

To the Honorable the Senate of Canada, in Parliament assembled :

The Report of the Acting Librarian, on the state of the Library of Parliament, respectfully sheweth :—

At each of the two previous Sessions of Parliament a special grant of \$1,000 was placed to the credit of the Library for the purchase of rare works on the North American continent. I am happy to be able to report that considerable additions have been made to this important section. Comparatively few works are now wanting in what may be called the *Bibliotheca Canadensis Vetustissima*, having relation to the discovery and early settlement of Canada. Hence our shelves offer a large number of works bearing on the history of the English colonies and plantations—their rise and progress, and, later on, their controversies with Great Britain previous to the Revolution; the wars of Independence and of 1812, and, returning to Canada, to the troubles of 1837-38, both in Upper and Lower Canada.

This special grant was made at a most appropriate time, for the prices of this particular class of books have of late increased largely. At a recent sale in New York 32 vols. of the *Relations des Jésuites (editio princeps)*, brought over \$3,500. I may here mention that the Library has been able to secure twenty-five of these precious components of our annals on much more favourable terms.

The American section of the Library now numbers 13,500 vols., of which 7,500 are Canadian.

During the years 1882 and 1883 the question whether the law books in the Library should be retained therein or transferred to the Supreme Court having been kept in suspense, but few purchases of law books were made. At its last Session, Parliament, however, decided that the law section should not be removed to the Supreme Court, and following that decision, I have endeavoured to bring up that section to its proper standard, by adding to it the latest editions of all law books recently issued.

It is a matter of regret to me that I have been unable, through the want of proper accommodation, to carry out, to its full extent, the resolution adopted by Parliament with regard to the organization in this Department of a section of Chartography. A considerable number of maps have been bought, but it has been found impossible to secure the necessary space to arrange and display them properly.

This want of room has been felt more or less in the different branches. The book cases around the House of Commons Reading Room, placed at our disposal by the Board of Public Works, have been filled to their utmost capacities, and it will be no easy task next year to shelve the new additions. It will, therefore, be necessary, in order to meet the requirements of the Library, to find more accommodation, and I beg leave to request respectfully that the rooms in the basement of the Library, now occupied by the Queen's Printer, be in future used for the purposes of this Department.

It has been proposed several times, within the last few years, to reorganize the Library and enlarge its scope and character. Referring to this matter, the Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald said, during the Session of 1883 (*Vide* official report Debates, April 16, 1883) when the report of the Library was under consideration :
 “ Our Library is neither the one thing nor the other just now. It is not a British Museum, or a Canadian Museum, or a National Library. * * * It is assumed, from the number of the volumes, that it has the character of a National Library, and yet it is commonly, and technically, merely a Parliamentary Library. Now, our selection of books is far too great to be considered a Parliamentary Library, which should be a collection of works to assist members of Parliament to perform their duties intelligently—books of reference, books containing all the information necessary for legislators; that is the idea in England, where the Parliamentary Library, which is used by the two Houses, the House of Peers and the House of Commons, is one distinctly of reference. * * * * We will have to face that subject very soon. * * * * Perhaps the