

REPORT  
OF THE  
LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS,  
SHOWING THE  
CONDITION OF THE LIBRARY  
DURING  
THE YEAR 1869.

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WASHINGTON:  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.  
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R E P O R T  
OF THE  
LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS,  
SHOWING THE  
*Progress of the Library during the year ending December 1, 1869.*

DECEMBER 15, 1869.—Ordered to be printed.

DECEMBER 17, 1869.—Ordered that 500 additional copies be printed with covers for the use of the library.

SIR: In accordance with the standing instructions of the Joint Committee on the Library, the undersigned has the honor to present the following report, exhibiting the progress of the library during the year ending December 1, 1869.

An enumeration of the books in all departments of the library at the above date shows an aggregate of 185,227 volumes, exclusive of pamphlets and periodicals unbound. Of this aggregate, 26,936 volumes belong to the law department of the library. The total number of volumes enumerated at the corresponding date last year was 173,965, showing an increase of 11,262 volumes during the year. This exhibits an accession of 2,764 more volumes in 1869 than in 1868.

The books added during the year have been derived from the sources indicated below:

	Volumes.
From purchases.....	6,180
From copyright.....	1,831
From deposit by the Smithsonian Institution.....	1,879
From presentation.....	724
From exchanges.....	648
Total.....	11,262

This aggregate is exclusive of about three thousand pamphlets.

The number of books and other publications received under the copyright laws of the United States during the past year is as follows:

Volumes of books.....	1,831
Pamphlets and periodicals.....	1,943
Pieces of music.....	2,420
Engravings and photographs.....	423
Maps.....	63
Total number of articles.....	6,680

This statement exhibits an increase of 1,589 articles derived from this source over the year preceding, although the increase in volumes of copyright books is but 150.

The catalogue system of the library is of cardinal importance, and may be said to rank next to its value and completeness as a repository of the best books in each department of science and literature. It has been the aim of the undersigned to furnish for the use of Congress and of the public resorting to the library, a printed catalogue of its stores, kept complete by annual supplements, and exhibiting with all requisite fullness the titles not only of books, but of pamphlets and periodicals. This purpose has been steadily fulfilled, save that the recent heavy accessions of pamphlets acquired with the Force collection and the Smithsonian library have been deferred as to the printing of titles, until the next publication of a general catalogue. The pamphlets have been catalogued on cards, and their titles are available in alphabetical order; but from economical considerations they have not been incorporated in the annual catalogues of additions. The time appears to have arrived for entering upon the work of issuing a new general catalogue of the Library, incorporating all these unprinted materials with the five annual catalogues which have been issued since 1864, and embracing the general catalogue of that year with them in a single alphabet. In this publication it is designed to carry out the feature introduced so usefully in the recently published annual catalogues of this library, embodying in the title a collation of each work, indicating fully the edition and the number of pages.

The undersigned is gratified in being able to announce the completion of the printed catalogue of subjects, so long in progress. The work, although necessarily very imperfect in some particulars, is one of great magnitude, involving much careful labor and many difficulties. This catalogue fills two large volumes, printed in double column type, and embracing more than seventeen hundred pages. It is not presumed that its plan, in respect to arrangement of subjects or distribution of material, will suit those critical judges who have favorite theories of classification. The alphabetical arrangement of topics has been adopted and adhered to, both in the general alphabet and under each subordinate head, so far as it seemed possible to combine the utmost facility of reference with a general unity of plan. On the score of scientific or logical arrangement this method may be open to grave objections; on the score of utility and convenience, its superiority scarcely admits of a doubt. From the nature of the case, all classifications of knowledge, save an alphabetical one, must be purely arbitrary. Every man can produce a system which admirably suits himself, but unhappily it is found that his system is clear to nobody else. To save the time and the patience of readers, there is no method that will avail but one which is its own interpreter; and the alphabetical arrangement of topics, with a copious system of cross-references, solves every difficulty as quickly

as it arises, instead of keeping the reader on a baffled search for knowledge. In the judgment of the undersigned, founded upon experience, that is the best catalogue which furnishes the readiest hand-book of reference to all readers, whether learned or unlearned.

The subject of the proper distribution of this catalogue is commended to the attention of the committee. It has heretofore been the usage to distribute only the annual catalogues of additions, one copy to each senator and representative; the general catalogue, being a work of considerable cost, and useful chiefly in connection with the library, being reserved for loan to members, returnable for the use of their successors. The distribution of one hundred and fifty copies to the principal libraries, American and foreign, was, however, authorized, and as a valuable return in kind is customarily received, a similar provision with regard to the new catalogue of subjects is recommended. Numerous applications from the smaller libraries and from individuals are made for this and the other catalogues of the library of Congress. While it is presumed that the printing of catalogues for gratuitous distribution would not be considered a proper expenditure of the public money, it is recommended that these calls may be answered by the Congressional Printer supplying at cost any of the catalogues of this library to those desiring them, in pursuance of the general law, thus reimbursing the printing fund to the extent of such sales.

A selection from the pages of the catalogue of subjects, comprising the titles of works on political economy and the science of government, has been printed in extra copies to the number of five hundred, for the immediate use of senators and representatives. The additional cost has been but trifling, while the advantage of having this information at once available to all is apparent.

The annual catalogue of additions to the library is now in the press, and will be issued at the earliest practicable moment. It will contain all the accessions of the year up to the assembling of Congress.

In concluding this report, the undersigned desires to call the attention of the committee to the expediency of making provision for opening the library to the public during the evening hours, as well as in the daytime. A great library, much the largest in the United States, has been built up at the seat of government, primarily for the use of the national legislature, but secondarily and by usage as a library of reading and reference for all who desire to resort to it. The withdrawal of books for use outside its walls is properly restricted by statute to members of Congress and the higher officers of the government; nor would any wide extension of the privilege of taking books from the library be compatible with its highest utility as a library of reference, its safety, or its careful preservation. Nevertheless it remains true that the public intelligence and welfare are promoted by every extension of the means of acquiring knowledge. The very numerous class of persons in the employ

of the government at this capital are at present without the ability to avail themselves of any privilege which this library presents, because the season of its being open coincides so nearly with the hours of business in the several departments. Not many years since the advantages of the library were even more restricted to the public than they now are, as it was closed on alternate days of the week during the recess of Congress, and open only from 9 to 3 o'clock. This was changed by the voluntary agency of the undersigned for the present usage of keeping the library open every week-day from 9 a. m. to 4 p. m., as well in the absence of Congress as during the season of its sessions. No provision has ever been made for lighting the library at night, and even when Congress holds evening sessions it must be closed at dusk, from mere inability to find books after the going down of the sun. The occasional inconvenience thus caused to senators and representatives, who may need authorities or references, would go far to justify the expense of introducing gas, which, in a library constructed wholly of iron, would be attended with no risk from fire.

In the opinion of the undersigned, Congress would confer an inestimable service upon the employés of the government, the permanent residents of Washington, and the numerous visitors who, at certain seasons, throng the capital, by throwing open this edifice with its library during the evening, under proper restrictions as to the age of admission to the privileges of readers. The government would perhaps find itself better and more intelligently served were this means of improvement and education made free to the clerks in its departments. In another view, the question becomes one of national significance, since this library is built up and sustained by the contributions of the American people, and is the only library entitled by law to exact the deposit of all copyright publications. As the permanent custodian, moreover, in trust, of the valuable scientific library of the Smithsonian Institution, whose primary object is the diffusion of knowledge among men, still greater weight is added to the considerations already urged in favor of rendering this great collection of books as widely useful as is compatible with their safety and preservation.

Difficulties will readily suggest themselves in the way of carrying into practical effect an object in itself so desirable. These are chiefly of an economical character, and, without entering into details, which may properly be considered hereafter, should the committee honor the suggestion with its attention, it may suffice to say that all difficulties and objections appear of trifling moment when brought into comparison with the resulting benefit.

One final suggestion is pertinent to the subject; and that is, the propriety of providing, in case of such an extension of the privileges of this library as that proposed, that the various department libraries now maintained separately should be consolidated with the library of Con-

gress. Their usefulness and attraction might thus be greatly widened, the expense of separate maintenance might be saved to the government, and the apparent waste of means involved in the duplication of numerous imperfect libraries at the seat of government might be exchanged for the broader object of forming one truly great and comprehensive library, worthy of Congress and of the nation.

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*Librarian.*

HON. A. G. CATTELL,  
*Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library.*

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