

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

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QUITE the most important happening in the history of the Society during the past six months has been the passing of two of its chief officers and most influential members—Calvin Coolidge, president of the Society since 1929, on January 5, 1933, and Waldo Lincoln, president from 1907 to 1927, on April 7, 1933. The death of Calvin Coolidge is a great loss to the American Antiquarian Society, for he not only brought prestige to the organization, but showed an active and continued interest in its welfare. Mr. Coolidge was elected president of the Society in October 1929, and thus served only a little over three years as its chief officer. During this time he never missed a meeting either of the Society or of the Council. He presided at the Society's meetings with dignity and precision and seemed to enjoy the social contacts at the luncheons which followed. As a presiding officer at the meetings of the Council, he speeded routine business but always allowed sufficient time for important discussion. These meetings may have seemed briefer than those of earlier days, but they were made interesting by Mr. Coolidge's presence and his ready wit. His concern for the welfare of the Library was always evident, as was shown by his frequent gifts and his response to the Director's calls for advice. The details of his connection with the Society during these three years are told elsewhere in this issue of the Proceedings.

The death of Waldo Lincoln removed one of the Society's most ardent supporters and one of its wisest counsellors. More than any other member of the Society in recent years, if not in the entire hundred and twenty years of its history, he directed its work into

progressive channels, and by his enthusiasm and his leadership greatly increased its prestige and its service to scholars. After the termination of Mr. Salisbury's long career as president, it was indeed fortunate for the Society that it had available so capable a man as Mr. Lincoln. Endowed by nature and by study with a love of history, and inheriting an ancestral pride in the Society's past, he brought to the presidency an admirable background for the work which he was called upon to assume. His willingness to waive precedent in favor of progress, his insistence upon adhering to high and honorable principles, and his daily oversight of matters of minutest detail, were reflected in the almost immediate advancement which the Society experienced after his installation.

In the twenty years' span of his administration, the Society accomplished as much, from every standard of comparison, as it had achieved in the preceding century of its history. His activity and enthusiasm were matched by his executive ability. He wisely advised in the selection of members, he arranged for the meetings and secured the speakers, he almost alone raised the various endowments, he presided over the meetings with ability and tact, and he spurred on with his own devotion everyone who served the Society or had its interests at heart. The luncheons which he gave each year in his historic mansion on Elm Street, at the time of the annual meeting, brought him into personal contact with the members and emphasized his friendliness and love of social contacts.

To those in the Library who served under him, his passing brings a grief that time can never change. To those of us in the Council who followed his leadership for so many years, his death brings a feeling of sadness that words can scarcely express. We shall miss the wisdom of his counsel and the constant encouragement of our aims, but especially shall we miss the warmth of his friendship and his understanding kindness.

Since the last meeting in October, the Society also has to record the deaths of three other members:

Clarence M. Burton of Detroit, elected in 1907, died October 23, 1932; Charles M. Thayer of Worcester, elected in 1927, died November 27, 1932; and Alfred Johnson of Brookline, elected in 1922, died January 13, 1933. Notices of these members will appear in the printed Proceedings of this meeting. For the Council meeting on March 20 last, Chief Justice Rugg prepared an extended notice of Mr. Coolidge which will be read this morning and will be printed as part of the record of this meeting.

During the winter the cork carpet floors in the main part of the library building have been resurfaced and refinished. Constant wear and dirt had soiled the carpets so that they were almost black, and the rough surface made them difficult to clean. The floors were therefore scraped and a new glossy finish put on, which should serve satisfactorily for several years.

The Worcester Art Museum, in connection with the opening of their new building, installed a loan exhibition, to which this Society contributed the Hancock double chair and the Pelham portrait of Cotton Mather.

The work of the Society has gone on as usual, with an ever-growing increase in the use of the Library. The decrease in our income, due to the lowering or cancellation of dividends, has resulted in limiting to a minimum our purchase of books, as well as in a lowering of salaries and general expenses. But this is common to all libraries in the country and, in fact, the conservative nature of our investments has caused us to be far less affected than many other organizations. It is unfortunate that this depleted book purchasing power should come at a time when opportunities to secure rare and needed material are offered at prices even below our lowest appraisals of value. One member of the Society who does not want his name mentioned (but I can at least say that he is the one who established both our bookplate collection and our collection of American literature) recently sent us a check of \$100 to be used in taking advantage of any especially

attractive offering. Other members, too, whose names are so frequently mentioned in the annual Librarian's reports, are constantly sending us material of historical and commercial value. Except for such gifts, I fear that the Library will do little during the present year to add to its collections through purchase.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM,  
*For the Council*

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