

DOCUMENT No. 34.

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE
ON
STATE LIBRARY,

PRESENTED TO THE LEGISLATURE—SESSION 1881,

With recommendations concerning the same.

REPORT.

To the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

The Joint Committee on State Library, in accordance with the requirements of section nine of the act to regulate the State Library, approved March 29, 1878, have investigated the condition of the library, and consulted Captain J. S. McDanolds, the Librarian, to whose practical and thorough knowledge we are indebted for much of the information contained in this report. We find it almost wholly a law library, and used chiefly by the judges and lawyers of the State. In our opinion, it should be something more than this—it should have the standard works of use to other professions and pursuits. In this respect it falls short of what a State Library should be. For example, there are scarcely any standard works on the following important subjects: agriculture, architecture, astronomy, botany chemistry, civil engineering, geology, horticulture, mathematics, mechanics, medicine, theology, mineralogy, natural history, political economy, etc.

There is an incomplete collection of local histories of the towns, cities and counties of our State, and not enough copies of all the general histories of New Jersey. It should possess at least two copies of all histories, whether general or local, of our own State and of the neighboring States of New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland.

There is also a small collection of novels and light literature, such as can be found in any circulating library, and which could be disposed of, to the great relief of the Librarian, and the space filled with useful works.

The Commissioners of the State Library have power, under section 2 of the act, to dispose of those and other useless books, and we recommend such a disposition of them. Your committee also find that the bound files of newspapers, some of which are of the greatest historical value, should be arranged so as to preserve them from damage and give convenient access to them.

We recommend that a newspaper stand be built, under the direction of the Librarian, for their special care. This could be done at little expense by the carpenter employed around the State-House, with material now belonging to the State, at the Arsenal.

There are also many valuable manuscripts, autograph letters from General Washington, Robert Hunter Morris, Governor William Franklin and others, which require a fire-proof safe for their custody. Some of these letters have been mutilated by having the signatures cut off and others are torn and damaged. These papers cannot be replaced if lost, and we recommend an appropriation of five hundred dollars for a fire-proof safe, to be placed in the library, in which those and other valuable papers and records may be kept, under the special care of the Librarian.

We also recommend that a catalogue of the books now in the library be prepared and published; that the Librarian should estimate the cost of such a catalogue and present the same to the next Legislature for their action. The committee report that the only fund now available for the purpose of repairing and buying books is the small amount of seven hundred and fifty dollars. The appropriation of two thousand dollars by the act of 1872, has expired of its own limitation, and the rent derived from the United States for use of a room at the State-House to hold the United States Court, and amounting to about eight hundred dollars, is 'no

longer available for the use of the State Library. The committee recommend, therefore, that the sum of three thousand dollars be appropriated for the purpose of the State Library, and that at least one-half of that appropriation be used to furnish books of practical use and information to other pursuits and professions than the law.

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