of legal and Governmental documents "wholly useless for legal, historical * * or official purposes, and of no possible interest to any one." The Repository, it was stated, was already filled to overflowing, and, unless some steps were taken to relieve the office of useless and cumbersome documents, it would get into a state of embarrassment from which it could not easily be extricated. A Committee was, therefore, suggested to consist of three; two being professional gentlemen, and the third, an officer of the Department. A list of nearly 100,000 packages, boxes and volumes of the papers to be dealt with is given in detail, besides many thousands only mentioned without specific numbers.

As a consequence of the memorandum, an Act amending the Public Record Office Act of 1838, was assented to on 14th August, 1877 (40 and 41 Vic., cap. 55.) Being a public Act, and easily accessible, I would only remark that its provisions show with what jealous care the permission to destroy any legal or State paper has been fenced about, to prevent the slightest risk of improper influences being used to secure the destruction of a document which it might be inconvenient to preserve.

According to the Act, the documents in Courts of Record are to be delivered to the custody of the Master of the Rolls on his warrant, the papers to be "of the age of twenty years from the making thereof," and no documents of this kind can be kept in the custody of the Court longer than that time, except on a certificate from the Chief Judge of the Court of which they are the records.

The State papers, on the other hand, are sent at uncertain intervals on the judgment of the Chiefs of Departments, as accumulations arise. These are delivered in large collections, and, neither in the case of the Court Records, nor of the State papers, was there any previous weeding. All came to the Repository from the most important document to the most useless fragment. It has been the practice, when a weeding out of useless papers is to take place, to have it conducted by an officer of the Department to which the papers belong, and one of the Record officers. It is from the indiscriminate system of transfer that has arisen much of the inconvenience complained of.

As a palliative in the case of the Court Records, only such are now received as are certified by the Chief Judge of each Court to be suitable for permanent safe-keeping; the others, of temporary value only, are left in the custody of the Court.

With respect to the Departments of State, I understand that the Treasury has suggested a system which is calculated to remedy the present state of affairs. It is not improbable that reports on the subject from the Departments may be prepared and may become available during the next session of the Imperial Parliament. Such reports would be of great value should any central system of keeping the records and State papers be adopted in Canada.

The State papers deposited in the Record Office come down to the following dates:—

Treasury to 1851.
Home Office to 1840.
Foreign Office to 1835.
Colonial Office to 1849.
War Office to 1856.
Admiralty Office to 1839.
Board of Trade to 1830.
Audit Office to 1840.

The regulations as to the dates to which they may be examined are for:—

Treasury to 1759.
Home Office to 1769.
Foreign Office to 1760, or to 1802 on previous application.
Colonial Office to the end of George II (1760).
War Office to end of George III (1820), with discretion to withhold any of the papers.
Admiralty letter books, &c., to end of 1800.
Audit Office to 1760.