

STATE LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF NEW JERSEY,

FOR THE YEAR 1858.

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

GENTLEMEN:—By reference to my annual report of February tenth, eighteen hundred and fifty-eight, you have the statement that by a large increase of books, extended forms and shelves had to be erected, in some degree to classify and arrange them. Since then, several courses of shelves, occupying the entire length of the room, were equally necessary, which are rapidly filling up by the increase of the last year, leaving no other ground to be occupied, whereby ready access is allowable; to which, in consideration, the aid of the Committees on the State Library is very respectfully solicited.

The aggregate in cash paid for books in 1858, is the sum of five hundred and seventy-six dollars and seventeen cents—money laid out to great advantage, and of much importance—and number one hundred and seventy-seven volumes.

The aggregate number of books, as donated to the State—comprising legislative acts of the several States, statutes and codes of States, with documents and journals, historical collections, colonial records, reports of coast surveys, &c.,—altogether form an important increase to this department, to the number of four hundred and eleven copies.

The present Catalogue of the Library bears date 1853. From an unavoidable necessity, many changes of books have been made on the shelves; and after using every care to make the proper connection in the principal catalogue, yet a difficulty is created; and I do respectfully suggest, that a privilege be granted for a thorough revision, as also the necessary improvement to their present classification.

I would very respectfully direct the attention of your honorable bodies to the number of duplicates that now occupy a portion of the shelves, and believe that, with the proper authority so to do, many valuable exchanges could be effected through an interchange with the various libraries, both public and private, such as would promote the standard of the New Jersey State Library. This, as a system, is practically carried out in some other States, and good results are known to follow.

No provision having been made by any previous Legislature to furnish the library with the ordinary copies of the reports of the late geological survey, which are frequently called for, I also suggest that this omission be corrected, accompanied by a map of the survey of Cape May county.

The gratuitous distribution of "Gifford's Index and Statutory Construction," during the past several sessions, to the Representatives of the State, (after supplying the present Senators and members who are entitled,) will leave thirteen copies as a surplus. I have considered it proper to make this statement, setting forth the balance on hand from the original number of three hundred copies, which had been entrusted to my care for their appropriate distribution in the several years past.

As alluded to in my previous reports, I cannot now omit to

notice the anxiety of many citizens, very often manifest in the question frequently put, "What have you for the safety of this library, in the accidental breaking out of fire?" And the recent devastation of Mary and William College, in Virginia, again very forcibly and in deplorable accents renews the interrogatory.

The question is again propounded, with all proper respect: What shall be done with the accumulating mass of valueless material that is thrown together in an ante-room of this building? occupying an amount of space which could be and necessarily will be more needful as a depository, oftentimes wanting and incidental to the property of the State.

To the foregoing statement, a few reflections are presented for the deliberation of the Legislature.

Fifty-five years have now elapsed since the New Jersey State Library had its origin. But a slow growth attended its advancing years, and, much like a tree planted on the margin of the Delaware, her *silvery* stream flowed gently and evenly by, imparting none of its life and moisture, and consequently the tree depended upon the rains and dews and occasional sprays for its growth, deriving little advantage from its situation on the bank of a mystic river.

In the year 1846 it received some nourishment, and its roots extended, and the trunk shot forth a few boughs, whose shades, by annual care and nurture, now afford a limited retreat for intellectual enjoyment to the statesman, legislator, scholar, farmer, and artisan; and there, too, may be found something for the zoologist, mineralogist, geologist, naturalist, and antiquarian, in connection with the manifold subjects peculiar to themselves. And they can all, in a limited degree, thus enjoy the annual appropriation and the beneficence of our national government—altogether constituting a nucleus for the future.

By a contract with the general government for the use of the court room, an important accession may soon be expected to the support and increase of this department, sufficient materially to multiply the volumes already on its shelves, thus

aiding an institution so well calculated to foster and cultivate the progressive tendencies of schools and education.

As your honorable bodies have extended generous help to other institutions, in accordance with the spirit of the age, your attention is respectfully yet earnestly directed to the wants of this department, very especially to the necessary enlargement which is manifest by the growing inconveniences that now exist.

Your servant,

C. J. IHRIE,
State Librarian.

March 14, 1859.