

Secretary's office, from which selections have been made, have been placed in boxes, but not arranged or classified.

The necessity of some system of registration of marriages has been the subject of much consideration during the last three years. In my last report I mentioned that a great number of bonds taken at the Secretary's office on the issuing of marriage licenses had come into my hands. These bonds extend over a period of 85 years, and are about eleven or twelve thousand in number. Many of them are defective, (particularly the more modern,) and some so carelessly filled up as not to contain the names of the persons to be married, but only those of the sureties; others are without seals, and in other respects defective. These bonds are usually filled up by the ministers in the country to whom the licenses are directed, who frequently neglect to return them to the office; consequently no record of marriages solemnized under license has been kept. I should suppose about one fourth part of these bonds only have been returned; those, however, in possession of the Government have been carefully catalogued. The governments of New York and Rhode Island, where the same system of marriage licenses prevailed previous to the revolution, have collected and published catalogues of marriages from their bonds on file. In the latter State there is a very complete system of registration of marriages, births, and deaths, and their returns are annually published by order of the State government.

I have attached a complete list of the books bound, and documents filed and preserved since the commencement of the commission; and in conclusion beg to say that the want of a proper place of deposit for the public archives has been the cause of considerable trouble and expense, which otherwise would have been avoided. There is no room in the building which could be conveniently appropriated for their reception, and it has been found necessary to remove several of the boxes to the garret of the building.

The bound volumes have been placed on the open shelves of the Legislative Library. They should have a separate press or division assigned them, and locked up when not required.

As so many materials have thus been collected at provincial expense, of much value for historical purposes, I think it right to revert to the idea suggested in the resolution of the Assembly in 1857, of printing and publishing selections from these archives, believing they would prove very interesting. The States of New York and Pennsylvania have lately published very large collections of this nature.

I have the honor to remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS B. AKINS.

Halifax, February 24, 1864.