# REPORT

ON THE

# LIBRARY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE YEAR 1909.

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Victoria, March 1st, 1910.

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

Mr. Speaker:

The undersigned has the honour respectfully to submit herewith the Report on the Library of the Legislative Assembly for the year 1909.

## Lack of Shelf-space.

The Provincial Library of British Columbia, so far as its contents are concerned, has now attained a standing which entitles it to a place among the leading libraries of Canada. It comprises over thirty-five thousand volumes of reference works, which, however, cannot be displayed or arranged to advantage owing to the lack of proper accommodation. This lack of shelf-room militates against the successful administration of the Department, inasmuch as it is impossible to arrange the books according to the adopted system of classification, upon the elaboration of which much time and labour has been expended. Were the books set out in their proper order—that is to say, arranged according to subject—it would at once be seen that the Library possesses valuable sources of information upon many subjects directly of interest to legislators, sociologists, students of economics, and historians. But so much has been said in former reports as to the great inconvenience caused by the lack of a suitable suite of rooms, especially designed for library purposes, that it is scarcely necessary at this time to more than allude to the present condition of affairs. It is certain that the quarters now set aside for the Library are inadequate, nor could they be made either suitable or convenient for so large a collection. When the collection was smaller, it might have been possible by a few alterations to have arranged for its proper housing in the rooms now assigned to the Library, but works are accumulating so rapidly that it is difficult to see how the present quarters can ever be more than a makeshift.

A comprehensive scheme for the accommodation of the Provincial Library should embrace the offices and departments enumerated hereunder:—

1. General Reading-room.
2. Members' rooms.
3. Special Study-room.
4. Reference Department.
5. Stack-room.
6. Department of North-west Americana.
7. Department of bound newspapers and periodicals
8. Department of Governmental publications.
9. Department of maps.
10. Exhibition-room for rare works.
11. Cataloguing Department.
12. Travelling Library Department
13. Business offices.
14. Office of Librarian.

In addition to the above, there should also be ample accommodation for the packing and unpacking of books; for a bindery in case it should ever prove necessary, as has so often happened in other large libraries, to employ binders especially for library work; for pigeon-holes for the current files of newspapers and magazines; for the usual sanitary arrangements; and such other accommodation as the exigencies of the situation may demand. It is difficult to conceive how all this accommodation could be suitably provided except in quarters especially designed for the purpose.

### NEW SHELVING.

Early in the year it was decided to fit up the apartment adjoining the office of the Librarian with steel shelving, in order partially to accommodate the thousands of volumes for which there was no shelf-room. In July an order for the necessary equipment was placed with the local agents of an eastern firm, but, for some reason or other, that company, in spite of the endeavours of its representatives here, paid no attention to the matter, and late in the year the order was revoked and given to another concern. The new equipment did not arrive until February, 1910, and, consequently, the Library was not in the best of order when the House met, owing to the fact that it was necessary to remove all the volumes and papers from the room which was to be shelved. All this material—and it comprised several thousands of volumes—had to be placed in odd corners for the time being; nor has it yet been placed on the shelves. The new stacks are now in position, however, and in a short while the whole Library will be entirely rearranged. It had been hoped that the work would have been finished before the meeting of the Legislature. If this had been done, the new arrangement would have greatly facilitated the work of the Department, and it would have been possible to have given the members a more efficient service during the present session.

Although the new shelving will help materially to allay the congestion, yet it will by no means provide the space required. Of the 35,000 volumes in the Library, only some 18,000 can be suitably placed in accessible rooms. If the old stack-room were fitted up with new steel shelving of the same style and make as that just received, an economy in space would be effected which would simplify the problem now confronting the Department. The old stacks could be used to advantage in the basement.

### STATISTICS.

During the period covered by this report there were added to the Library 4,669 volumes, of which 2,861 were donated, and 1,808 purchased. In addition to this material, several hundreds of pamphlets were acquired, and also many very valuable maps illustrating the progress of geographical discovery in that vast region which is the Province of British Columbia. In the year, some 7,500 new cards were issued from the office of the cataloguer, which is an average of twenty-nine for every working-day. To the date hereof, 23,717 volumes have passed through Miss Russell's hands, and she has prepared 47,434 cards. It is not necessary to speak of the amount of labour involved in the work, as these figures speak for themselves. It should be stated, however, that if Miss Russell had not been frequently called away from her work in order to attend to the travelling libraries, she would have accessioned many more books and prepared many more cards.

It may not be out of place to state at this point that the writer is of the opinion that there is not on the Continent of America a reference library of the size and importance of the Provincial Library of British Columbia administered by a staff as small, or nearly as small, as the staff of this Department.

## Additions.

Valuable material was added to the sections devoted to reference works, political economy, sociology, constitutional practice and law, biography, history, and to the collection of North-west Americana. All the volumes were carefully selected with a view to their permanent value as records of the knowledge acquired in the various subjects of which they treat. It is believed that such works as "The Legislation of the Empire, 1898-1907," published by the Society of Comparative Legislation; Mr. Holdsworth's "History of English Law"; Herslet's "Commercial Treaties"; Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates" (new edition); Besant's "London"; Stephen's "Commentaries on the Laws of England"; Broom's "Constitutional Law"; Dawson and Bowles' "Birds of Washington and British Columbia"; Pool's "Index to Periodical Literature"; "Russell on Crimes"; Redlich's "Procedure of the House of Commons" (three volumes); the "Works of Thomas Carlyle" (Edinburgh Edition, thirty volumes); Hazlitt's Complete Works; "Boswell's Life of Johnson," by George Birkbeck Hill; the "Complete Works of John Ruskin" (Library Edition; George Allen, London, 1903-1908; thirty-five volumes); and many other works as important, or more important, cannot but prove of service.

## Legislative Reference Section.

Bearing in mind that primarily the Library is maintained for the use of the members of the House, in session and during recess, particular attention is paid to the gathering together of works of special interest to parliamentarians and to economists. In the Library may be found all the authoritative works on the law of the constitution and parliamentary practice and procedure, as well as standard works on all subjects directly of interest to legislators. A glance over the shelves will reveal the fact that the section devoted to sociology and kindred subjects is replete with useful volumes. In this age of progress, so many books of paramount interest are being issued from the printing presses that it is quite impossible to acquire all the works published, but an earnest endeavour is made to provide the best literature by the recognised leaders of public opinion in such matters. It is hoped that this section will be largely augmented during the present year.

## North-west Collection.

The collection of Americana relating to the northern Pacific Slope deserves special mention. Each year this really fine collection of historical material is becoming more and more valuable, and it is scarcely too much to say that in the not far distant future it will command the attention of the historians and sociologists of the West and of the countries bordering on the Pacific Ocean, because, undoubtedly, that Ocean from now on will play an important and an ever-increasing part in world-politics.

As time passes, the story of the rise of British power on the North-west Coast of North America must become of more than ordinary interest to all concerned in the commerce of the Pacific, and practically all the great nations of the world are concerned in the future of that sea as a highway to the Orient. It follows, then, that a great interest attaches to the collection of books and documents in the Provincial Library dealing with the early history of Canada on the Pacific. It would not be overstating the fact, perhaps, to state that this special department will always be one of the main features of the Library of the Legislative Assembly. No doubt, in years to come, many students will be attracted hither by the material in question, and its possession will redound to the credit of the Department and of the Province as a whole.

Recently many important and rare items have been added to the collection, of which the following may be mentioned:—

FRANCHERE. Relation d'un voyage à la côte du Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique Septentrionale dans les années 1810, 11, 12, 13, et 14. Montreal. 1820.

RELACION del viage hecho par las goletas Sutil y Mexicana en el âno de 1792. Madrid. 1802. With plates.

VENEGAS. Noticia de la California. 3 vols. Madrid. 1757.

NARRATIVE of the negotiations occasioned by the dispute between England and Spain in the year 1790.

MACKENZIE'S voyages dans l'intérieur de l'Amérique Septentrionale, faits en 1789, 1792, et 1793. 3 vols. Paris. 1802.

KOTZEBUE. Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1823, 24, 25, und 26. Weimar. 1830.

KOTZEBUE. Entdeckungs-Reise in de Sud-See und nach der Berings-Strasze zur erforschung einer nordostlichen Durchfahrt. Weimar. 1821.

MORTIMER. Observations and remarks made during a voyage to the Islands of Teneriffe, etc., and on the North-west Coast of America. Lond. 1791.

LEE AND FROST. Ten years in Oregon. New York. 1844.

MEARES. Collection de cartes géographiques, vues, marines, plans et portraits relatifs aux voyages. Paris. An 3e de la Republique.

BENYOWSKY. Memoirs and travels. 2 vols. Lond. 1790.

MEARES. Voyages de la Chine a la côte Nord-Ouest d'Amérique. 3 vols. Paris. An 3e de la Republique.

GOLDSON. Observations on the passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Portsmouth. 1793.

AUTHENTIC Statement of all the facts relative to Nootka Sound. Lond. 1790.

JEFFERYS' Great probability of a North-west Passage: deduced from observations on the letter of Admiral De Fonte. Lond. 1768.

TOWNSHEND, J. K. Sporting excursions in the Rocky Mountains. 2 vols. Lond. 1840.

LUTKE'S Voyage autour de monde. 3 vols. Paris. 1835.

SOME account of the North-western Coasts of America from Captain Cook, who visited those places in the summer of 1778.

SHELEKHOF. North-west America. 1783.

CAPTAIN Cook's three voyages to the Pacific Ocean. 2 vols. New York. 1814.

COOK'S Voyages to the Pacific Ocean. 4 vols. Lond. 1793.

REPLY to letter of "Old Settler," on selection of a terminus on Pacific Coast for proposed C. P. R. Lond.

PASSAGE to the Western American Ocean through Hudson's Streights. Lond. 1749.

SELKIRK. Sketch of the British Fur Trade in North America. Ed. 2. Lond. 1816.

PURCHAS His Pilgrimes. 5 vols. Lond. 1625.

BRITISH Columbia Proclamations: Sir James Douglas' collection. 1857-1863.

CORRESPONDENCE relative to the Oregon Territory subsequent to the Treaty of Washington. Lond. 1846.

## CATALOGUE.

With reference to the cataloguing of the Library, it is only necessary to say that this very important work is being accomplished with all despatch. The catalogue, as it stands to-day, is complete enough for all practical purposes. The 12,000-odd volumes not yet classified consist chiefly of various governmental reports and files of newspapers and magazines. Of the volumes acquired during the early years of the Library's existence, but some 3,500 remain to be catalogued. As these books are principally histories, biographies, belles lettres, and general reference works, they are not particularly difficult to classify, and accordingly there is every prospect of the catalogue being ready for the printer's hands early in the autumn. It is the

earnest wish of the writer to see the catalogue in print, as it is believed that it will prove a model production and very useful to the members, who, up to the present, have had no means of learning anything of the resources of the Library but by personal observation and through the card catalogue, which, though a very perfect instrument, is decidedly unwieldy.

### Indices.

A complete Index to the Journals of the House, from the first session of the Provincial Legislature to the year 1910, will be finished during the year, and the undersigned would respectfully recommend that the same be printed for the use of the members. The value of such an index will be apparent to those who have had occasion from time to time to go through the Journals in search of some particular resolution or vote. By means of the index, it will be a very simple and easy matter to find any particular information contained in the volumes in question. The writer trusts that when the House meets in 1911 a copy of the index may be in the hands of each member.

An index to the Sessional Papers, 1872 to 1910, will likewise be prepared, and it is believed that it also will prove of great value, because the documents referred to contain valuable data upon a great variety of subjects of interest to legislators in particular and to the public in general. If the Private Acts should not be gathered together by the Commissioners appointed to revise the Statutes, an alphabetical list of, or index to, the same will be prepared, as nothing whatever has been done in the way of cataloguing the private legislation since the year 1888, when all the Private Acts were published in a volume entitled the "Unconsolidated Statutes." So many of the Private Acts and charters have lapsed, and so many of them have been amended, that it would appear that a properly arranged list of them, with explanatory notes, would serve a useful purpose.

### Travelling Libraries.

The work of the Travelling Library Department in each succeeding year becomes heavier and more involved. At the present time there are ninety libraries in circulation, many of them stationed in far-distant districts where the books are indeed a boon to the residents, especially during the winter months. Fifteen new libraries were issued in the year 1909, and several of the old ones were repaired. It is reckoned that a new case of books costs in the neighbourhood of $90, and the average cost of repairing libraries after they have been in circulation for two years is $45.

As usual, the demand for books far exceeded the supply, and consequently the Department will start the new financial year with an unprecedented number of names on the waiting list. There are no less than thirty-six places waiting for books at the present time, and were the appropriation three times as large as it is, it would scarcely be possible to supply all of them with libraries. Of the ninety libraries in circulation, thirty have been returned for repairs. The latter will be reissued as soon as possible.

In the light of letters received, it may be judged that the Travelling Library Department is, as far as it goes, doing a good work, but it would be futile to assert that its usefulness is not impaired by the fact that the supply of books is always far short of the demand. It should also be borne in mind that, as there is no special staff to attend to the preparation and distribution of the travelling libraries, the whole of the work devolves upon the staff of the Provincial Library, with the result that both Departments suffer to a certain extent. When the library work is being attended to, the travelling libraries are neglected; and when the travelling libraries are receiving attention, library work must be left undone.

In conclusion, it may not be out of place to observe that the present year promises to be an exceptionally busy one for the Department, as it has been planned to entirely rearrange the whole Library and to compare each book with its author and subject cards, in order to prove the catalogue and to ascertain if any of the books are missing.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

E. O. S. SCHOLEFIELD,
*Librarian.*

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