

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

In compliance with the by-laws of the Society, the Council reports that the affairs of the Society are all in good order under the charge of the officers recently elected and the committee appointed as above reported, who are all engaged upon the work assigned them.

The library and financial conditions of the Society appear to be satisfactory, as will be shown in the annual report of the treasurer herewith submitted.

The death of George Grenville Benedict, Litt. D., of Burlington, Vermont, has been reported, and a brief paper upon his life and work has been prepared by the Society's biographer.

Vice-president Waldo Lincoln, Honorable Edward L. Davis and Judge Samuel Utley were appointed to consider the question of a new building. This committee has carefully gone over the many questions involved, examined sites, consulted an architect concerning the present building occupied by the Society, and has interviewed the County Commissioners in regard to the disposal of the present building and grounds of the Society. They have reported to the Council.

The committee appointed at the annual meeting to consider the publication of the British Royal Proclamations relating to America, report that they have appointed Mr. Clarence Saunders Brigham, librarian of the Rhode Island Historical Society, as editor.

Vice-president Lincoln was appointed to take suitable action regarding the removal of present limitations on the use of the Lincoln Legacy Fund, also to examine and report upon objections imposed upon expenditures from the Collection and Research and other funds of the Society,

and an action of the Society in this direction will be requested.

Vice-president Lincoln reported to the Council on behalf of the Library Committee that many books upon our shelves are of questionable value, especially in view of the crowded condition of the alcoves, and asked the Council to consider the question of disposing of books least likely to be used and the Council will present a vote to the Society for action.

It will be remembered that the Society authorized a committee to have the manuscripts owned by the Society indexed. This plan has been perfected and Mr. Charles H. Lincoln, formerly of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, has been appointed tentatively to begin this work. Mr. Lincoln has already presented a report to the Council and the Library Committee covering his work up to date, from which it appears that there are between 25,000 and 30,000 manuscripts in the collection and that the work of indexing these manuscripts is well under way. The Society has long desired and urgently needed a description of its priceless collection of manuscripts relating to America and particularly to Colonial History and may well congratulate itself on this auspicious beginning of a scientific treatment of this comprehensive material. The work will doubtless be long and difficult but in the opinion of the Council it can be no longer delayed. In going over the miscellaneous papers, many manuscripts which really belong in certain well defined groups can be taken from the miscellaneous collections in which they are found and united with the group to which they belong. When this analytic and descriptive work is complete, each manuscript can be located and classified with those with which it is most closely connected and an abstract of the contents of the more important manuscripts will be at hand.

It was the sense of the Council that the Society should proceed to fill the thirty-five present vacancies in the Society as fast as suitable candidates could be presented, and in view of this the Council presents to-day, through its committee, eight nominations for the action of the Society. The Council has taken great pains to secure a long list of

desirable names vouched for by experts, not only from New England, but from the country at large, from which nominations to-day, and perhaps those to be made in the near future can be selected.

Mr. Nathaniel Paine, after forty-four years of continuous and faithful service as treasurer of the Society, declines reelection to that important office. It is the desire of the Council that under suspension of the by-laws he be added to their number. Mr. Paine was elected a member of the Society, October 22, 1860, and was elected treasurer, October 21, 1863, and has been a member of the Committee on Publication since 1880. In seniority of membership, Mr. Paine ranks third, Dr. Hale having been elected in October, 1847, and Dr. Davis in April, 1851. Mr. Paine has also made valuable contributions to our Proceedings. The retirement of such an officer after such service is an unusual event and the Council desires to record its profound sense both of regret and of gratitude. If the Society were able to confer some suitable honorary or retiring degree upon those who have been so long and so vitally connected with its work, it could not better be bestowed.

G. STANLEY HALL,

For the Council.

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