

SESS. II.—1887.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

(SPECIAL REPORT.)

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Major Atkinson, with Leave of the House.

REPORT ON PROPOSALS FOR NEW LIBRARY BUILDINGS.

The LIBRARIAN, General Assembly Library, to the Hon. the CHAIRMAN, Recess Library Committee.

SIR,—

General Assembly Library, 19th September, 1887.

I have the honour, in compliance with your instructions, to submit a report narrating the steps that have been taken during the last nine years towards providing increased accommodation for the Parliamentary Library.

A memorandum by Sir John Richardson, then Chairman of the Joint Library Committee, presented to the Council, 20th August, 1878, and printed in the Appendix to the Journals, gives “a succinct history” of the proceedings of the three previous years with the same object. The writer describes a motion of Sir F. D. Bell (now Agent-General), requesting Sir George Grey to move in the House in the session of 1875 for the issue of a Royal Commission,—Sir G. Grey’s moving accordingly,—the issue of a Royal Commission,—the preparation of plans,—the voting of £5,000, and the lapse of the vote,—the revival of the subject in the following year, and the failure of the House to vote a sum of £7,000,—the appointment in 1877 of a second Commission (which never met), and the placing of £2,500 on the estimates (which was not voted).

Undiscouraged by a succession of reverses, the Joint Library Committee resumed consideration of the subject in the following year. Conscious that the negotiations had come to grief through a collision of opinion on the question of a site, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse moved, on the 19th October, 1878, that the site of the new Library be left to the Government. This was met by the Hon. Dr. Menzies with an amendment in favour of erecting it on the site of the tennis-ground, but the motion was carried. It seems not to have been considered inconsistent with this that a motion, proposed by the Hon. Mr. Stout, required that the Library be erected as part of such a general plan for the reconstruction of Parliament Buildings as was produced before the Committee in March, 1877.

At a meeting of the Recess Committee on the 26th November, 1878, it was resolved, “That the Chairman write to the Colonial Secretary requesting that immediate steps be taken with a view to providing increased accommodation, as suggested in the resolution of the Joint Library Committee of the 19th October last.” The Chairman was the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.

The same unwearied advocate of Library extension carried a resolution on the 29th July in the following year to the effect, “That the Hon. the Speakers, Mr. Bowen, and the mover be appointed a Sub-Committee to bring under the notice of the Government the absolute necessity existing for additional Library accommodation.”

A Dissolution took place, and after the General Elections Members returned to the now old theme with renewed vigour. On the 6th November, 1879, Mr. Waterhouse moved, and it was resolved, “That the Hon. the Speakers of the two Houses be requested to wait upon the Government with a view to urging upon the Government the desirability of placing a sum upon the estimates to enable the building of a new Library to be proceeded with.” No sum seems to have been placed on the estimates; at all events, none was voted. In this connection a resolution moved by Sir F. Dillon Bell, and carried, is significant: “That if the House of Representatives should vote a sum of money for the new Library, such sum should at once be placed in the bank to a separate account in the name of the two Speakers.” The site was under discussion at the same meeting, with the result that (on the motion of Mr. J. C. Brown) it was resolved, “That the site of the new Library be where the old Legislative Council Chamber now stands.” A discussion in Committee on the 11th December did not issue in a motion.

A long lull followed so much fruitless activity, and for about three years nothing more was attempted. Certain rooms, however, were in the interval added to the Library, so that the demand for increased accommodation was met to an extent that for some time proved adequate.

In the session of 1882 a sum of £20,000 was placed on the estimates for a partial reconstruction of Parliament Buildings, which was intended to include both a new Bellamy’s and a new Library. The House refused to sanction the expenditure of more than £10,000, and even this was swallowed up by the cost of rebuilding Bellamy’s. The Library was, as usual, left out in the cold.

At Committee meetings in 1884, and again in 1885, the late Mr. W. J. Hurst "drew attention to the desirableness of building dividing walls at each end of the Library, for the purpose of providing better protection against fire, and thereby obtaining a reduction in the insurance premiums." The suggestion was not given effect to, the Public Works Department having reported that the building of such walls would be no effectual protection against fire.

Seven years' adverse experience having proved the hopelessness of procuring a structure adequate to contain the whole Library collection, the Committee took into consideration the advisableness of erecting a small fire-proof building for the safe-keeping of the costly and rare works which are an ornament of the Library. By far the most valuable of these is the splendid collection of etchings and engravings which the colony owes to the generosity of Bishop Monrad. Ditlöv Gothard Monrad was a Danish ecclesiastic, who was President of the Council of State when the Schleswig-Holstein war broke out with the German Powers. Having so closely identified himself with the national cause as to pronounce for the continuation of the struggle, he seems to have taken to heart the inevitable defeat. In depression and despair he exiled himself from the fatherland whose integrity he had failed to preserve, and resolved, at the age of fifty-three, to settle with his family in a country remote, as he conceived, from old-world strifes. After residing in Nelson and Wanganui, he purchased land in the Manawatu district, whence in a few years he was driven by Native disturbances. He returned to Denmark in 1869, resumed his ecclesiastical functions, and died a few months ago.* His collection of prints was presented to the colony, and, after being deposited in the Colonial Museum, ultimately found its right place in what ought to be the nucleus of a national institution. It must have been the accumulation of a lifetime, and is unique in interest. Nearly 600 engravings and etchings have come down from the Little Masters of the sixteenth and the Old Masters of the seventeenth centuries; while sixty-six photographic reproductions represent the prince of engravers, Marcantonio Raimondi. The money-value of the collection cannot be readily ascertained, but the lowest estimate is £800, and a still higher sum might be reasonably assigned. In 1872 an enterprising artist photographed the historical and pre-historic collections of the British Museum—the Elgin Marbles and those of the Mausoleum, the results of Layard's and George Smith's excavations, the sculptures from Easter Island, British antiquities, Roman and medieval art, and a long series of the seals of the European monarchies. Altogether, there are over 900 photographs in twelve volumes, which cost £125. The five volumes of photographs of the Old Masters in the National Gallery, the twelve volumes of the *Galerie de peintres*, Hogarth's works and Gillray's caricatures, Angas's *New Zealanders*, his *South Australians* and *Kaffirs*, Flaxman's drawings and the illustrations of the once-popular Doré, and many others which it would be tedious to enumerate, fill up a compartment which would not be over-valued at £1,500. The Library also possesses many old editions of the English and ancient classics, which have a peculiar value in a colony with less than half a century of history behind it. A *Sallust* of 1494; a *Mapheus Veggius Vergil* of 1517, said to rank after the Aldine *Vergil*; a *Chaucer*, a *Bracton*, and a *Holinshed*—all in black-letter; a second edition of *Shakespeare* (1632), and a complete *Ben Jonson* of 1642; with some seventy volumes of Latin and Greek authors printed between 1524 and 1708, make up a collection which, it was felt, ought not to be exposed to the same risks as the furniture of a day-labourer's cottage.† Accordingly, at a meeting of the Committee on the 22nd June, 1885, the Chairman, the Speaker of the House, Hon. Mr. Miller, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, and Dr. Newman were "appointed a Committee to inquire into the cost of erecting a building sufficient to contain all the more valuable books of the Library, and to report generally thereon." Mr. Beatson, of the Public Works Department, attended a meeting of this Sub-Committee on the 16th July, and, "after giving evidence, was requested by the Committee to furnish certain plans and estimates of expenditure then fully explained to him." Mr. Beatson's plans, which were ready by the 11th September, provided for a one-storey building (in its completed form) 67ft. long by 42ft. broad, consisting of a hall running the entire length, and flanked on each side by six recesses or alcoves. The site was the eastern end of the tennis-ground, and the building was to be connected with the northern entrance to the Legislative Council Chamber by a corridor 100ft. in length. The estimated cost, with shelving, heating, and ventilating, was £5,175. If only a part of it, 20ft. long, sufficient to contain the more valuable books, was put up, the cost would be £3,550. On the 15th December of the same year the Librarian was instructed to examine the plans and report on them. The report was submitted at an early subsequent meeting of the Recess Committee, and was read on the 6th May of the following year. By desire of the Hon. Dr. Menzies it is here reprinted *in extenso* :—

* The Danish Consul in Wellington, Mr. Toxward, has kindly furnished information relating to Bishop Monrad, who is also the subject of an article in the *Dictionnaire des contemporains*. Vapereau ascribes to him a work on Old New Zealand, which is probably a translation of Maning's book with that title into Danish, whence it was rendered into German.

† The intellectual distinction of much of the early colonisation is noticeable in these and other rarities with which the Library has been enriched by generous men of scholarly acquirements—pre-eminently Mr. Carleton, Mr. Mantell, and a New Zealander by birth, the late Mr. Sheehan, who must have made their donations in the hope that they were laying the foundations of a National Library. As the Assembly's wealth in this kind is probably unknown to many Members, others may be mentioned: Plowden's *Commentaries*, 1571 (black-letter); Stowe, *Survey of London*, 1633; *Acts of the Long Parliament*, 1642–56; *Eikon Basilike*, 1649; Hobbes's *Leviathan*, 1651; a *Corpus Juris* of 1663, a *Justinian* of the same year, a *Codex Theodosianus* of 1665, and Van Espen's *Commentarius*; two Lexicons—Scapula's (1652) and Martinus's (1655); Raleigh's *Historie of the World*, 1671; Algernon Sidney's *Discourses on Government*, 1698; *Seldeni Opera*, 6 vols.; Picart's *Ceremonies*, 6 vols.; Lyndwood's *Provinciale* (in black-letter); Camden's *Britannia*; Moreri's great historical dictionary, 10 vols.; "the celebrated Mr. Bayle's" *Dictionary*, in 10 vols.; the *Biographia Britannica* (1747–66), in 7 vols.; Montfaucon's *L'Antiquité expliquée*, 15 vols.; Daniel's *Histoire de la milice française* (1721), and Puysegur's *Art de la guerre* (1749); Mandelslo's *Voyages and travels* (1642); Harris's and Pinkerton's Collections; the Hakluyt Society's publications, 56 vols.; Cook's and other *Voyages*; Muratori's *Annali*; a fine edition of *Bossuet*; an *Ariosto*, printed at Birmingham in 1773; the volumes of the United States Exploring Expedition; Forster's *Observations*; Hunter's *Journal*, and Parkinson's; and a number of others, not absolutely irreplaceable, but procurable with difficulty, at great cost, and after long delay.

REPORT ON PROJECTED LIBRARY BUILDINGS.

The following report bears upon three points—the requirements of the Library, the defects of the proposed building, and the alterations suggested.

I. *Requirements.*—(1.) The Library consists of over 26,000 volumes; it augments at the rate of 1,400 volumes a year; in fifteen years more, at the same rate of increase, it will have augmented by 21,000 volumes; so that by the end of the century it will contain close upon 50,000 volumes. But as it is probable that the rate of increase will quicken with the growing population and wealth of the colony, accommodation ought to be provided for at least 60,000 volumes.

(2.) The Library will not stop growing, unless the colony stops growing, in the year 1900. A site ought therefore to be chosen that will leave room for extension. The tennis-ground meets that condition. As the projected building is to be lit from the roof, a wing could be adjoined, or the building could be extended in the direction of its length, so as to contain 50,000 additional volumes. There would thus be prospective accommodation for 110,000 volumes—a number that will almost certainly be attained in forty years.

(3.) There ought to be suitable offices for the performance of the routine work of the Library, for the convenience of visitors and students, for the storing of stationery, periodicals, and pamphlets, and for the display of maps.

II. How do the plans before the Committee meet these requirements?

(1.) The building there outlined consists of a single hall measuring 67ft. by 42ft., yielding 2,814 sq. ft. The existing Library buildings consist of five rooms—the central room, with 1,008 sq. ft.; the smoking-room, with 1,114 sq. ft.; the entrance-room, with 968 sq. ft.; the reference-room, with 540ft.; and the small reference- or Committee-room, with 368ft.: amounting altogether to 4,028ft. Thus the new library building will contain 1,214ft. less than the old, which is insufficient for present needs, and will be embarrassed to furnish space for the books ordered within the last three months.

(2.) The plan is further defective in providing no accommodation for the carrying-on of the Library-work. There is no room for students or visitors, and the unpacking of cases, the storing of unbound publications, and the routine business generally, would have to be done elsewhere. The inconvenience of such an arrangement need not be enlarged upon. All the work connected with a library ought to be done within the walls of the library. Even the binding might well be, and in most large libraries now is, done inside the buildings, and if the plans could be altered to include a bindery, the vexatious delays in the receipt of new books, and the sending-out of defective or wrongly-lettered volumes, would be precluded. This, however, is not at present proposed.

III. *Suggested alterations.*—(1.) More space is then needed, and more suitable accommodation. The space can be provided in two ways. If the corridor were widened by 5ft. and shelved, it would house between 2,000 and 3,000 volumes of newspapers on one side and (say) twice as many volumes of official publications on the other. On a rough estimate 7,000 volumes could be placed in the corridor if widened and shelved.

This leaves over 50,000 volumes to be accommodated, if it be assumed that space (not necessarily shelving) is to be provided for 60,000 volumes. The projected hall is estimated to contain 6,000ft. of shelving. If a foot of shelving will hold nine volumes on an average—eight demy and ten crown octavos—the hall would afford room for 54,000 volumes, the number required. Two deductions have, however, to be made. (a.) If an entrance-room is cut off from the hall, and set apart for the purposes to which the present entrance-room is devoted, the amount of space available for shelving will be reduced by 1,000 sq. ft., and the number of books that can be shelved by perhaps 10,000. (b.) In the course of time—of no distant time—the corridor will get stocked, and as the tall and bulky volumes of newspapers and official publications will then have to be accommodated in the main building, the possible amount of shelving will be proportionately reduced. It might therefore not be safe to assume that the projected hall will house more than 40,000 volumes, if as many; which would still leave us with space to be sought.

Additional space might be gained by broadening, by lengthening, or by heightening the hall, or by raising the corridor. If the breadth of the hall were enlarged by 10ft., thus making it 52ft., as was proposed in 1876, instead of only 42ft. as was proposed last session, space would be provided for 1,000ft. more of shelving, with accommodation for from 6,000 to 9,000 volumes, according to size.

(2.) The plan now before the Committee has the further defect that the hall stands undivided, not partitioned off into rooms. One such division will, at all events, be requisite. A room where students and visitors may read with comfort, and yet be shut off from the rest of the Library, is indispensable. A high partition is not, however, necessary: a low iron screen would answer the purpose.

It is also a question whether the portion of the Library containing the works which belong to the Reference Department ought not to be similarly divided off from the main building. Perhaps stamped words on the outside or a printed slip on the inside of volumes belonging to this department, to the effect that they are not to be taken out of the Library, would suffice.

(3.) The accommodation for the staff now only remains to be described: (a.) It will perhaps be admitted that a room for the sole use of the Librarian is not a luxury. Such a room would be placed most conveniently at the end of the corridor, and at the entrance to the main building. (b.) Above it, on a second storey, might be built a room for the display of maps, some fifty of which now lie almost inaccessible in the store-room. (c.) On the left hand just opposite would be a room for unpacking, stamping, and registering new books, and perhaps for filing newspapers. (d.) Overhead of it should be a store-room for stationery, unfiled newspapers, pamphlets, &c. And (e) joining it with the map-room might be a Committee-room, where also could be placed the valuable and rare books that now find a home in the smaller reference-room.

General Assembly Library, 23rd January, 1886.

J. COLLIER.

This report was considered on the 25th June, 1886, by the General Business Sub-Committee, and on the motion of Mr. Montgomery "it was agreed to recommend that the sum of £5,000 be placed on the estimates to provide Library Buildings, say 90ft. by 52ft., containing a librarian's room, and a registering or unpacking room, with corridor 15ft. wide; to be heated with hot air and patent stoves, with the electric light, shelving and all complete; and the building to be lit from the roof." The Sub-Committee's recommendation was read at a meeting of the Joint Library Committee on the 5th July, when a series of resolutions was passed. It had been, perhaps incautiously, urged as an argument for the erection of a substantial building as a Parliamentary Library that such a library might justly be considered a *national* library. This was strongly objected to on the grounds that it was a perversion or an extension of the objects with which the Library was founded, that it would tend to withdraw the control of the Library from the Assembly, and (perhaps most of all) that it was located in Wellington, when Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin had, to say the least, equal claims to be the seat of such an institution. It was accordingly resolved "that the Library proposed to be erected shall be considered a part of Parliament Buildings." By a majority of ten to one the tennis-ground was selected for the site. The Government was recommended to put £5,000 on the estimates. The Chairman and Mr. Lake were to consult with Mr. Beatson on his plans (which he explained to the Committee) and report.

The referring of the plans to a Sub-Committee for further examination arose out of a feeling of dissatisfaction with the insufficient securities against fire provided by the new building. According to Mr. Lake, then member for Waipa, it united all the requisites of failure. Aid in the designing of new plans was derived from a pamphlet on the construction of library buildings by a librarian

of great practical capacity, Dr. W. F. Poole, of the Chicago Public Library. Dr. Poole severely criticizes what he calls the "conventional American library building," but which might as properly be called the conventional European or (by imitation) colonial library building. With its long hall, high roof, large open space flanked with alcoves and surrounded by galleries, it is but the medieval cloister hardly altered. Such a building is objectionable on many grounds. It involves a great waste of space; it is difficult to heat; the over-heated galleries are destructive of the books; fire, once getting hold, could not be isolated; the building could with difficulty be enlarged; and it is needlessly expensive. Dr. Poole proposes a plan that shall be free from these defects, which are those also of the plans submitted to the Committee. The distinctive features of his scheme are that the building shall be constructed in fire-proof compartments, that separate rooms be assigned to special subjects, that the books be shelved near the floor, and galleries and alcoves abolished. The results attained are that risk from fire is reduced to a minimum, that the maximum use is made of the space available, that the building is easily heated, that there are convenient quarters for the officers and quiet accommodations for readers, and that the cost of construction is kept within reasonable limits. Dr. Poole's pamphlet, which is issued by the United States Government,* was circulated among the Committee and made a deep impression. At a Committee meeting held on the 29th July it was resolved, on the motion of Sir R. Stout, "That the suggestions made by Mr. Poole regarding the construction of Library buildings should as far as possible be adopted." At the same meeting it was resolved, "That a Sub-Committee be appointed to confer with the Hon. the Minister for Public Works regarding the new Library buildings; such Committee to consist of the Hon. Mr. Johnson, Hon. Dr. Grace, Dr. Newman, and the mover"—Sir R. Stout. In the last days—almost in the last hours—of the session a sum of £2,000 was provisionally voted by the House as part of a total of £5,000.

The session came to an end, and the Recess Committee was convened. At a meeting on the 26th August it was resolved, on the motion of the Hon. Mr. Mantell, "That the Buildings Sub-Committee be requested to consider the subject of a new building, in accordance with the resolution passed on the 29th July, as soon as possible, and report thereon to the Committee." The Sub-Committee met the following day, and after careful consideration "resolved to recommend to the Library Committee the adoption of the plan prepared during the past session by Mr. Beatson, embodying the suggestions of Mr. Lake, M.H.R., subject, however, to some alterations as to measurements and internal arrangements which were decided upon by the Sub-Committee." The Sub-Committee waited upon the Minister for Public Works, who instructed the Draughtsman "to prepare drawings of plans in accordance with the views expressed by the Sub-Committee." The Superintendent of Telegraphs was written to respecting the lighting of the building by electricity. The Sub-Committee met again on the 10th September, and recommended for adoption the plans so thoroughly canvassed. These plans, with the corresponding specifications, were submitted to the Recess Committee on the 19th November. After a conversation on the presence in the plans of certain features which detracted from the fire-proof character of the proposed building, Dr. Newman moved, "That the specifications be sent back to the architect (1) to have the floors altered from wood to cement; and (2) to call for alternative tenders for having the building heated (a) with hot-air on Ashbury's patent, or (b) with fireplaces as specified." Mr. Wakefield moved that the Government be recommended to build the Library of pressed bricks, but this was afterwards found to be inadvisable. Finally, the Chairman was authorised to forward the resolutions to the Minister for Public Works, "with the request that tenders be at once called for for the erection of the building." Tenders were in the course of time called for, and the lowest, which was understood to be lower than the amount of the appropriation, was retained. But nothing else was done, and the vote was allowed to lapse.

Another Parliamentary session arrived, and the subject came again under discussion. At a meeting of the Joint Library Committee on the 19th May, 1887, the Hon. Mr. Rolleston moved, "That this Committee, having understood from the Hon. the Premier that the sum of £5,000 will be re-placed on the estimates for the erection of a section of a building for the Library of the General Assembly, thinks it inadvisable to incur expenditure on the erection of a safe pending the final decision of the larger question." The motion, which was carried, reveals a division of opinion on the probability of obtaining a new Library: the minority, believing that the agitation for a complete building would be ineffectual, wished to take measures for the security of the more valuable possessions; while the majority, still hopeful, refused to compromise their prospects by accepting an instalment that might block the way of the larger structure.

The subject meanwhile entered on a new and unexpected phase. The Joint House Committee, in the exercise of a disputed prerogative, brought up a report recommending "that the new building for a Library, if erected during the recess, should be situated as nearly as possible on the site of the present Library." This report was the occasion of an animated debate in the Legislative Council on the 17th May, when the utility of the Library itself was challenged, but also warmly defended. The upshot was that a conference was arranged between the two Joint Committees, and that a Sub-Committee of the two, which was appointed specially to consider the question, was "of opinion that the most suitable position is the site of the old Legislative Council." A few days later the short session came suddenly to an end, and with it all discussions and negotiations on the *quæstio vexata* of so many years.

The Hon. the Chairman, Recess Library Committee.

I have, &c.,

J. COLLIER.

* Circulars of Information of the Bureau of Education. No. 1, 1881.

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