

LETTER  
FROM  
THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS,

TRANSMITTING

*His first annual report.*

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DECEMBER 20, 1866.—Ordered to be printed.

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,  
*Washington, December 3, 1866.*

SIR: In compliance with the instructions of the Joint Committee of both houses of Congress on the Library, the undersigned has the honor to submit the following report, for the year ending December 1, 1866:

The progress of the new library extension during the vacation of Congress, though not so rapid as was expected at the commencement of the work, has resulted in the completion of one entire wing, measuring ninety-five feet in length by thirty feet in width, which is now opened and fully occupied with books. It is expected that the remaining wing will be completed and occupied during the coming month. The modifications of the original plan, heretofore sanctioned by the committee, have added greatly to the architectural effect of both wings of the new library, by reducing the projection of the galleries, and securing additional shelf-room for books. The light and ventilation are superior to those features in the main library, while the economy of space has been so closely consulted in the details as to give an increase of 3,800 linear feet of shelving in each wing, over that which exists in the main library. The total length of iron shelving in the library is now 21,360 feet, which will afford space for about one hundred and seventy thousand volumes. Adding the shelf accommodation of the law library room (formerly occupied by the Supreme Court) and the long attic room communicating with the upper gallery of the main library, the entire length of shelving at command is 26,148 feet, or nearly five miles. These accommodations afford space for the safe-keeping of about 210,000 volumes. The fact that the whole library is now impregnably fire-proof, being constructed of solid iron material throughout, and that future accessions to its stores, as well as the present accumulation of valuable works, are secure from a casualty which has twice consumed our national library, is a matter for sincere congratulation.

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The warming of both of the wings and of the central library by a current of hot air, brought from the steam heating apparatus of the Senate on the one side and the House of Representatives on the other, has been carried into effect. The heat thus obtained proves ample for the purpose, and when the flues, now freshly coated, shall have become thoroughly dried, there is every reason to expect an atmosphere not only far more comfortable, but also more wholesome than prevailed in the library under the old process of heating by hot-air furnaces. That the warming of the whole library by steam has thus been carried successfully into operation, without encumbering the Capitol with additional steam-engines and boilers, is a testimony to the wisdom of the change authorized by the committee in the method of heating.

In the furnishing of the library, the undersigned has been guided by a desire to secure the most serviceable and permanent furniture that could be obtained, rather than to expend the appropriation for that purpose upon merely ornamental work. One hundred and forty library chairs, one hundred and fifty stands for reaching the upper shelves, and fifteen tables, all of the best selected black walnut, have been made to order, at a cost of about \$2,500. This furniture, with that already on hand, is sufficient to provide every alcove in the library with a seat, besides supplying the reading-room with suitable accommodations for the public. In regard to carpeting, the iron floors of the galleries throughout the library are being covered with kamptulicon floor-cloth, a fabric composed of India-rubber and cork, which is found to combine the qualities of durability, cheapness, and cleanliness in a higher degree than any carpeting whatever. About \$3,000 of the appropriation has been thus expended, and a further sum of \$1,400 in furnishings of a miscellaneous character needed for the accommodation of the library. It is proposed to devote the remaining \$3,000 of the appropriation to the furnishing of additional cases, with sliding shelves, for the safe-keeping of large illustrated works, of which the library now contains a greatly increased number.

The accessions to the library during the year ending December 1, 1866, have been 7,251 volumes, exclusive of about six hundred pamphlets. Of the books, there have been received—

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| By purchase.....                              | 5,603 | volumes. |
| By the operation of the copyright law.....    | 836   | "        |
| By donation (chiefly official documents)..... | 645   | "        |
| By exchange of duplicate books.....           | 167   | "        |

These additions exceed those of the preceding year (1865) by 1,215 volumes, and bring the aggregate number of volumes in the library at this date up to 99,650, exclusive of the 40,000 volumes, more or less, of the library belonging to the Smithsonian Institution. The latter collection of books is now in process of removal, to be incorporated with the library of Congress, as a special deposit, by agreement of the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, and in pursuance of the provisions of an act of Congress approved April 5, 1866. This large accession to the treasures of the library is especially valuable in the range of scientific books, comprising by far the largest collection of the journals

and transactions of learned societies, foreign and domestic, which exists in America. It is also found to be an important supplement to the present library in the departments of linguistics, bibliography, statistics, voyages and travels, and works relating to the fine arts; in each of which departments it embraces works of great cost and value, while its collection of books in all branches of natural history is invaluable. About one-half the collection has already been removed and partially catalogued, while the remainder only awaits the completion of the south wing of the library to be transferred and arranged upon the shelves. It is believed that the greatly enlarged facilities for research thus supplied to readers prosecuting any branch of inquiry will be appreciated by all who have heretofore resorted to the Smithsonian library, while the annual accessions of valuable books derived from the systematic exchanges by the Smithsonian Institution of its publications with societies and individuals in all parts of the world, fully compensate Congress for the additional expenses involved in the proper custody of the books belonging to the Smithsonian Institution. The union of the two libraries will prove doubly advantageous to those heretofore resorting to either, and will insure the rapid growth of a great and truly national library, with far greater economy of means than would attend the duplication, so to speak, of two large libraries at the seat of government of the United States.

A copy of the catalogue of additions made to the library during the year ending December 1, 1866, is herewith submitted. Its completion and distribution to members during the first week of the session, notwithstanding the brief time since the adjournment of Congress for the collection and cataloguing of the chief portion of the books, is in great measure due to the efficient co-operation of my assistants. It is proper here to observe that the annual supplementary catalogues embrace the titles of books only, the titles of pamphlets being reserved for the general catalogue, issued at intervals of four to five years. The present number of pamphlets in the library, bound and unbound, does not exceed six thousand, exclusive of duplicates. Increased attention will hereafter be devoted to enlarging the collection of these often valuable materials for political history.

The projected general catalogue of the library, arranged by subject-matters in alphabetical order, has advanced less rapidly than was intended, owing to the pre-occupation of myself and my principal assistants in the labors attending the reception and arrangement of the large accessions of the year. Besides this, the removal and rearrangement of the entire collection of books, (excepting the law library,) and the incorporation with them (and with the catalogue,) of the Smithsonian addition of about forty thousand volumes, will require the incessant application of the whole library force for some time to come. The great importance of an index by subjects to all who use the library can scarcely be overrated, and the enhanced value of such an index by embracing in it the entire contents of the Smithsonian collection, together with the supplementary catalogues of the last three years, is so apparent as to justify the postponement of the printing of such a catalogue until this wide range of titles can be incorporated. The index to the last general catalogue, issued in 1864, is now nearly

completed, but the incorporation above referred to, of the whole present contents of the library in a single alphabetical catalogue, analysed by subject-matters, will be a task involving much time and labor, but none the less necessary to be accomplished.

The financial accounts of the library have been kept, as for many years past by the Register of the Treasury, as disbursing agent of the Joint Committee on the Library. The balances on hand to the credit of the several funds in charge of the committee are the following, including the amount of undrawn appropriations in the treasury of the United States :

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| Fund for purchase of books . . . . .   | \$2, 525 90 |
| Fund for purchase of law books . . . . .   | 1, 828 46   |
| Fund for purchase of files of leading American newspapers . . . . .                                    | 2, 090 35   |
| Fund for purchase of furniture . . . . .   | 6, 525 90   |
| Fund for removal of the Smithsonian library . . . . .  | 355 71      |
| Fund for purchase of the law library of James L. Petigru . . . . .                                     | 5, 000 00   |
| Fund for contingent expenses . . . . .   | 1, 970 46   |
| Catalogue fund . . . . .   | 100 65      |
| Fund for ornamenting the Capitol with works of art . . . . .   | 16, 500 00  |
| Fund for portraits of the Presidents of the United States . . . . .                                    | 5, 000 00   |
| Fund for Powell's painting of a naval victory, for the Capitol . . . . .                               | 23, 000 00  |
| ✓ Fund for completing the publication of the works of the United States Exploring Expedition . . . . . | 17 14       |
| ✓ Fund for pay of arrears and artists of the Exploring Expedition . . . . .                            | 5, 837 75   |
| Fund for replacing the works of the Exploring Expedition destroyed by fire . . . . .                   | 1, 346 10   |
| Fund for putting in order the plates of the Exploring Expedition . . . . .                             | 457 79      |
| Botanic garden fund . . . . .  | 1, 171 32   |
| Green-house fund . . . . .   | 3, 486 94   |
| Special green-house fund . . . . .   | 1, 000 00   |
| ✓ Fund for publishing the writings of James Madison . . . . .  | 100 13      |

The undersigned deems it proper to call the attention of the committee to some necessities of the library. It has been found indispensable to erect several light iron stairways, occupying little room, at the eastern extremity of each wing of the library, to facilitate communication with the alcoves of the three new galleries. This improvement will save an incalculable amount of time, by diminishing the space which would otherwise have to be traversed in the daily service of books to those who use the library. It is respectfully recommended that this modification of the original plans, rendered necessary by practical experience, be sanctioned by the committee.

The need of a new sky-light, to replace the present one over the central library room, is too apparent upon inspection to require more than a brief mention. The ornamented glass is discolored and darkened by the fall of substances from above, and the frequent breaking of the sky-light during the progress of work upon the dome has led to patching it with various kinds of glass, so as to render it very unsightly, and out of harmony with the clearness and

beauty of the new sky-lights in the wings. The defective light in the central library could also be remedied by the removal of the iron panels on either side of the sky-light, and the substitution of glass in their room. That this improvement be recommended by the committee is respectfully suggested.

The repainting of a portion of the central library, in places discolored by leakage before the new roof was put on, is also recommended. No part of the library has been repainted during the fourteen years which have elapsed since the rebuilding after the fire of 1851, and the fact that nearly the whole of the paint and decorative gilding presents as fresh an appearance as when first applied is an evidence of the fitness and economy of the style of decoration which has been followed in the new library.

In conclusion, the undersigned desires the attention of the committee to the present operation of the copyright law of March 3, 1865, by which one copy of each publication for which the government grants a copyright is required to be deposited in the Library of Congress. There have been received during the year ending December 1, under this law, 836 volumes of books, 386 pieces of music, and 202 maps, engravings, and photographs, or a total of 1,425 articles. This is an increase of only 290 volumes over the receipts of the first nine months of the operation of the law. The undersigned is of the opinion, founded upon experience, that the benefits of the law to the Congressional Library will depend greatly upon the means provided for its enforcement, and the vigilance with which it is administered. Comparatively few owners of copyrights, outside of the leading publishing houses, comply with the requisition of the law without notice. These notices, to the number of several hundreds, have been regularly served upon delinquents whenever the undersigned could obtain authentic evidence of a copyright having issued. In most cases, the requirements of the law have been complied with after notice, although there are many exceptions. The provisions of the English law of copyright, which are much more exacting than our own, (requiring the deposit of five copies of each work instead of one,) prescribe a penalty of five pounds sterling, and the value of the books withheld, recoverable at the suit of the proper officer of the institution in which the work is required to be deposited. This provision is found to be amply sufficient to secure a general compliance with the law. A similar modification of the present statute is respectfully suggested to the consideration of the committee, as also a provision by which books and other publications may be transmitted through the mails, free of charge, to the Library of Congress. These amendments would remove the chief obstacles which exist to a full compliance with the law.

Respectfully submitted.

A. R. SPOFFORD, *Librarian.*

HON. JNO. A. J. CRESWELL,  
*Chairman of Joint Committee on the Library.*