

1900.
NEW ZEALAND.

RECORDS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

MEMORANDUM ADDRESSED TO THE HON. THE SPEAKER.

Laid on the Table by the Hon. the Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER,—

During last session of Parliament I addressed to you a memorandum, of which the following is a copy:—

18th July, 1899.

I have the honour to bring under your notice the following remarks and suggestions:—

For forty-five years an accumulation of manuscript and other records of the House has been taking place. Many of the documents have been printed and bound in the volumes on the shelves of our reference libraries, and many originally of only temporary value have become useless. The shelves and floor of the Record Room are now so encumbered that it is found almost impossible to keep the papers in order, or to readily find any record that may be required for reference.

As I understand that a muniment room can be provided in the basement of the building now in course of completion, I would urge that the coming recess would be a fitting time for the destruction, by a competent officer under the supervision of the Clerk of the House, of a large proportion of the accumulated papers, and the rearrangement of the remainder.

I would therefore suggest that, if necessary, a resolution be passed by the House authorising the selection and burning of the following documents:—

(1.) Papers laid upon the table prior to the year 1896 (?), which have been printed in the Appendices to the Journals of the House.

(2.) Petitions presented to the House before the year 1880 (?).

(3.) Clerk's (including notices of motion) and Clerk Assistant's notes (taken at the table and elaborated in the Journals) prior to 1896 (?).

(4.) Manuscript of all division-lists prior to 1896 (?).

(5.) Minutes, proceedings, and papers of Select Committees, prior to 1896 (?), which have appeared in print in the Appendices.

(6.) Reports of Select Committees which have been printed in the Journals or Appendices.

(7.) Record copies of Order Papers, with Clerk's original notes, prior to 1896. (?)

(8.) Messages from the Governor and messages from the Legislative Council prior to 1896. (?)

(9.) Miscellaneous maps and plans which, in the opinion of the Clerk, are no longer of any value.

Any of the above which the Clerk may consider of historic or other interest to be retained.

I would also suggest that permanent authority be given on the lines of the above proposals for the future periodical destruction of accumulating records by the Clerk.

H. OTTERSON, Clerk, House of Representatives.

No opportunity having presented itself for you to bring the matter before the House during the session, on leaving Wellington in October last you instructed me to employ during the recess Mr. Kane, Reader and Clerk of Bills and Papers, on the preliminary work of sorting and arranging the records for proposed retention and destruction respectively.

This has now been done in a satisfactory manner, and the destination of the various papers, which have been tied up and labelled according to description and year, awaits the sanction of the House.

In addition to arranging the records named in the memorandum quoted above, Mr. Kane has, under my supervision, dealt with other books and records as follows:—

Has set aside for retention the whole of the manuscript Journals of the House, with the exception of volume for 1855, missing; all manuscript letter-books, all published documents having unpublished plans attached, and six copies of each Bill introduced into the House since 1861, with the exception of the Bills of 1876, which have gone astray.

Has set aside for destruction all manuscript books which can be of no further use; and

Has arranged in order of number petitions proposed to be retained, from 1880 to date.

"Records of historic or other interest" which I proposed to retain, although coming under one or other of the descriptions of those proposed to be destroyed, have proved to be few in number; but I have set aside several scarce books laid upon the table, including an incomplete set of the Transactions of the New Zealand Institute; also, all the oath-books of the House containing autographs of members.

As regards the last paragraph of my memorandum of last session, I would suggest that power be given to the Clerk to deal with one year's additional records at the end of every session, in continuation of the process now proposed to be carried out.

21st June, 1900.

H. OTTERSON, Clerk, House of Representatives.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation not given; printing (1,376 copies), 18s.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1900.

Price 3d.]