

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

DURING the past year the Society has functioned about as usual, although most of its activities have been lessened by the unavoidable decrease in income. The library building, constructed in 1910 but still considered by us as "new," has undergone few changes. The heating plant has lived out its life of twenty-four years and has required alterations. One of the two boilers gave out and was replaced last fall, and this fall the second boiler likewise deteriorated beyond economical repair and had to be replaced. A twelve section Mills-Smith boiler has been installed and will, we hope, last for another quarter century. The fast increasing shortage of shelf space has required the installation of a wooden bookcase in the rotunda room, which will be removed when an addition to the metal bookstack is eventually constructed.

The province of the Director of this Society includes a general oversight of its activities, the issuing of its publications, the safeguarding of its income, and the superintendence of its library, outside of the administration and building up of its collections, which is the province of the Librarian. Incidentally, the Director has taken upon himself the increasing and listing of its newspaper collections, since this is a subject in which he is especially interested. But the most important feature of his work is the securing of funds wherewith the Library may be run. And in this field during the past two years he cannot claim to have been particularly successful. The decrease in income and the shrinking of personal incomes have not been conducive to his securing for the Society adequate financial support. During the past year, even with the strictest

economy and lowering of salaries, there has been a deficit of nearly five thousand dollars, which has been taken from a fortunate surplus in the profit and loss account. The purchase of books has been reduced to a minimum, in spite of the fact that the opportunities to acquire needed books have never been so frequent or so attractive within recent years.

The reason for this loss of income does not lie in weak or declining investments, but in the noticeable lessening in the amount of gifts to the Society. During the past five years, the special gifts in money have averaged about ten thousand dollars annually. This past year not half of that amount has been received. And this accounts almost exactly for our shortage.

In this emergency it seems entirely proper to the Council to suggest to the entire membership that the Society needs funds for administration and for book purchase. Within a fortnight a letter will be sent out to members explaining the necessity of the step and inviting gifts of from ten dollars to five hundred dollars for the coming fiscal year.

Membership in the American Antiquarian Society is solely honorary. There are neither initiation fees nor annual dues, and members are elected either because of prominence or interest in historical studies, or to aid in the administrative functions of the Society. No call is ordinarily made upon the members for funds, since in normal times the endowment or regular gifts take care of the outlay. Only once in the past twenty years has a similar step been taken. In 1927 an appeal was sent out to members to contribute for the expenses of that year, with the result that fifty subscriptions were received, comprising one of \$10.00, five of \$25.00, one of \$50.00, nine of \$100.00, two of \$300.00, twelve of \$250.00, one of \$350.00, one of \$400.00, and ten of \$500.00—a total of slightly over \$10,000.00.

Yet in the present appeal no member is urged, or even asked, to give. But several members have queried how they could best assist us at the present time, and

this will furnish the opportunity. Unless some aid is forthcoming, the Library for the next year or two will have to economize so much further that administration will be reduced beyond the point of adequate service, and there will be no book purchase whatever.

During the past six months there has been only one vacancy caused by death. Wilfred Harold Munro of Providence, for many years professor of history at Brown University and in later life president of the Rhode Island Historical Society, died August 9, 1934. A sketch of his life will appear in the printed Proceedings of this meeting.

One of the most important happenings of the current year has been the acquisition of a portrait of one of the former Presidents of the Society. Hitherto we lacked the portraits of but three Presidents, those of George Frisbie Hoar, Edward Everett Hale and Calvin Coolidge. That of Senator Hoar we hope to obtain from his family, and that of Dr. Hale is yet to be considered. Now there has come to the Library within the past week a splendid portrait of President Coolidge, painted by Frank O. Salisbury, whose lifelike portrait of Waldo Lincoln is so well known to the members. As usual, when the Society needs help in a case like this, it has turned to Mr. Clarence W. Bowen, who for thirty years as a member of the Society and for twenty-two years on its Council, has always been one of its most loyal friends. Mr. Bowen engaged Mr. Salisbury in 1928 to paint a portrait of President Coolidge for the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, and for a fortnight in December Mr. Salisbury visited the Coolidges at Sapelo Island in Georgia, and there held half a dozen sittings. From this portrait Mr. Salisbury has now made a copy, but changing the color of the costume and making certain alterations in agreement with the suggestions of Mrs. Coolidge and two intimate friends of Mr. Coolidge. The result, I believe, is the finest and most truthful portrait of Mr. Coolidge yet painted. Exactly how we shall make the necessary

financial plan to acquire this portrait is yet to be determined, but I have reason to think that it will be satisfactorily arranged.

When I visited Mr. Coolidge at Northampton on October 18, 1932, I inquired of him as to what life portraits had been painted, and I took careful notes of his replies and his comments upon the painters and the portraits. It seems an excellent place to record here the results of that conversation.

In 1924 Hanatschek made a portrait which went to Amherst. It hung in the Amherst College Library for a number of years, but has recently been replaced by the Cartotto portrait. In the Coolidge house at Northampton there hangs in the small library a crayon portrait made by Hanatschek in 1924 when he was painting the large portrait.

Howard Chandler Christy, the illustrator, painted a portrait of Mr. Coolidge, in 1924, which hangs in the Forbes Library at Northampton.

In the summer of 1925 Edmund C. Tarbell of Boston made at Swampscott a portrait for the State of Massachusetts and this now hangs in the State House. Later a copy was made for the Algonquin Club of Boston.

In either 1926 or 1927 Delazlo made a three-quarter length portrait of Mr. Coolidge as a gift to Mrs. Coolidge, and this now hangs in the living room of the Coolidge house at Northampton.

In 1927 Sigall painted at the White House portraits of both Mr. and Mrs. Coolidge. Mrs. Coolidge told me that she gave the artist about five sittings and that he had not progressed much further than the top of her head, showing the hair, forehead and eyes. He worked in a darkened room with the curtains drawn and with an artificial light coming from above. Mrs. Coolidge then told him that if he intended to finish the portrait, he had better get at it, as she had no more time for sittings. The next day he told her that the portrait was finished, but it only showed the head. It seems that the

artist wanted it for an Exhibition in New York, but when Mrs. Coolidge showed her husband the portrait, he requested the artist to paint the rest of the figure, showing a red dress. Later when the portrait was exhibited in New York, judging from a reproduction in the rotogravure section of a New York newspaper, Mrs. Coolidge said that only the head showed—a kind of ectoplasm head—and that someone had painted out the dress. When the portrait was returned to the White House several weeks later, the artist had painted in another dress, but one of a different color. The portrait which he painted of Mr. Coolidge showed the head and part of the figure. Both of these portraits are still boxed in the basement of the house at Northampton.

In 1928 Ercole Cartotto (whose address is 20 Grammercy Park, New York City) painted at the White House a portrait which is now in the Amherst College Library. Somewhat later he painted another portrait (not a copy but a different sitting) which is in either the Amherst Club in New York City or the Phi Gamma Delta house. In 1931 he painted at "The Beeches" another portrait, from still another sitting, which is now in the Vermont State Capitol at Montpelier. In the library at "The Beeches" is also a crayon head which Cartotto made in 1928 at the time of painting the first portrait.

About Christmas time, 1928, Frank O. Salisbury, the English artist, came to Sapeloe Island, Georgia, where the Coolidges were spending a short vacation, and painted a portrait of Mr. Coolidge, which was arranged for by Mr. Clarence W. Bowen of New York and now hangs in the building of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society.

In the fall of 1930 De Witt Lockman came to Northampton and painted the portrait of Mr. Coolidge for the New York Historical Society, and it now hangs in their gallery.

In 1932 Charles Sydney Hopkinson of Boston came to "The Beeches" and painted the official portrait of

Mr. Coolidge which was authorized by vote of Congress, arranged by the Congressional Committee, and now hangs in the White House.

Mr. Coolidge also told me that occasional artists had painted portraits from photographs or sketches and then asked him for a brief sitting of a few minutes to put the finishing touches on their work, but that the above were the only portraits which had been seriously considered.

This Society is fortunate in having so excellent a portrait of Mr. Coolidge, who in his three years as President of this organization did much to advance its interests, and by his continued presence at our meetings, brought additional prestige to the Society.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE S. BRIGHAM,

For the Council

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