mayor John E. Mills, expressing his intention to dispose of his salary as mayor to deserving institutions connected with the interests and welfare of the city, donated £150 to The Mechanics' Institute for the purchase of books.

Those early evidences of public appreciation and support were increased and multiplied when the Institute made its general appeal in 1852. Individuals—among them the Mayor, the Hon. C. Wilson with a donation of £50—and business firms—headed by Frothingham and Workman with the subscription of a similar amount—responded generously. A trip to Port-

INCORPORATION AND PERMANENT HOME

land under the auspices of the Marine Charitable Mechanics' Association of Portland not only proved most enjoyable and further cemented the ties of membership, but also netted the building fund £60. Two other contributions are particularly worthy of record as indicating the favourable impression the work of the Institute had made in the engineering world, and as recalling a memorable achievement in Montreal's history. In 1852 Mr. Robert Stephenson, designer of the Victoria Bridge, then under construction, visited the Institute and contributed £60, 16s. 8d. to the Fund, while Mr. Jackson of Messrs. Jackson, Brassey, Peto and Betts, who accompanied Mr. Stephenson, donated £121, 13s. 4d. on behalf of his firm, the bridge's builders. Mr. Stephenson was a member of the British House of Commons and perhaps the most distinguished engineer in the English-speaking world. His visit and interest thus were considered as an endorsement of the work being done by the Institute. So many flocked to welcome him that the gathering had to adjourn to the large St. George Hall, where Mr. Henry Bulmer, President of the Institute, presented him with an address on behalf of the members. At this time the proceeds of a "Stephenson Dinner" added another £30 to the Build-Fund which, by the time of the inauguration ceremony, had reached £3,850 towards the £8,000 estimated cost.

The long struggle to obtain a permanent home reached its fitting climax with the impressive ceremonies connected with the laying of the corner stone on May 11th, 1854. It was a beautiful spring day of
CORNER STONE sunshine when all Montreal seemed to have turned out to view the ceremonies and the imposing procession preceding them. From the St. Lawrence Hall, by Place d'Armes, along Notre Dame, McGill and St. James to the site at the corner of St. Peter, the procession was led by the Mayor and Corporation, followed by the clergy and then the members of the Institute and subscribers to the Building Fund. Next came the representatives of

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many societies: Odd Fellows, Temperance Associations, National Societies, President and Council of the Board of Trade, Literary Associations, Institute Canadien, Mercantile Library Association, Natural History Association, Governors, Officers and Professors of McGill College, and the Masonic Fraternity. Such impressive representation is in itself proof of the esteem in which the Institute's achievements were held by Montreal's citizens and societies.

The actual ceremony of laying the corner stone was performed with full Masonic Honours by the Hon. William Badgeley, C.M.P.P., the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master of Free and Accepted Masons of Canada. The reply to his address was made by Mr. Henry Bulmer, President of the Institute, who presented him with a very richly chased silver trowel, suitably inscribed. In the corner stone were deposited a very interesting collection of documents, papers and coins, which, when discovered and displayed 72 years afterwards, were to excite the curiosity of a later generation in a greater Montreal. Included among the papers deposited were:

List of Office Bearers for 1854 (Henry Bulmer, President; James H. McGee, Charles P. Lodd, and James Rayes, Vice-Presidents; Alexander Murray, Corresponding Secretary; Alexander A. Stevenson, Recording Secretary; Henry Lyman, Treasurer; Thomas D. Reed, Librarian); List of General Committee: List of Contributors to Fund up to May 11th, 1854; Masonic Officers of Provincial Grand Lodge who took part in the ceremony (headed by the R.W. the Hon. Peter McGill, Provincial Grand Master, and R. W. Brother Frederick Griffin, Deputy Provincial Grand Master); President's Address, and Programme of the Order of Procession.

Among the coins of different denominations was an interesting medal which had been presented by Prince Albert at the First Industrial Exhibition, London, 1851, to Mr. Alfred Perry for his exhibit of a hand-pump fire

INCORPORATION AND PERMANENT HOME

engine which had been made at the Perry shops in Montreal.

The ceremonies concluded with an address in French by the Mayor, Dr. Wolfred Nelson, the famous veteran of 1837.

It is perhaps significant, considering how the development of the Institute paralleled and influenced the development of Montreal, that this year of the laying of the corner stone—the Crimean War year of 1854—has been taken as marking the beginning of Montreal's Industrial era.* Previously Montreal had been predominantly a commercial city; but in 1854 its great industrial future was heralded by the establishment of a large sugar refinery by the first president of the re-organized Institute, Mr. John Redpath.

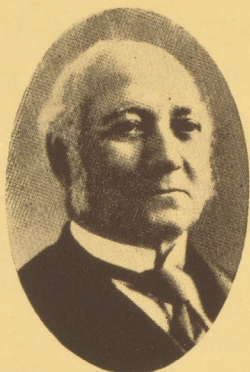
A year later, on Monday, May 21st, 1855, the new building was formally opened. On that evening the inauguration ceremonies were held in the new hall, which was handsomely decorated with flags and with banners bearing such mottoes as "To Make a Man a Better Mechanic and the Mechanic a Better Man." 600 members and invited guests filled the hall to hear the impressive inaugural address by the Hon. Mr. Justice Aylwin.

The inauguration festivities were continued throughout the week, with a "Fancy Fair, Polytechnic Exhibition, Concerts, etc.," providing some of the most enjoyable events ever sponsored by the Institute.

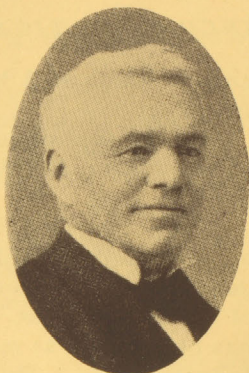
Then the members proceeded with renewed enthusiasm to the practical tasks of the Institute's programme.

*See S. E. Dawson in Semi-Centennial Report of the Board of Trade, 1893.

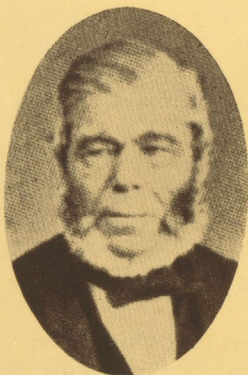
PAST PRESIDENTS



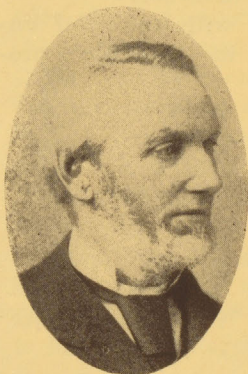
COL. A. A. STEVENSON
1865-66
1886-89



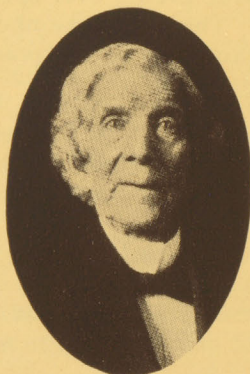
HENRY BULMER
1851-55



JOHN REDPATH
1840-43

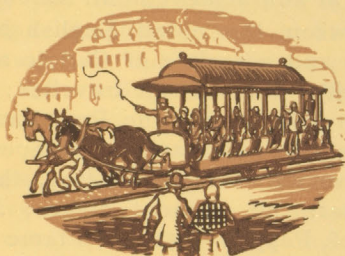


GEORGE CRUIKSHANK
1875-80



ROBERT IRWIN
1882-86

INCREASED ACTIVITY



WITH the occupancy of the new home the Institute entered a period of increased usefulness and greater prominence in the community. Larger numbers of students were attracted, and the leading citizens continued to give their support to the Institute's efforts by their influence and frequent attendance.

While the class rooms exhibited increased activity, it was the new Lecture Hall which came to be considered the most important feature of the Institute by the general public. Its central location, size and utility resulted in its being in constant demand for concerts, lectures and important gatherings. In addition to these, the Institute itself inaugurated a series of public lectures as annual events which attracted large crowds.

Thus during the latter half of the century the "Mechanics' Hall" became one of the principal cultural centres in the community. Through the succeeding decades, as Montreal steadily expanded—through the 60's which saw the coming of the horse cars and the first shops being built on St. Catherine Street; through the vicissitudes of the 70's and the recovery of the 80's when Montreal became a great railroad centre—the Hall of the Institute echoed the words of the leading men of the English-speaking world.

LECTURES The list of distinguished scientists, travellers and men of letters who delivered lectures to the citizens of Montreal in this famous Hall is

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

indeed an imposing one, reflecting the best of 19th century thought and achievement. Among them were:

George Dawson, the noted English Nonconformist divine, friend and associate of Carlyle and Emerson; Paul Du Chaillu, the African traveller; W. H. Kerr, K.C.; Rev. Dr. Stevenson; the Rev. Canon Kingsley; Edmund Yates, novelist and newspaper writer; Dr. MacDonald, writer; Gerald Massey, the poet; Rev. Henry Beecher, the eminent divine; Josh Billings, humorist; Prof. Pepper of ghoulish fame; Prof. Bodes, scientist; Artemus Ward, Rev. J. M. Bellew, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Sir John A. MacDonald, Sir William Dawson, the first President of the Royal Society of Canada and Principal of McGill University; Prof. Richard Proctor, Mrs. Scott Siddons, Hepworth Dixon, Prof. Goldwin Smith, and many others.

There is, too, a tradition that this historic Hall, in the 50's, was the scene of the debut as a pianist of a little seven-year-old French-Canadian girl—Emma Lajeunesse—who was later to become the world-famous prima donna, Madame Albani.*

Mention of the great Irish-Canadian statesman, McGee, in the above list, recalls a riotous—and at this late date, amusing—episode in which the Institute became innocently involved. For the campaign of 1867 to elect members to the first Dominion Parliament, accommodation was secured in the Mechanics' Hall to serve as McGee's Central Committee Rooms. When McGee won, supporters of the defeated candidate marched on the Hall and attacked it. Windows were broken and pistol shots fired, but the attempt to force an entry was repulsed by those inside. Finally—and somewhat belatedly, McGee's men claimed—cavalry and police arrived to disperse the rioters.**

CONTEMPORARY OPINIONS The importance of the Institute in the life of Montreal is indicated by the prominence given it in contemporary accounts of the

*According to Atherton, History of Montreal.

**Sandham, "Ville Marie," 1870.

INCREASED ACTIVITY

city. For example, Sandham, writing in 1870, devoted several paragraphs to a description of the building and the work being accomplished there, noting the spaciousness of the main hall, that the library contained 4,500 volumes, and the reading room was well stocked with periodicals; and that during the winter months classes in mechanical drawing and other subjects were well attended. "In securing teachers for these classes," he reports, "every effort is made to obtain the highest talent of the city for the respective departments."

Then, in 1897, the Rev. Douglas Borthwick in his *History of Montreal* refers to the Institute as "one of the few Libraries in Montreal," with about 12,000 volumes on the shelves, and with the Reading Room well patronized by the public. He also stated that, financially, "the Institution is not in the flourishing condition it should be."

The financial condition, indeed, had begun to cause grave concern as early as 1870. In that year it became necessary to discontinue the night classes for student-workmen. This work by the Institute was not then, however, as vitally important as it had been during the previous thirty years. Other free classes were being sponsored by the Council of Arts and Manufactures, which were able to absorb the students and render unnecessary any further attempts by the Institute to continue its technical training courses. Then, too, in the following years, still other institutions were established coincident with the civic expansion of Montreal, such as more night schools and technical schools, while McGill developed a series of extension courses. To the Institute, though, must forever be accorded the honour of having pioneered in this important work which was a vital element in the progress of Montreal. During three decades it had been the only institution providing training in that technical education from which the industrial development of the city received much of its original impetus.

At the time of the discontinuance of night classes by

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

the Institute, financial difficulties were also being experienced by other societies. Among these was the Mercantile Library Association which then proposed an amalgamation with the Institute. A committee reported favourably on the idea and a plan of union was submitted to the Association. When no reply was received to this, the matter was dropped, and afterwards the Association disposed of its real estate. Its library was taken over by the Fraser Institute (incorporated 1870) with which in the future The Mechanics' Institute was to engage in similar but equally ineffective amalgamation discussions.

With the trend of the residential section to the uptown districts, and the building of other halls in the city, the revenue from the Institute's Lecture Hall, which had been yielding \$3,000 to \$4,000 yearly, seriously declined. (It is interesting to note that in 1858 the change was made from sterling to dollars.) Several members then advocated disposing of the St. James Street property, for which an offer of \$105,000 had been made. At a special meeting held on November 15th, 1886, it was moved that this offer be accepted and the proceeds invested in a building uptown, with the light literature and \$5,000 being given to a citizens' free library, the scientific books being retained, and a technical school founded which would be affiliated with McGill. These suggestions met with a storm of protest from the majority of the members, and it was determined to carry on as before, while developing new sources of revenue.

POINT ST. CHARLES BRANCH Civic expansion did, however, result in the Institute's securing a new property at this time. The extension of the city's industrial activities indicated the desirability of an institute situated closer to the residential section of the workmen. To meet this need, the Institute opened a branch at Point St. Charles in 1887. Property was purchased at the corner of Wellington and Bourgeois Streets for \$5,000 and certain movables for \$900 extra. (Of this

INCREASED ACTIVITY

sum, \$2,000 was subscribed and a mortgage given for the balance.) This new departure further illustrated the earnest determination of the members to serve Montreal in accord with the chartered objects of the Institute. Unfortunately, after the branch had been conducted for four years, it had to be closed due to lack of support from the community. Nine years later the property was sold.

ALTERATIONS Meanwhile an increased revenue from the St. James Street building had been assured. In 1887 it was decided to alter the stores on the ground floor, enlarge the reading room and library, and make the upper part of the building into first class offices. Mr. James Wright prepared plans, but before they were approved a fire broke out in the building—on October 24th—which did considerable damage, necessitating temporary repairs. Then, the plans having been approved at a special meeting, the alterations were effected without materially disturbing the work of the Institute or interfering with the tenants on the ground floor.

By May 1st, 1888, most of the offices were rented, and the Institute had an estimated revenue of \$14,500 from the remodelled building. In December of that year, the building was for the first time illuminated by electricity, which replaced the gaslight by which, for 43 years, the lectures and classes of the Institute had been conducted. (The alterations had cost \$45,541.00; the mortgage debt upon the Institute had been \$26,000, and power was now obtained from the Legislature to borrow \$50,000 to meet the cost of alterations. The result was the increase of the mortgage indebtedness to \$69,000.)

By this time the membership had grown to 928, the library contained 10,000 volumes, and the Institute faced the future confident of maintaining its long record of service which had won it the goodwill of the men who had profited by its teaching and the approbation and support of the leading citizens of the city.

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

Thus, though further offers, ranging up to \$240,000, were received for the property, all were refused, and the Institute entered the new century still in the old building—the well-remembered haunt of book-lovers which, during noon hours and after five o'clock, was one of the busiest spots on a busy street.

INTO THE NEW CENTURY

FOR Montreal the first decade of the 20th Century was an era of increasing prosperity. The city's economic development continued, stimulated by the constant application of new technical improvements and inventions to industry. It was, therefore, only natural that the Institute should consider various means of extending its activities in order to play a part of greater usefulness in an increasingly industrialized world. To this end several members advocated disposing of the old building, establishing a Mechanics' Institute Technical School, and locating in a more convenient section of the city. Simultaneously came a suggestion from the Manufacturers' Association of Montreal to aid in this project. A tentative proposition was made to that body, that if they would raise a sum of \$100,000, The Mechanics' Institute would add its equipment and resources, and thereby assure its success. The offer was reaffirmed at the annual meeting of 1902, but next year, the Manufacturers' Association having failed to show any further interest, it was rescinded. (Later, when the Montreal Technical Institute was established, The Mechanics' Institute's long service to technical education was recognized by its being accorded representation on the board of the new society.)

AMALGAMATION PROPOSALS

It was not until 1909 that any further proposals to amalgamate were made. In December of that year, at the annual meeting, the Builders Exchange (a corporate body of which many members were also members of the Institute) suggested obtaining control by the election of its members to the Institute's general committee of management. The idea was to form a joint stock company and erect a general office building with accommodation suitable for both institutions. The plan did not receive support and failed to materialize.

Then for a second time, in 1910, the amalgamation

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

of the Institute with the Natural History Society was discussed, but without result.

Meanwhile support was growing for the idea of selling the building and locating elsewhere. Two important considerations gave weight to the argument. First, the property, purchased for a comparatively modest sum over half a century before, had increased many times in value; there had been a steady trend of the financial and banking interests to this section of the city, and many attractive offers had been made to the Institute. Second, it was becoming evident that the location was now unsatisfactory for an educational institution and library.

Accordingly a special meeting was called for July 18th, 1911, to consider an offer made on behalf of a syndicate by Messrs. Gault & Ewing, of \$350,000, the building to be transferred May 1st, 1913. Then matters became complicated when, just as the meeting came to order, several other bids were made—one of them for \$355,000. Since Messrs. Gault & Ewing had been negotiating for some time, it was decided to give them an opportunity of making a second offer, and they increased their bid to \$357,500. Still the members hesitated to accept it, for reasons expressed in the motion of Col. Burland, seconded by Mr. J. W. Hughes:

"That whereas no plans for the future of the Institute after their present home should be sold had been formulated, that the operating expenses of the Institute were comparatively low, and that the Institute stood to lose heavily by having a large sum of money on hand that could only be invested at a low rate of interest, it would be inadvisable to sell at the present time especially as within the next few months a much higher sum might be obtainable."

SALE OF THE OLD PROPERTY After considerable discussion, the general committee was empowered to sell for a sum of not less than \$400,000. On October 17th, 1911, a general meeting of the members was called for the purpose of approving, ratifying and con-

INTO THE NEW CENTURY

firming the resolution passed by the general committee at a meeting held on September 12th, 1911, and accepting an offer of \$400,000 made by Messrs. Gault & Ewing as contained in their letter of September 7th. The deed was signed and transfer made of the property to the Montreal Trust Company on October 21st, 1911.

Arrangements were made for the Institute to continue to occupy the old quarters temporarily, so that although it was now without a permanent home, its work was not interrupted.

The disposal of the property again revived interest in the advisability of combining with some other institution of like nature. At the annual meeting of December 4th, 1911, a special committee was appointed "To obtain information and consider suggestions which might be useful in guiding the future policy of the Institute and especially that the committee keep in view the fact that the Institute should not be deprived of its identity."

The members of this committee were soon busy and reported as early as January 22nd, 1912, that they had discussed informally the possibilities of amalgamation with the Fraser Institute, the Natural History Society, and the Montreal Technical Institute. They submitted six different schemes, but without any special recommendations.

Finally, on May 27th, they drew up terms of amalgamation with the Fraser Institute, which, however, did not find them acceptable.

The question was then taken up with the Natural History Society, and a report submitted at the annual meeting, December 2nd, 1912. The matter was still being considered through the ensuing years by succeeding committees.

At the meeting of December 6th, 1915, the General Committee of management was empowered, not only to obtain an amendment to the Charter to allow the Institute to amalgamate with any other corporation having a similar object in whole or in part, but also to

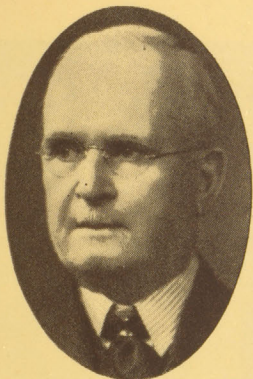
THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

purchase land for a building at the corner of Atwater Avenue and Tupper Street, Westmount.

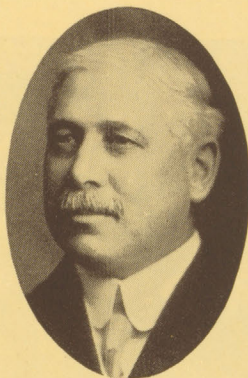
It was at the next annual meeting (December 4th, 1916) that it was finally reported that the necessary information regarding the financial condition of the Natural History Society could not be obtained. By this time, however, the Institute, realizing that the possibilities of satisfactory amalgamation were slight, was already proceeding with arrangements for building a home of its own which would be suitable for carrying on its work.

It is interesting to note that as the Institute neared the end of its long occupancy of the building on St. James Street, there were 22,000 volumes on the shelves, and more than 12,000 books in circulation during a year.

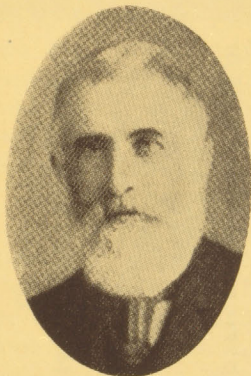
PAST PRESIDENTS



E. MCG. QUIRK
1921-27



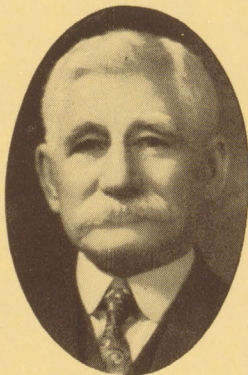
W. RUTHERFORD
1913-21



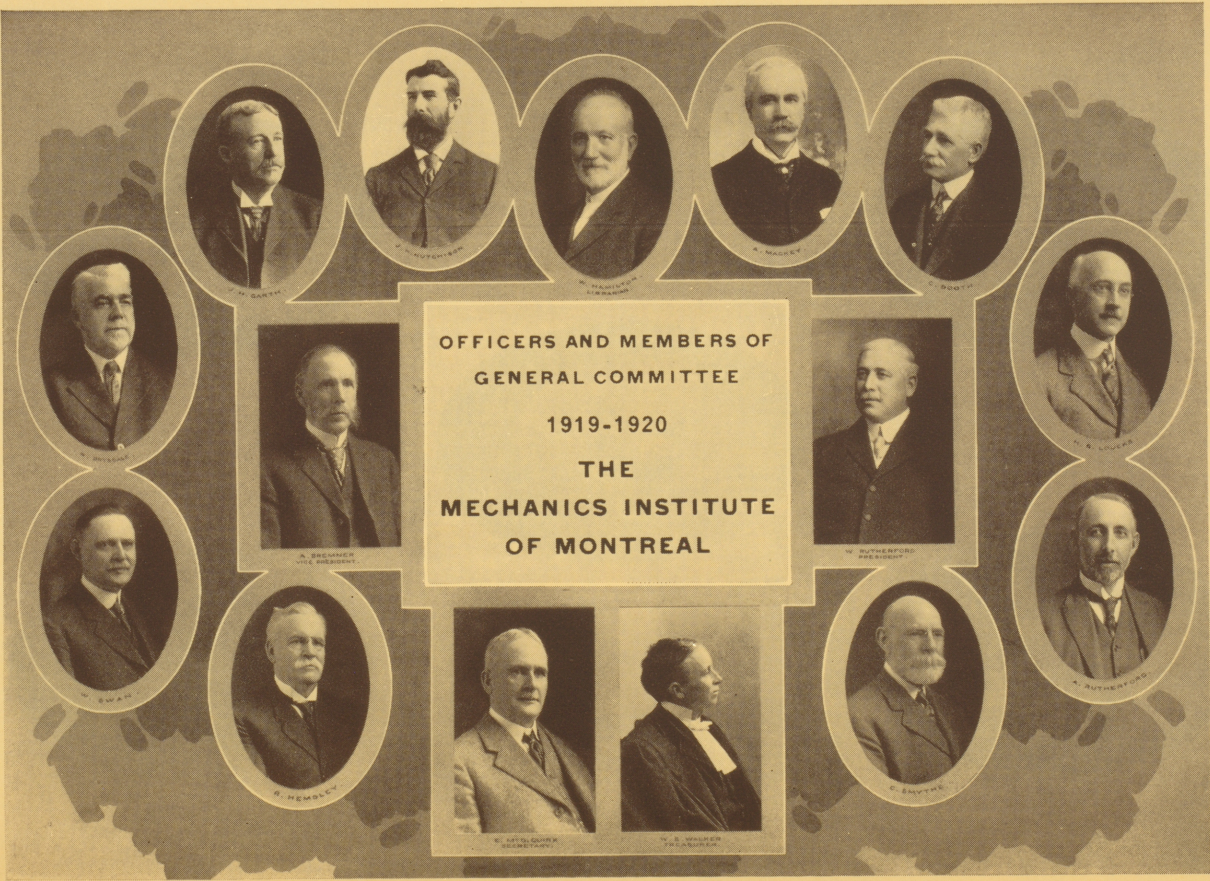
WILLIAM RUTHERFORD
1889-92



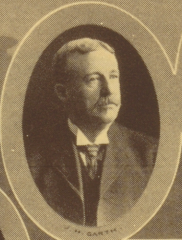
W. SIMPSON WALKER, K.C.
1927-29



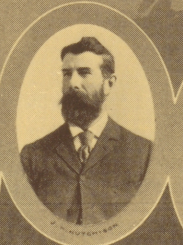
CHARLES BOOTH
1929-38



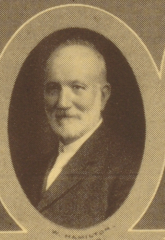
OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF
GENERAL COMMITTEE
1919-1920
THE
MECHANICS INSTITUTE
OF MONTREAL



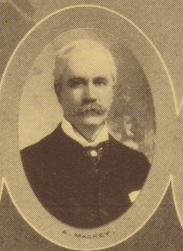
W. GARTH



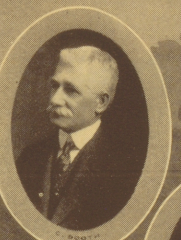
C. HUTCHINS



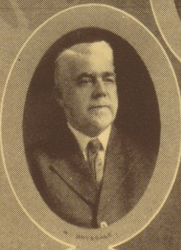
W. HEMPLEY



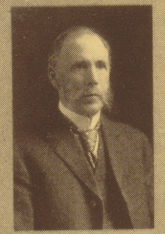
A. MADLEY



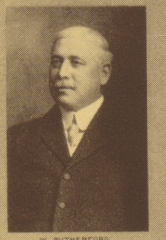
C. BOOTH



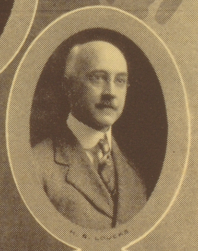
W. BRIDGES



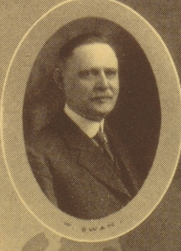
A. BREWSTER



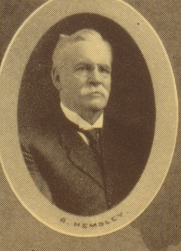
W. RUTHERFORD



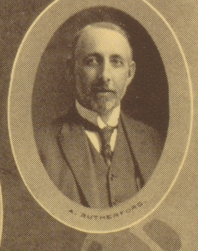
H. E. LUCAS



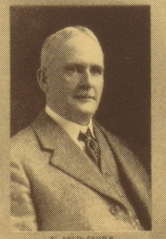
W. EWING



W. HEMPLEY



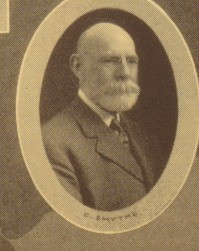
A. RUTHERFORD



E. MITCHELL



W. E. WALKER



C. SAUTER

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

THE decision having been taken and a splendid building site acquired, the members were determined that construction should commence as soon as possible upon a thoroughly modern building of the utmost utility for the work of the Institute.

During 1917 a sub-committee went carefully into the question of costs in relation to present and future requirements, holding frequent conferences with architects and other experts. A complete report, submitted at the annual meeting of December 3rd, recommended: a building at least 80 x 80 feet, fully equipped, containing a reading room, library, lecture room, class and club rooms and smoking rooms, to cost approximately \$100,000; and that a sum of not less than \$240,000 be invested to yield an annual income of \$12,000 for maintenance and administration.

To assure the incorporation of the most modern arrangements in the proposed building, a special committee (the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of the House Committee, and Superintendent) visited Boston, Somerville, Waltham, Springfield, New Haven, New York and Brooklyn Libraries, making a complete investigation of equipment and methods in modern institutions of this kind.

Since the Institute's lease on the old building expired in May, 1919, it was naturally hoped that the new building would be ready by that time. Work commenced in May, 1918, under the supervision of Messrs. Hutchison, Wood and Miller, architects, the contract price being \$88,471.43 (not including cost of lighting fixtures, steel book stacks and furniture). In consideration of the fact that the new building was to be used as a library and for educational purposes, the City of Westmount agreed to exempt it from taxes.

At the meeting of December 2nd, 1918, it was decided that at least \$120,000 would be necessary to construct and equip the kind of building desired, and

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

the committee was authorized to expend that amount, This was the last annual meeting held in the old building, where for 63 years the officers and committees had met and faithfully striven to increase the usefulness of the Institute and maintain the ideals of its founders. Now the members were looking forward to a future of progress and greater service, and particularly to the opening of their new building the following spring.

In this they were disappointed. Because of labour troubles, scarcity of materials and delayed shipments, completion of the building was delayed almost a year. As a result, with the lease on the old property expiring May 1st, it was necessary to close the library and store the books in the basement of the new building.

OPENING OF THE NEW BUILDING Finally, after many vexatious delays, the new home of the Institute was formally opened on Friday evening, January 30th, 1920. A distinguished gathering of prominent citizens—officers and members and invited guests—assembled in the new hall for the ceremonies. Mr. William Rutherford, President of the Institute, presided and briefly reviewed the Institute's history. Brig.-Gen. Sir Alexander Bertram delivered an address referring in eulogistic terms to the achievements of the Institute, the benefit of such an organization to the mechanic, and the worth of the mechanic to the community. Other speakers were Alderman Stewart F. Rutherford, representing the Mayor of Westmount, who welcomed the Institute to the city, the Very Rev. Dean Evans, Mr. George Sumner, President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. E. A. Wright, a former chairman of the trustees of the Westmount Public Library.

The praise and congratulations accorded the Institute's officers that night reflected the public's appreciation of the service done the community by the erection of this magnificent library building, modern, well lighted and superbly furnished. Its location had been carefully chosen as being geographically central

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

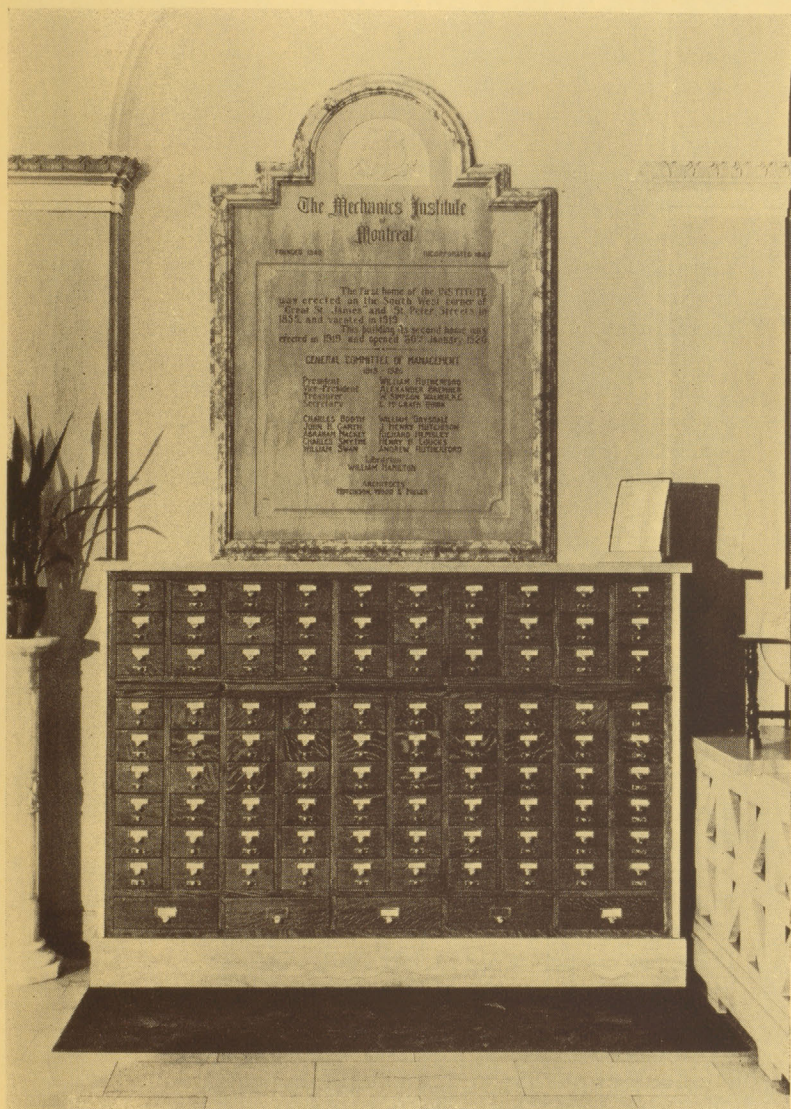
in relation to the English-speaking population. Its appointments had been selected and arranged to assure the utmost in practical serviceability. Its design allowed for such enlargement as might be required for future usefulness.

DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING Facing a public square, the building has an impressive and dignified exterior befitting its location, and in accord with the high ideals to which the Institute's efforts for a hundred years have been dedicated. Of buff brick with stone trimming, it is ornamented with symbolic plaques representing art, science and industry. The massive oak doors of the main entrance open upon a vestibule panelled in beautiful marble, and a short flight of steps leads to a wide lobby from which large arched openings on each side give entrance to the reading and reference rooms. High ceilings accentuate the impression of spaciousness and provide for effective lighting, there being great windows along the sides of the reading rooms and a large skylight dome above the lobby. The reading rooms are fitted with open book shelves, finished in dull oak, with reading tables and chairs to match. At the rear of the lobby is the delivery desk, fashioned of marble. Past it, to the right, two large archways lead to the steel book stacks, which occupy two stories, the upper being reached by a steel stairway, while a dull glass floor permits light to radiate on both levels. To the left of the delivery desk are the administrative offices. Over the desk is a beautiful marble clock, the gift of Mr. Richard Hemsley; under the clock is a small tablet bearing a brief enunciation of the Institute's aims. There are three well-equipped class rooms in the building. On the upper floor, there is also the lecture hall with a seating capacity of 200, a board room, and a well-equipped rest room for the librarians.

COMMEMORATIVE TABLETS At the entrance to the lobby are two historically interesting tablets. One bears the names of the Presidents of the Institute



COMMEMORATIVE TABLET
CROWNING PERMANENT CARD INDEX



COMMEMORATIVE TABLET
CROWNING PERMANENT CARD INDEX

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

since 1840 (as listed on page 52). The other commemorates the opening of the present building, while also recording the long occupancy of the first home. It lists the General Committee of Management 1919-20, the Librarian, and the Architects.

Portraits of many of the Presidents who, in regular succession for 100 years, have guided the efforts of the Institute for the benefit of the community are included in this book. Unfortunately the complete list could not be pictured, since satisfactory portraits of all were not available.

The Librarian, Mr. William Hamilton, had up to the time of the opening of the new building, served for 23 years as the capable and respected "custodian of the literary treasures" of the Institute. He continued his duties in the new building for another 13 years. Then, upon his retirement in March, 1933, he was the recipient of a presentation by the officers, committee and staff, as a token of the esteem in which he was held.

In 1928 a symbolic ceremony of great historic interest to the members further typified the continuity of the Institute's efforts through the changing years, and linked the new building with the earliest traditions of the old. During the autumn of 1926, workmen, levelling the old site preparatory to the erection of the Royal Bank Building, discovered the original corner stone. The contents, which had been deposited there 72 years before, were handed over to Mr. E. McG. Quirk, President of the Institute, and Mr. Richard Hemsley, Director. Placed on display in the windows of Mr. Hemsley's store, they attracted the interested attention of hundreds of modern Montrealers and were prominently featured in the daily press. There was much discussion as to their disposal, but finally these historic mementoes of 1854 and the beginnings of the Institute's first home were re-deposited in the original stone. To them were added several records of the modern Institute: Copy of the Act of Incorporation and By-Laws of the Institute as of 1919, the historical booklet of



CONTENTS OF CORNERSTONE
DEPOSITED IN OLD BUILDING, 1854.
RE-DEPOSITED IN NEW BUILDING, 1928.

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1920, the Annual Report for 1927, and the Syllabus of Lectures for the season 1927-28, as well as a representative collection of Canadian coins, and daily papers of May 12th, 1928. On that date a small group of officers and members of the Institute, headed by the President, W. Simpson Walker, K.C., assembled for a simple but impressive ceremony when the old corner stone, with its records of the past and present, was placed in the Atwater and Tupper corner of the new building.



LOBBY

CONTINUED PROGRESS AND INCREASED USEFULNESS

THE opening of the new building inaugurated an era of greater service in the history of the Institute. Its increasing usefulness to the community has been apparent in many ways.

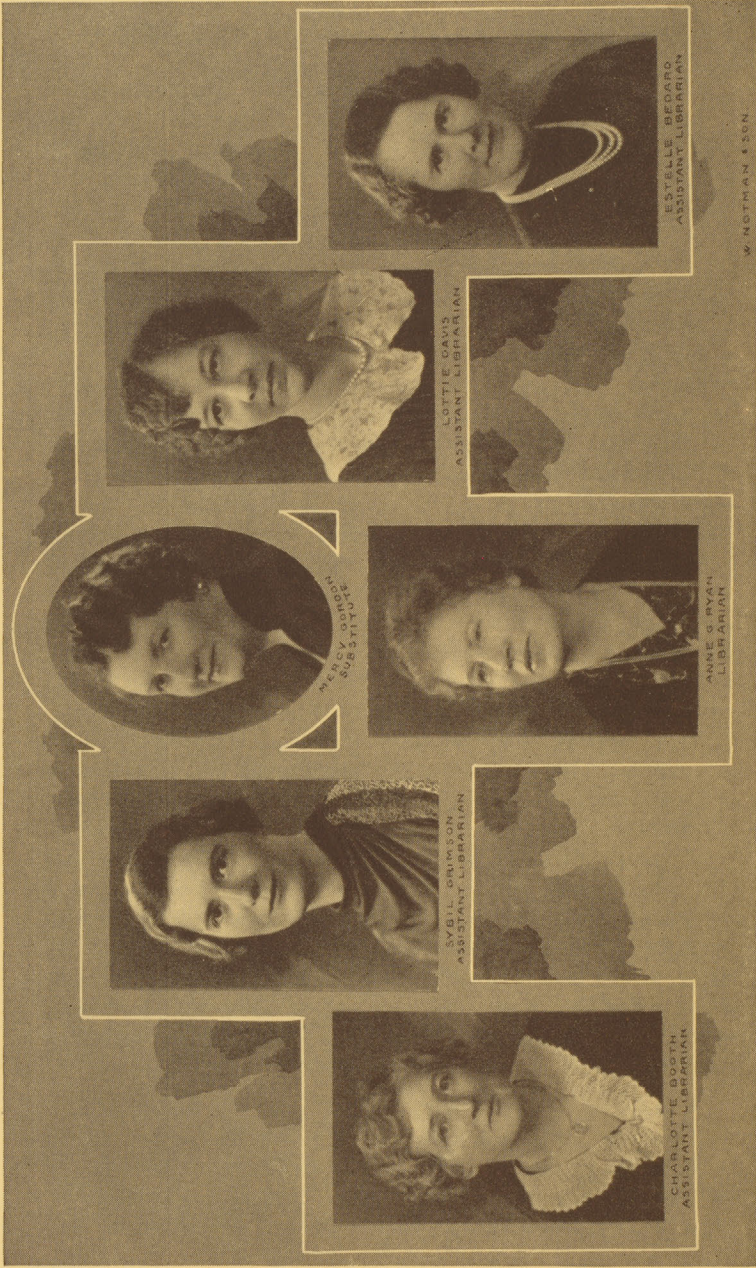
THE LIBRARY The library has steadily grown—in number of volumes, in popularity, and in value to Montreal citizens. A consistent increase in the number of volumes on its shelves is noted year by year: 23,000 in 1920; 28,000 in 1925; over 33,000 in 1930; and about 45,000 in 1940. Correspondingly, the circulation of books during a year has increased to more than 80,000. Of these it is significant that approximately 1/3 are non-fiction—a proportion well above the general library average. Encouragement of non-fiction reading has been a cardinal principle of the library policy, which is based on a consideration of two factors: the preferences of the reading public, and the educational objects of the Institute. Thus, while developing as complete as possible a collection of technical works which would provide facilities for instruction in the various arts and sciences, the Institute has added to its shelves the best current volumes of History, Biography and Travel, and a carefully selected assortment of fiction. An average of \$250 every month is expended for new books, and, the cost of technical books being generally higher than that of others, the greater proportion of this amount—as a rule, about 60%—is spent upon non-fiction volumes.

The importance attached to works devoted to useful knowledge is a natural development of the Institute's century-old educational efforts, and has resulted in the creation of one of the finest technical reference libraries in the country. In 1840 the Institute was primarily interested in offering to ambitious young

CONTINUED PROGRESS AND INCREASED USEFULNESS

workmen the opportunity for practical education. That policy has been maintained, though the method has been naturally modified, and today there are many evidences that modern Montrealers are following the examples of their predecessors in taking full advantage of the opportunities which the Institute affords. The Library is well supplied with the latest books on Mechanical and Industrial Arts, Science, Sociology, History, Biography, Travel, and General Literature. The reading rooms which, in addition to all standard reference works, are well supplied with the best weekly, monthly and quarterly periodicals, are open to the public. Non-members are granted free reading privileges—which include access to the shelves in the reading rooms—the only requirement being the recommendation of a responsible citizen. Thus today a young mechanic has only to obtain the endorsement of his foreman or employer on his reading card to have at his service the latest reference books and periodicals dealing with his particular subject. Almost any evening a dozen or more students may be observed in the reading rooms absorbed in study and making notes and calculations from their reading of authoritative scientific books. This splendid library collection has also proved a practical benefit to many an unemployed man, who can, through the facilities here provided, keep pace with the latest advances in his specialty and thus be prepared for the finest employment opportunities. To give one concrete example: a technical worker in an out-of-town plant recently made a special visit to the Institute to express his gratitude for the assistance he had received in gaining the practical knowledge which had directly resulted in his employment.

A feature of the library's service to the public is the open-shelf system which has proved most successful. Access to the stacks enables the seeker after knowledge to become thoroughly acquainted with the possibilities of the library, and offers the widest opportunity for



LOTTIE DAVIS
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN



ESTELLE BEDARO
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN



MERVYN HAROLD
SUSZTYK
LIBRARIAN



ANNE G. RYAN
LIBRARIAN



SYBIL GRIMSON
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN



CHARLOTTE BOOTH
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

W. NOTMAN & SON

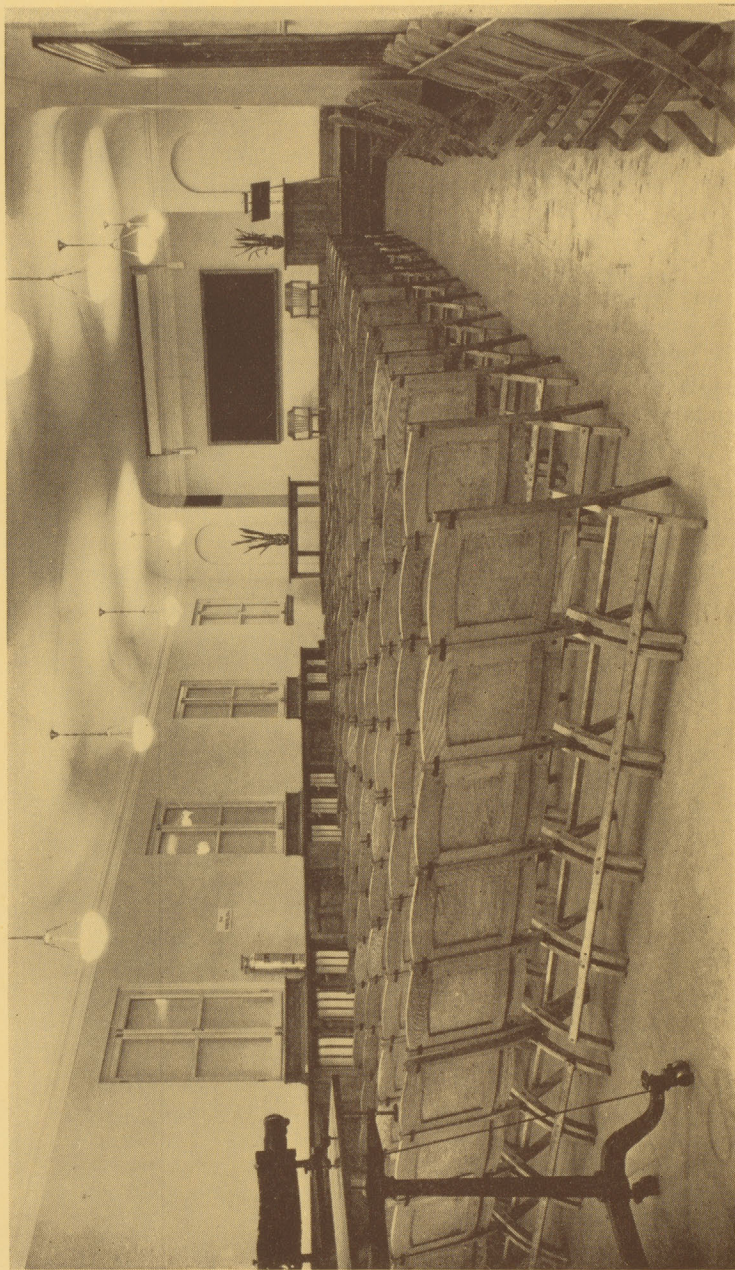
LIBRARY STAFF, 1940

CONTINUED PROGRESS AND INCREASED USEFULNESS

complete selection. A modern card catalogue system is of course maintained; and to provide for the steady addition of new volumes which it is naturally impossible to include immediately in the permanent card index, a loose leaf catalogue of recent acquisitions is kept available at the Delivery Desk. Thus complete information as to the volumes in the library is always easily and conveniently obtainable. The efficient operation of this system and the extent of the service which the library offers the public have been made possible largely because of the capable library staff, working under the supervision of Miss A. G. Ryan, Librarian.

Registration of over 600 reading cards during a year attest the use which has been made of the reading rooms. Then, in addition to the 141 Life Members and 91 Annual Members, approximately 1,000 Associate Members each year enjoy book-borrowing privileges.

Among the library's literary treasures are several rare volumes comprising an outstanding collection of "Canadiana," including such historic items as the files of "The Morning Courier" of Montreal for the years 1835 and 1836. There are many bound sets of periodical publications, ranging from the Statutes of the old Province of Canada and later Dominion and Provincial Statutes to the copies of "Punch" since 1859. Examples of the valuable and unique works in the Institute's library are three volumes of Russell's "The Modern System of Naval Architecture," 1865. (These are of unusually large size and superbly bound. They are copiously and magnificently illustrated with large-scale plans of ship construction, and are appropriately dedicated "To Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen." "Second only to the practice of Navigation itself," declares the dedication, "to a seafaring people, is the art of ship construction; and to no one could be more properly dedicated a Treatise on Naval Architecture, than to the Queen of the Maritime Nation—the Lady who, beyond all other Sovereigns, is Mistress of the Seas.")



LECTURE HALL

CONTINUED PROGRESS AND INCREASED USEFULNESS

The library's chief pride, however, remains the excellence of its technical books, several of which are the only copies available to students in the city. The purchasing policy has been consistently based on a recognition of the fact that the library and reading rooms should be primarily at the service of "Industrial Workers and those engaged in the Manufacturing and Mechanical Arts."

CLASS ROOMS

The same consideration influences all the Institute's efforts. The three excellently-equipped class rooms are available—at no cost except a nominal fee to cover maintenance expenses—for the use of groups whose efforts are devoted to educational purposes. During the fall and winter months these are constantly occupied, so that, though the Institute itself is no longer directly engaged in teaching, its rooms, as in the old days, are regularly used for practical instruction. Among the organizations which have taken advantage of the Institute's class room facilities have been:

The Montreal Board of Trade Classes.

The People's Mutual Building Society.

The Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds.

McGill University French Classes.

Shawinigan Public Speaking Group.

Canadian Credit Association (Montreal Chapter) and others.

The lecture hall is also available for the use of societies engaged in educational work. For example, the Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds has regularly held its meetings here for many years, and when the Canadian Association for Adult Education met in Montreal for the first time it was historically fitting that it assemble in the hall of The Mechanics' Institute, the Canadian pioneer in adult education.

FREE PUBLIC LECTURES

Perhaps, however, the gatherings which have been most widely appreciated by the citizens of Montreal have been those



DELIVERY DESK

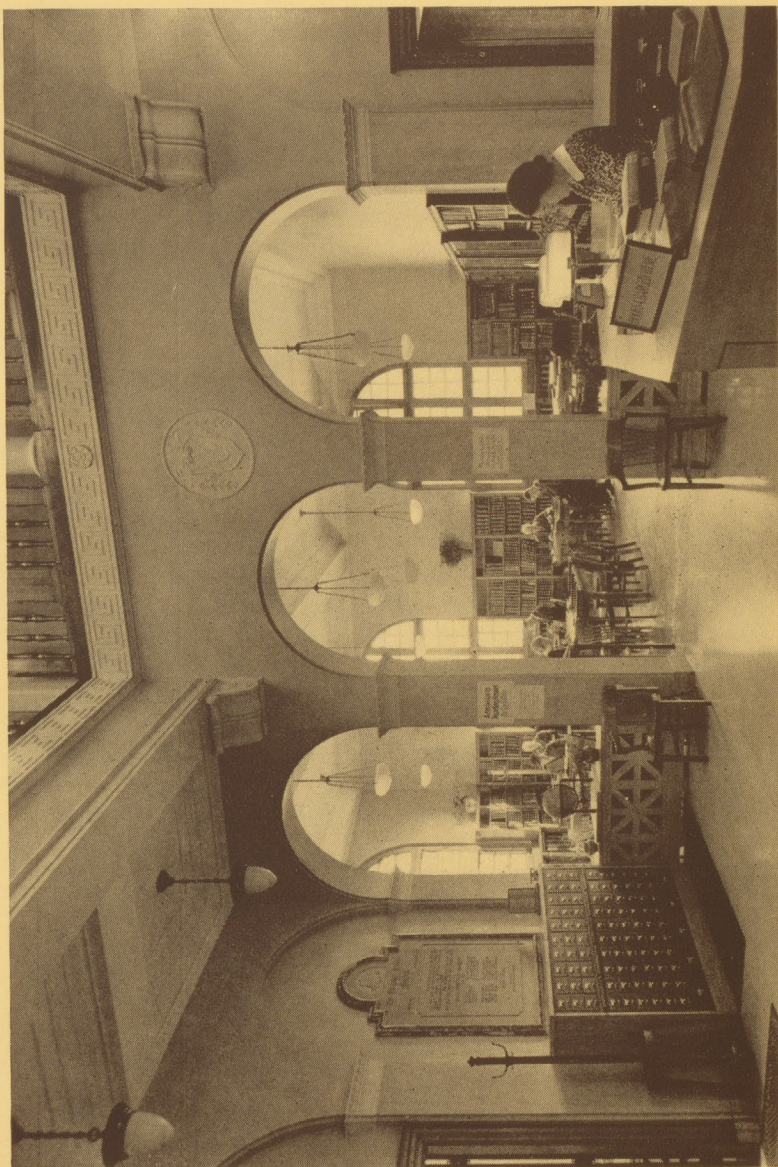
CONTINUED PROGRESS AND INCREASED USEFULNESS

Free Public Lectures sponsored by the Institute itself. In the latter half of the 19th century the old Hall on St. James Street was the city's finest and most popular public auditorium, famous for the succession of distinguished speakers who addressed the citizens of Montreal from its platform. In the new building that fine tradition has been revived.

In 1922, Dr. A. A. Bramley-Moore, a Life Member of the Institute, arranged for a series of Free Public Medical Lectures to be held in the Institute's hall. Leading medical authorities were secured to deliver educational talks on their respective specialties. In sponsoring them the Institute was performing a work of valuable public service, which was continued in succeeding years.

The idea was soon extended, and in March, 1923, the Institute inaugurated a policy of presenting each season a series of Free Public Lectures on general subjects. These have continued to be an important feature of the Institute's work up to the present time. It is interesting to note that in the first year's series the majority of lectures were given by members of the teaching staff of the Montreal Technical School. Many other organizations have co-operated with the Institute in arranging for these interesting and educational talks, including the Geographical Society of Montreal, Macdonald College, and, especially, McGill's Department of Extra-Mural Relations (of which the Director, Colonel Wilfrid Bovey, himself the speaker on some of these occasions, is a grandson of the Institute's first President, Mr. John Redpath).

A complete variety of interesting subjects has been covered in the course of these lectures, most of which have been illustrated. They have dealt with various aspects of Science, Economics, History and Travel, and a consistently high standard of excellence has been maintained. The speakers have been authorities on their subjects, including the Consuls-General of several countries, Deans and Heads of University Depart-



READING ROOM

CONTINUED PROGRESS AND INCREASED USEFULNESS

ments. Public appreciation of this aspect of the Institute's service has been best expressed by the record of attendance in the Institute's hall. Indeed, so popular did these evenings become that at one time the Institute had to give serious consideration to reserving seats for its own members.

Lectures are given weekly during the winter, from the beginning of November until the end of March, so that a total of 16 or 18 are usually included in each season's programme.

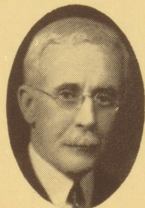
True to its policy, maintained throughout 100 years, of keeping abreast of the times, the Institute has now installed in the lecture hall the most modern motion-picture equipment for the presentation of sound films, illustrating and describing the latest technical developments and other subjects of educational value.

Recognizing that it is very largely the superb new building which has provided the Institute with its greatly increased opportunities for public service, the committee of management have given particular attention to maintaining it in the finest possible condition. In addition to such regular routine operations as frequent painting and redecorating, there have been several major improvements, including the renovation of the entire heating system for increased efficiency, and the addition of extra stacks to accommodate, for some years to come, the increasing number of volumes being added to the library.

In class room, lecture hall, library and reading room, the Institute is carrying on the traditions of 100 years. Some changes and modifications of its efforts have been from time to time necessary in order to adapt the work to changing conditions—but the objectives remain the same. "Knowledge is Power"—that motto has always been the inspiration of the membership. In an increasingly complex world, with the struggle for industrial and economic supremacy constantly growing more intense, practical knowledge is more necessary than ever. Upon it and its intelligent application to modern



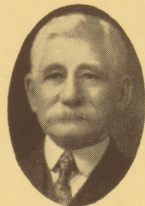
H. H. BOYD



T. W. R. MACRAE



FRED D. ROGERS



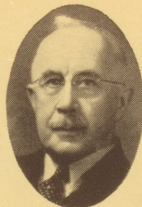
CHARLES BOOTH



FRANK P. JENNINGS
SECRETARY



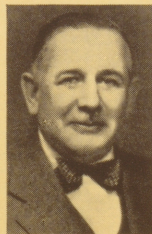
C. T. RUSSELL



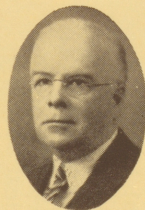
J. E. MILLEN



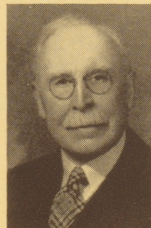
THOMAS BLAIKIE
PRESIDENT



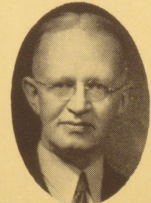
C. J. A. COOK
VICE-PRES.



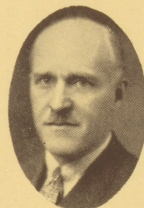
F. J. EVELEIGH



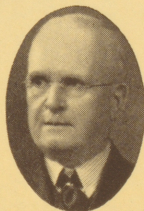
A. J. G. MACDUFF
TREASURER



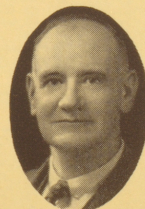
H. F. SWIFT



G. A. JOHNSON



E. MCG. QUIRK



DR. A. A. BRAMLEY-MOORE

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS
GENERAL COMMITTEE, 1939-40

CONTINUED PROGRESS AND INCREASED USEFULNESS

problems the progress of the individual and of the nation depends. Now as always The Mechanics' Institute of Montreal provides an educational centre where ambitious Montrealers can obtain the knowledge which will better equip them for advancement in their careers.

In this Centenary Year, the Institute can look back with pride upon its long record of public service; and, under normal world conditions, could look forward to the future with confidence, for, after many struggles and vicissitudes, it is today firmly established in a position to continue more effectively than ever its efforts for the benefit of the community. The Institute enters its Second Century resolved to maintain those high ideals which, in its small sphere, it has striven for 100 years to uphold and upon which the ordered progress of an educated society depends. The hope of future civilization demands that those ideals prevail, and that the educational efforts of such institutions as this be maintained and strengthened throughout the years to come.

**PRESIDENTS OF THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL
SINCE ITS FORMATION, 11TH FEBRUARY, 1840**

	<i>Dates of Election</i>
JOHN REDPATH	16th Mar., 1840
JOHN SMITH	7th Feb., 1843
DAVID BROWN	30th Jan., 1844
JOHN OSTELL	28th Jan., 1845
CHAS. M. TAIT	2nd Nov., 1846
WM. SPIER	13th Nov., 1848
HENRY BULMER	17th Nov., 1851
CHAS. GARTH	5th Nov., 1855
GEO. W. WEAVER	2nd Nov., 1857
DAVID BROWN	7th Nov., 1859
HECTOR MUNROE	24th Sept., 1860
GEO. W. WEAVER	18th Sept., 1862
WM. REID	7th Sept., 1863
A. A. STEVENSON	4th Sept., 1865
NORTON B. CORSE	3rd Sept., 1866
DAVID McFARLANE	2nd Sept., 1872
GEO. CRUIKSHANK	6th Sept., 1875
JOHN BOYD	6th Dec., 1880
ROBERT IRWIN	4th Dec., 1882
COL. A. A. STEVENSON	6th Dec., 1886
WILLIAM RUTHERFORD	2nd Dec., 1889
JOHN HARPER	5th Dec., 1892
JOHN GOW	2nd Dec., 1895
STEPHEN WHITE	6th Dec., 1897
AMOS COWEN	4th Dec., 1899
A. MACKEY	2nd Dec., 1901
C. STEVENS	5th Dec., 1904
F. CASEY	2nd Dec., 1907
W. RUTHERFORD	1st Dec., 1913
E. McG. QUIRK	14th Feb., 1921
W. S. WALKER, K.C.	14th Feb., 1927
CHARLES BOOTH	11th Feb., 1929
THOMAS BLAIKIE	14th Feb., 1938

**PRESENT LIFE MEMBERS
OF
THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE
OF MONTREAL
AS OF JANUARY 1ST, 1939**

Honorary Member W. HAMILTON

ALLEN, SIR H. M.	HOSMER, E. B.
‡ARCHIBALD, C. E.	HUDSON, WM.
BAILEY, FRANK	HUGHES, GEORGE
BENNETT, A. L.	HUGILL, J. H.
BLACK, J. P.	HUTCHISON, H. R.
BLAIKIE, THOS.	JOHNSON, G. A.
BOOTH, A. L.	KENWOOD, MISS V. A.
BOOTH, CHAS.	KIERNAN, FRANK
BOURNE, ARTHUR	KING, NORMAN
BOYD, H. H.	KYDD, R. A.
BRADY, JOHN	LEACH, JOHN J.
BRAMLEY-MOORE, DR. A. A.	LEITH, ARTHUR
BURNETT, ALEX.	LESLIE, JAS.
CALDER, R. E.	‡LE TENDRE, F. E.
CARTWRIGHT, A. E.	LEWIS, ROBERT
‡CHARLTON, A. H.	LINDSAY, E. G.
COCKBURN, F. J.	LITTLE, REV. H. M.
COLLINS, P. R.	LOGAN, R. S.
COOK, C. J. A.	LONGMIRE, THOS. B.
CRABTREE, H.	LORIMER, D.
CRABTREE, H. R.	LOUCKS, G. B.
CROWLEY, D.	LOUCKS, H. B.
CURRIE, ROBERT	LYALL, WM.
DAVIS, H. W.	LYMAN, LT.-COL. W. E.
DESJARDINS, R.	MacCALLUM, MISS S. A.
DICKSON, JOS.	MACDONALD, N. K.
DOUGLAS, JAMES	MACDUFF, A. J. G.
DOW, MISS JESSIE	McFARLANE, DUNCAN
DRYSDALE, W. F.	McFARLANE, P. A.
‡EAVES, J. L.	McKECHNIE, F. H.
EMO, JOHN	MacKENZIE, MISS C. I.
EVELEIGH, F. J.	MACRAE, T. W. R.
FAIRMAN, E. E.	MESSERVY, P. C.
FREEMAN, L. W.	MILL, E. C.
FRIGON, J. A.	MILLEN, J. E.
GORDON, JOHN A.	MILLER, G. A.
GRAHAM, J. W.	MITCHELL, J. M.
GRANDE, MRS. P.	MORGAN, DR. J. D.
GREGORY, NORMAN	MORRIS, ALEX.
GURD, MRS. C. C.	MORRISON, WM.
HAGAR, L. M.	MURRAY, W. M.
HALDIMAND, DR. A. W.	NICKLE, H. F.
‡HAMILTON, H. J. B.	NIVEN, R.
HAMILTON, W. R.	O'BRIEN, MRS. J. B.
HERSEY, DR. MILTON L.	PARDELLIAN, MISS E. M.
HILL, A. H. J.	PATERSON, J. B.
HOLMES, R. T.	PATON, HUGH
HOOD, R. G.	PELL, HENRY

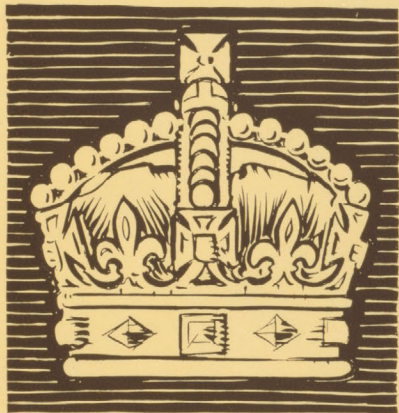
‡Since Deceased.

THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE OF MONTREAL

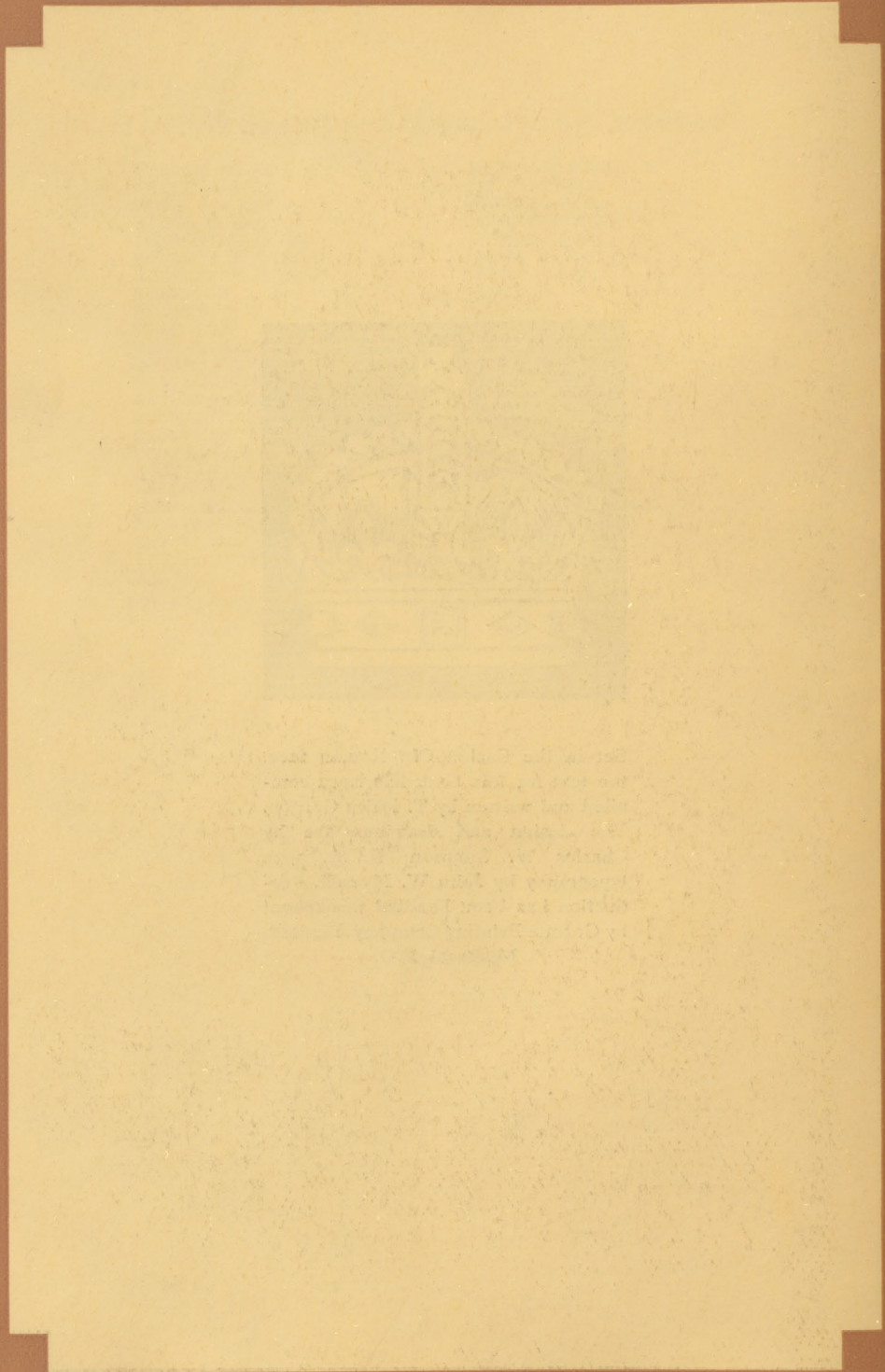
PHELAN, M. A., K.C.
PRATT, A. T.
‡PRICE, WALTER L.
QUIRK, E. McG.
RILEY, MISS M. M.
ROBERTS, J. J.
ROBERTSON, A. E.
ROBINSON, F. D.
ROGERS, F. D.
ROSE, DAN
ROSS, R. B. Jr.
ROYAN, ALFRED W.
RUSSELL-MURRAY, J.
RUTHERFORD, ANDERW
RUTHERFORD, S. F.
SAUNDERS, C. S.
SCOTT, GEORGE
SCOTT, R. L.
SEATH, W. P.
SHEPPARD, P. J.
SHIRRES, DR. D. A.
SLACK, MISS C.
SMITH, GEORGE
SMITH, J. D.

‡Since Deceased.

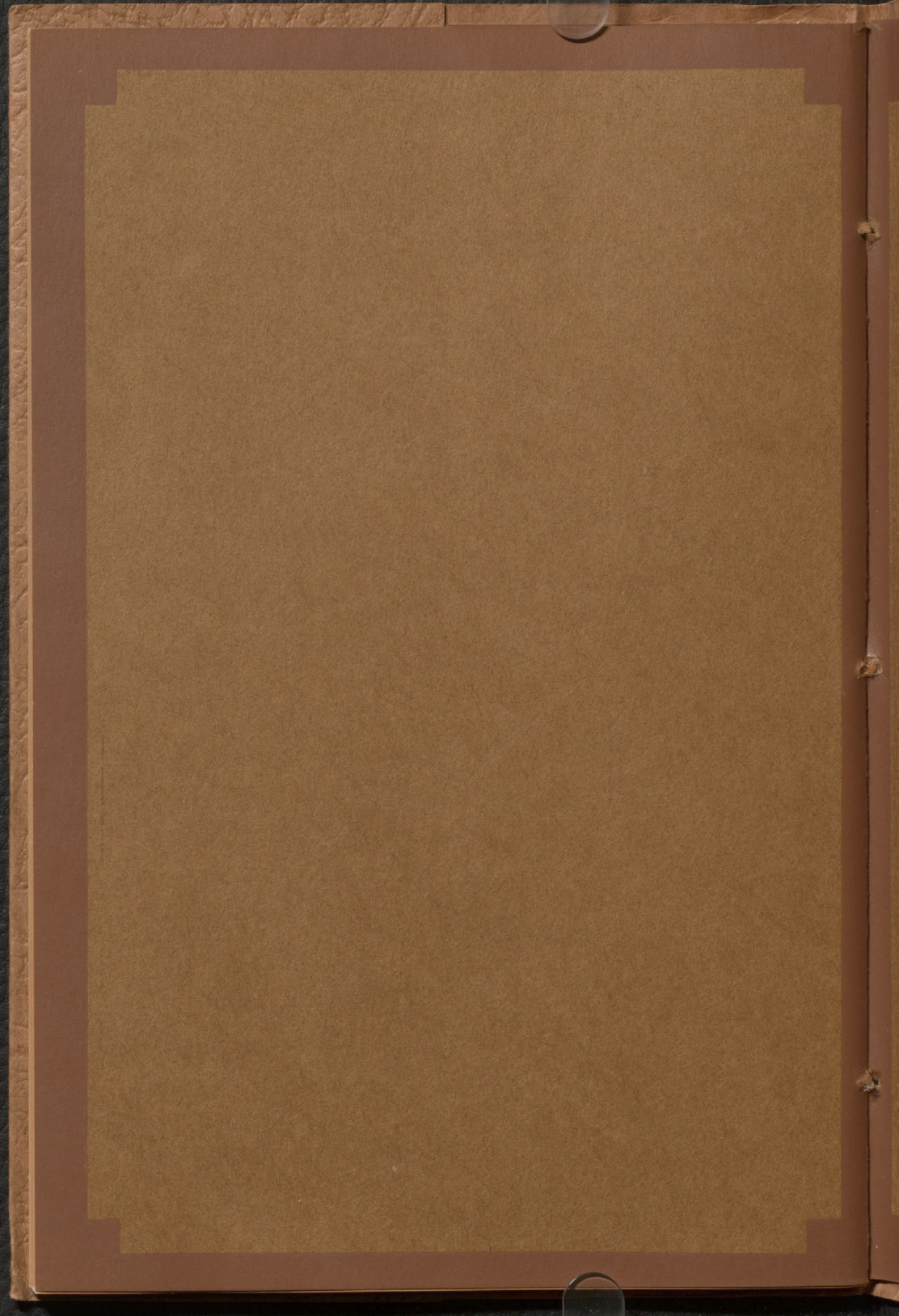
SMITH, PEMBERTON
SMITH, PETER
SMYTHE, H. B.
SOMMERVILLE, P. A.
SPENCE, J. R.
STARR, F. R.
STEPHENS, G. W.
STEWART, NORMAN
STONEMAN, A. M.
SULLIVAN, T. F.
SUTHERLAND, W. A.
SWIFT, H. F.
THOMPSON, DR. F. E.
THOMPSON, MRS. J. D.
THOMSON, J. H.
THOMSON, MRS. J. H.
‡TYRE, C. W. C.
WALKER, WM.
WILL, W. A.
WILLIAMSON, MRS. C. E.
WOLFF, H. H.
WOOD, D. F.
WOOD, G. W.
WYNN, G. M.



Set in the Caslon Old Roman face,
the text for this book has been com-
piled and written by T. Miles Gordon.
The design and drawings are by
Charles W. Simpson, R.C.A. with
typography by John W. Morrell. Pro-
duction has been handled throughout
by Gazette Printing Company, Limited,
Montreal, P.Q.







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