REPORT ON

THE LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY

OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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PROVINCIAL LIBRARY,
VICTORIA, 5th March, 1894.

To the Honourable the Speaker
of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to submit a report on the condition of the Legislative Library of British Columbia.

I took charge on the first day of November, 1893, at which time I found it in a very incomplete and disorganized condition. The books were subsequently re-arranged and re-classified. There were then about 1,200 single volumes, principally Dominion and Provincial Sessional Papers, Statutes, Journals, House of Commons and Senate debates, and other official reports, and a few miscellaneous works. There were, in addition, about an equal number of duplicates of official reports referred to, the whole, outside of our own official reports, and the Parliamentary debates at Ottawa, and a few useful books of a miscellaneous character, forming a collection of little practical value, and very incomplete at that, numbers of nearly every series being found missing.

Since the first day of November last, about 250 bound volumes—files of newspapers, blue books, works of reference and statistics, historical and miscellaneous books, and over 400 books and pamphlets unbound, covering a much similar field—have been added. A good many of the latter have been contributed, and the others obtained at a very low rate, the whole to date, including binding, not exceeding in cost $375. Accompanying this report will be found an unclassified list of books, etc., in the Library to date. Among the new books are the Scribner-Black Atlas of the World (the best work of the kind extant), a complete set of Parkman's works, Kingsford's History of Canada (of which six volumes so far have been published), six copies of the '93 edition of May, a complete file of the Humboldt Library (now being bound), and a number of other valuable scientific, statistical, reference, and other books of the character described in the foregoing.

Correspondence has been opened in various directions with a view to obtaining special publications of an official character, and also with a view to supplying those missing in series now comprised in the Library.

An effort has been made to establish a library on lines along which I conceive it should develop to a degree of utility and completeness. There should be a special department relating to British Columbia, its official records, the history of earliest times and subsequent settlement, its progress and development, etc., comprising newspaper files, old books and pamphlets, and all other literature of Provincial interest that may from time to time exist; there should be a library of distinctively Canadian literature, as complete as practicable; there should be a general historical department, a statistical department, and, what is very important, a well selected department of works devoted to political, social, and industrial economy, and Parliamentary government, procedure, etc. Apart from what may refer to British Columbia and Canada, and what may be regarded as purely standard and classic, I would not recommend entertaining works of fiction and other forms of lighter literature which are usually so conspicuous in public libraries. Having reference to the peculiar character and variety of our natural resources, the Library should contain the best and latest standard works and reports on mining, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and the like. In short, it should

be a *useful* library, one that would largely anticipate not only the requirements of the Legislative Assembly, no matter what the subject for deliberation, but the enquiries of the Province at large, such a library as should furnish all information that might reasonably be referred to it.

In this connection, I would regard it as a favour if the members of the Legislature, before dissolution takes place, would furnish me with lists of books, papers, etc., which in their opinions would be desirable to secure for the Library, and such suggestions are most welcome from all quarters. There will be a book supplied in which to enter the same.

As you are aware, an arrangement has been entered into by which, with your consent and approval, and that of the Hon. the Attorney-General, the British Columbia Natural History Society will hold its meetings in the Library rooms, and place its collection of books therein for the use of the public. This useful body will do much towards promoting the work in hand, and its co-operation is most timely and welcome.

As stated, there has been a number of contributions of books, pamphlets, and papers, some of them relating to British Columbia and contiguous territory. A number of others has been promised, and it is intended to make general the invitation for contributions of this nature.

The reading room, in compliance with your instructions prior to the opening of the Session, has been supplied during the present Session, for the use of its members, with the daily and weekly papers of the Province, 28 in all, the leading daily and a few weekly papers of Canada, the United States, and Great Britain, and ten of the leading magazines. Judging from the interest taken by the members, this feature of the Library has been duly appreciated.

There is appended for your inspection a list of papers and books in the Library up to date. It is not classified, as, during the recess, I intend preparing a three-part catalogue, entering the books alphabetically, by authors, and according to subjects, which may be continued from year to year systematically.

In conclusion, I trust that the progress made during the interim will be such as to commend itself to your successor and the members of the incoming Parliament, and to fully justify the new departure made in establishing a Legislative Library on a more comprehensive basis Our space is at present very limited, but, by utilizing the old library room adjoining, it may be rendered adequate for the time being.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

R. E. GOSNELL,
Librarian.

VICTORIA, B. C.:
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