

commercial value of the collection as it now stands could be not less than £80,000. By reason of its special and peculiar wealth of rare and valuable books, charts, and manuscripts on Australasian history, geography, and ethnology, it must rightly be considered as of almost priceless value to the people of this country.

THE STAFF.

On the 1st January, 1919, Mr. Johannes C. Andersen, one of the senior assistants in the General Assembly Library, who had been appointed Librarian by the Public Service Commissioners, took charge of the library, and at once commenced a preliminary and general classification of the books, pamphlets, &c. On the 1st May, 1919, three lady assistants, Misses Q. B. Cowles, G. F. C. Davidson, and M. D. Gray, commenced their duties under Mr. Andersen, and are now, under his superintendence, engaged in classifying, arranging, and writing catalogue cards for the bound volumes in the collection, some 30,000 in number. The late Mr. Turnbull had partially prepared a card catalogue, but it was merely a record of possession and was very incomplete, there being no record of classification according to subject, nor any indication as to the exact locality of the volumes on the shelves in the various rooms.

WORK ALREADY DONE.

It became manifest that before the library could be utilized for reference purposes the whole of the books must be accessioned in a register and properly catalogued. This work is now in progress. Already, up to the date of this report, some two thousand volumes, the whole consisting of voyages and travels, and relating more particularly to Australasia and the Pacific, have been classified and arranged in the cases and several thousands of cards for these books have been written, with main and cross references to facilitate ready consultation by students and others who may use the library. For a large proportion of these books there were no cards in the catalogue cabinets used by the late Mr. Turnbull, and even where the cards existed the details given thereon have had to be supplemented by classification and locality marks. A large collection of New Zealand newspapers have been carefully collated and prepared for binding.

WORK REMAINING TO BE DONE.

It is desirable that some details should be given on the work remaining to be done before the library can be opened for the use of students and the public generally. In addition to completing a detailed card catalogue of the bound volumes, the immense collection of maps, charts, prints, engravings, and photographs—the exact number of which has not yet been ascertained—must be properly classified and arranged by subject, chronology, &c.

Many thousands of unbound books, pamphlets, and leaflets of varying character, at present roughly assembled in no special order of subject or date, have yet to be examined, classified, catalogued, and accessioned, previous to being bound into volumes as may be found desirable.

The library also contains a large collection of interesting and most valuable manuscripts and autographed letters by Australasian and British authors. These will require to be arranged very carefully upon a well-ordered plan of classification. All this will take a considerable time to carry out.

THE LIBRARY AND THE PUBLIC.

Much interest and curiosity must naturally attach as to the probable date upon which it may be found possible to open the library to the public. Recognizing that for the purposes of historical research the section including New Zealand and Australian history, topography, &c., will be more specially useful to students, the Librarian is at present confining his attention to pushing on with the classification, cataloguing, and arrangement on the shelves of that particular portion of the collection. He hopes that the New Zealand and Australian section (including works on the Pacific generally) will be available for reference purposes by students and the public by the end of the year, but at present it is impossible to specify the probable date of the opening. This section may be roughly estimated at 10,000 volumes, of which, when the library opens, a scientifically detailed and very useful catalogue should be ready for use.

With regard to the remainder of the collection, it would be unwise to fix any date upon which it is likely to be made fully available for reference purposes, but, speaking generally, the library as a whole cannot well be classified completely and arranged under two years. Once, however, the first section is ready for use by the public there need be no objection to visitors being admitted to the library and reading any works the library is known to contain, although it may be found necessary to place a temporary "taboo" or reserve, on the particular class which is undergoing examination or being catalogued.

Once one section is open to the public the work of cataloguing the remainder of the collection will probably be slower than at present, as the attention required to be given to students and visitors will trench upon the time of the assistants to some appreciable extent.

SAFEGUARDS AGAINST FIRE.

Structural alterations have been found necessary to the building in order to ensure proper safeguards against fire, and are now being proceeded with.

FUTURE PURCHASES.

With regard to the future acquisition of books, &c., much will depend upon the amount the State is prepared to expend upon such purposes. It is undesirable, in my opinion, that there should be any duplication either with the General Assembly Library or with the Dominion Museum Library. The general principle to be observed should, I think, be that the Turnbull Library should specialize in the collection of books and other publications dealing with the history, geography, ethnology, and folk-