

REPORT

OF THE

LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS.

DECEMBER 9, 1897.— Referred to the Committee on the Library
and ordered to be printed.

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GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

1897.

The question of transfer, the care of weather, the renovation of the books, the consequences of dust and other problem.

was closed to all except those having department. Then came the preparation which began August 2. All Library movement except what was necessary for assistant was assigned to this duty. and, and those for emergency. We were concerned; and, as a result of the staff, the whole Library, with was removed in ten weeks. As an high praise; but apart from that, we which transferred this vast mass without of a volume.

new Library with regard to conven- Books which experience had shown on shelves near the reading room. l chemistry, were grouped together, section, only one-half of each shelf

actions is as follows:

WEST BOOK STACK.

s of foreign governments; pamphlet United States Patent Office Gazette;

ions of the States of the Union; space

omy, geology, chemistry, physics, and zoology.

nology, ecclesiastical history, and

ts, music, poetry, drama, correspond- or.

ient and modern; history, biography, pt the United States and Great Brit- hy).

rt) polygraphy, literature, bibliogra-

statistics, politics, philosophy, edu- apy.

s; duplicates.

SOUTH BOOK STACK.

First to fifth story from top.—Bound newspapers and works on art.

Sixth story.—Bound periodicals.

Seventh story.—Directories, fiction (in part), orientalia; Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Virgil, Goethe.

Eighth story.—Bound periodicals.

Ninth story.—Copyright duplicates.

EAST BOOK STACK.

Library (in part) of the Smithsonian Institution.

Reading room.—Gallery: United States documents. Alcoves on floor: Americana (in part); genealogy, biography, local history, reference books, fiction (in part).

The Library closed on July 31; was opened to the public on November 1. This meant the adjustment of over 400,000 books so that they might be available. Since then the reading room has been in use daily except on Sunday. While the public has therefore the advantages of a splendid reading library the work of classification still goes forward, and in a short time we hope to have every volume and pamphlet even of the miscellaneous matter in its appropriate place.

As a part of the present system, there is a pneumatic tube, a tunnel, and electric machinery for the transmission of books from the Library to the Capitol. It would be impossible to overestimate the importance of this ingenious work in the practical efficiency of Library administration. A test was made of its operations on October 27 by the Library officials. The telephone was not yet in operation, and therefore the experiment was under imperfect conditions. Without any prearrangement or forewarning a request for books was conveyed through the pneumatic tube from the Capitol to the reading desk in the new Library. In ten minutes and five seconds the volume asked for reached the Capitol. The second request was for four books—one in English, the other three in Italian, German, and French, respectively. Three of them, the Italian, German, and English, came within eight minutes and eleven seconds. The French volume, *Les Châtiments*, arrived two minutes later. The third was a request for *The London Times* containing an account of the battle of Waterloo. The *Times*, the volume of 1815, was promptly found on its appropriate shelf in the upper part of the Library Building, but owing to a little delay at the reading desk was twelve minutes in reaching the Capitol.

The test was notable as demonstrating the practical convenience of the Library in the service of Congress and the Supreme Court. Under the old system the Library was so congested, books were heaped up in so many crevices and out-of-the-way corners, down in the crypt, hidden in darkness from access of observation, that obtaining a volume, and especially, one out of the range of general reading, was a question of time and

patience. Frequently, it depended upon the phenomenal memory of the distinguished Librarian.

The present arrangement may be described as almost automatic in its character, and there is no reason why a Senator at his desk, or a Justice of the Supreme Court in the conference room may not summon the page and have whatever he requires within twelve or fifteen minutes. This is not a theory or an anticipation, but a practical demonstration. The new Library brings its treasures within an easier reach of those who need them than ever before.

THE LIBRARY AS ARRANGED.

The question of arrangement of the new Library building has been under careful consideration. Assignments have been made, but they are still subject to such changes as experience may justify.

THE BASEMENT.

The copyright department has been assigned to the southwest pavilion and the north and south curtains. In the south curtain and pavilion are the offices of the register and clerks. In the north curtain are the archives—that is to say, where an original copy of every copyright article is preserved. The offices of the superintendent of the building are in the west south curtain. The west north curtain remains unassigned, but is filled with books and pamphlets. The west north pavilion has been set apart for the blind. The eastern pavilion and curtains have been given over to the bindery, the packing and mail rooms, and for purposes of general utility.

THE FIRST STORY (LIBRARY FLOOR).

The central feature of the first story is the reading room, with its surrounding alcoves. The newspapers and periodicals will be given as much of the south and east south curtains as may be requisite. The Smithsonian Institution, the manuscript, the Toner and Washington collections will have special places in the eastern curtains. The catalogue department will occupy as much of the north curtain as is requisite. The southwest pavilion is devoted to the reading room of the Senate; the west south curtain to that of the House. The executive offices of the Library are in the west north curtain. Here will be found the Library records, and the books of rare value and interest, which are specially safeguarded. The manuscript department has been assigned to the northeast pavilion for reasons of security.

THE SECOND STORY (GALLERIES).

This is the finest in the way of decoration of the Library floors. Keeping this in view, the four pavilions and the western curtains will be devoted to exhibition purposes, rare books, works of art, and notable collections. The southern gallery will be given to graphic art, selec-