

Report of the Council

QUITE the most important happenings of recent weeks were the two hurricanes of August 31 and September 11, termed "Carol" and "Edna" by the weather bureau, which threatened Worcester as well as the rest of New England. Although the first storm visited Worcester with high winds and torrential rains, the second storm almost avoided Worcester, so far as damage was concerned. The Society's building suffered no harm whatever and the only effect of the two hurricanes was the loss of small branches on several trees.

The hurricanes interested us greatly because of the fact that the Library possessed the largest existing collection of disaster data of recent years—floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other manifestations of nature. In 1947 the Society received through bequest from P. Hildreth Parker, of Belmont, Massachusetts, a collection of 177 handsome buckram-bound portfolios and volumes of pamphlets, newspapers, and pictures relating to the New England hurricanes of 1938 and 1944, the floods of 1927 and 1936, and the Florida and Texas hurricanes of 1945. As a result of owning this collection, the Library gathered all of the literature of the 1954 hurricanes—brochures, pictures, and the newspapers published in New London, Westerly, New Bedford, Newport, Boston, and Worcester—and bound them in a large portfolio, appropriately lettered, to become part of the Parker collection. Future students of New England weather disasters will find this collection invaluable.

The addition to the book-stack, finished two years ago, has proved satisfactory in every way and has absorbed the

expansion of our various collections. The main floor of the stack has been given over to about fifty thousand books which have been included in the new subject classification devised by Mr. Shipton, who has supervised the entire rearrangement of the books according to his scheme. The increased usefulness of grouping all books by subject has already shown the great advantage over the fixed shelf idea under which the Library operated for many years.

The details of the Library's acquisitions during the year are covered in the Librarian's report. The accessions, although not so numerous as in previous years, have been outstandingly valuable. This is but natural, since our wants, increasingly few for special collections, are nearly all book rarities. From two donors, Mr. George T. Goodspeed and Miss Lucile K. Wilkin, we have received numerous and needed additions. The standard of the collections has also been raised by the weeding of certain gatherings of books not properly in our field. One great mass of ten thousand books not considered worth cataloguing has carefully been examined, with the result that nine-tenths of the volumes have been exchanged, sold, or discarded. Insignificant items of recent years, books in foreign languages, and European classics that are to be found in most public libraries, have thus been excluded from our collections. All libraries unwittingly receive much material of this kind, and its exclusion surely redounds to the benefit of the fields in which we have outstanding collections and for which the Library is continuously used.

The two major bibliographical projects which have been under way for the past few years are rapidly approaching completion. The Director's work on *Paul Revere's Engravings* has been seen through page proof, except for the index, and the problem of placing the seventy-seven pages of illustrations is now being solved. The volume should be pub-

lished in December. Mr. Shipton's final volume of Evans' *American Bibliography*, Volume 13, covering the last half of the alphabet for the year 1799 and the entire year 1800, should be finished and issued early in the Spring.

There have been six deaths in the Society's membership during the last six months. Dr. George H. Blakeslee of Worcester, outstanding authority on international law and on the Far East, also a member of the Council of the Society for twenty-six years, elected to the Society in 1908, died May 5, 1954. Charles Warren, of Washington, D. C., nationally known authority on Constitutional law, elected in 1944, died August 16. Elmer T. Hutchinson, of Elizabeth, N. J., Corresponding Secretary of the New Jersey Historical Society and the historian of early New Jersey printing, elected in 1950, died September 13. Alfred M. Tozzer, of Cambridge, Mass., professor of anthropology at Harvard University and Secretary of the Peabody Museum, elected in 1908, died October 5. Isaac Rand Thomas, a descendant of Isaiah Thomas's grandfather, and for most of his life a resident of Boston, elected in 1917, died October 3. James Duncan Phillips, of Topsfield, Mass., historian of Salem and a generous friend to this Society, elected in 1936, died October 19. Obituary notices of these members will appear in the printed *Proceedings* of this meeting.

As usual, the appeal for gifts which would enable us to purchase books needed to fill in our collections has measured up to the standard set in previous years. As shown in the Treasurer's Report, the Special Gifts Fund has received a total of \$10,911 in donations. The Society much appreciates the friendly interest and generosity of its members.

Respectfully submitted,

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For the Council

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