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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 23, 1896.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MORRELL, from the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,
submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 698.]

The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds submits the following report on the bill (S. 698) to provide for the erection of an additional fire proof building for the National Museum.

The following extract is taken from the last annual report of S. P. Langley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution:

In my last annual statement I pointed out three conditions which are operating to seriously retard the growth of the National Museum: First, the lack of space for the installation of objects which should be placed on exhibition; second, the unsymmetrical growth of the collections; and third, the fact that the storage of collections in the wooden sheds south of the Smithsonian building, as well as in the basement of the building itself, is most undesirable and dangerous. The sum of \$900, allowed for 1896, will be necessarily expended in the rental of shop and storage room in place of the "Armory building." The actually dangerous wooden sheds must therefore remain occupied until a sum of money is provided which will enable me to discontinue their use altogether by renting other quarters, removed entirely from proximity to the Smithsonian building.

The problem of even providing shelter of any kind for the vast amount of material daily received from persons interested in the growth and work of the Museum still remains unsolved. The Institution is placed in an embarrassing position. It has been designated by law as the only depository of collections offered to, or made under the auspices of, the Government, and can not, under the law, refuse to receive them. The fact remains, however, that when accepted there is no suitable place in which to store them, and no space in the Museum building to exhibit such of the objects as should properly be shown to the public. As I have already pointed out, there is probably no museum in the world in which so small a proportion of the objects worthy of exhibition is visible to the public, or in which the objects exhibited are crowded together so closely. It is now more true than ever that if another museum building as large as the present one were provided it could be at once filled with specimens already on hand.

Dr. G. Brown Goode, assistant secretary in charge, has furnished, at the request of the committee, the following details and statistical information:

The Smithsonian Institution is the custodian of the National Museum, which is the only lawful place of deposit of "all objects of art and of foreign and curious research, and all objects of natural history, plants, and geological and mineralogical specimens belonging to the United States." The nucleus of the collections consists of the specimens brought home by the Wilkes and other exploring expeditions, but for many years the Museum was supported entirely at the expense of the Smithsonian fund, and a considerable portion of the collections is the property of the Institution.

Professor Huxley defines a museum as "a consultative library of objects." The National Museum is such a consultative library, and it is a great deal more. It is an agency for the instruction of the people of the whole country, and it keeps in mind the needs of persons whose lives are not occupied in the study of science as well as those of the professional investigator and teacher.

Its benefits are extended without cost or reserve to hundreds of thousands of visitors from all parts of the United States, who pass through its doors each year, as is shown in the following table:

Number of visitors since 1881.

Year.	New building.	Old building.	Total.
1881	150,000	100,000	250,000
1882	167,455	153,744	320,199
1883	202,188	104,823	307,011
1884 (half year).....	97,661	41,565	139,226
1884-85	* 205,026	102,093	307,119
1885-86	174,225	88,960	263,185
1886-87	216,562	98,552	315,114
1887-88	249,665	102,863	352,528
1888-89	* 374,843	149,618	524,461
1889-90	274,324	120,894	395,218
1890-91	286,426	111,669	398,095
1891-92	269,825	114,817	384,642
1892-93	* 319,930	174,188	494,118
1893-94	195,748	103,910	299,658
1894-95	196,375	109,847	306,222
	3,380,253	1,676,543	5,056,796

* Years of Presidential inaugurations.

It is also accessory to public education through the distribution of the duplicate specimens in the Museum, which are made up into sets, accurately named, and given to public institutions in all parts of the country.

The history of the Museum is divided into three periods: First, that from the foundation of the Smithsonian Institution to 1857, during which time specimens were collected purely and solely to serve as materials for research, no special effort having been made to publicly exhibit them or to utilize them except as a foundation for scientific description and theory. Second, the period from 1857, when the Institution assumed the custody of the "National Cabinet of Curiosities," to 1876. During this period the Museum became a place of deposit for scientific material, which had already been studied, this material, so far as practicable, being exhibited to the public, and thus made to serve an educational purpose. Third, the present period, beginning in the year 1876, during which the Museum has entered upon a career of active work in gathering collections and exhibiting them on account of their educational value.

During the first period the main object of the Museum was scientific research; in the second the establishment became a museum of record as well as of research; while in the third period there is growing up also the idea of public education.

The three ideas, record, research, and education, cooperative and mutually helpful as they are, are essential to the development of every great museum. The National Museum endeavors to promote them all.

It is a museum of record, in which are preserved the material foundations of an enormous amount of scientific knowledge, the types of numerous past investigations. This is especially the case with those

materials that have served as a foundation for the reports upon the resources of the United States.

It is a museum of research, which aims to make its contents serve in the highest degree as a stimulus to inquiry and a foundation for scientific investigation. Research is necessary in order to identify and group the objects in the most philosophical and instructive relations, and its officers are therefore selected for their ability as investigators, as well as their trustworthiness as custodians.

It is an educational museum, through its policy of illustrating by specimens every kind of natural object and every manifestation of human thought and activity, of displaying descriptive labels adapted to the popular mind, and of distributing its publications and its named series of duplicates.

The collections are installed, in part, in the Smithsonian building and, in part, in the large building adjacent, covering 3½ acres of ground, which was erected in 1881 to afford temporary accommodations for the overflow until such time as an adequate new building could be constructed.

The following tables show the number of specimens in the various departments of the Museum June 30, 1894 and 1895.

Department.	1894.	1895.
Arts and industries:		
Materia medica.....	6,317	6,322
Foods.....	1,111	1,114
Textiles.....	3,306	3,308
Fisheries.....	10,080	10,080
Animal products.....	3,028	3,028
Graphic arts.....	1,704	1,774
Forestry.....	726	749
Transportation and engineering.....	1,793	1,799
Naval architecture.....	802	802
Historical collections.....	29,998	30,296
Musical instruments.....	1,219	1,300
Modern pottery, porcelain, bronzes, etc.....	3,583	3,597
Paints and dyes.....	197	197
Physical apparatus.....	366	366
Oils and gums.....	} 1,112	1,112
Chemical products.....		
Domestic animals.....	162	203
Ethnology.....	a 423,000	425,642
American aboriginal pottery.....	33,293	33,368
Oriental antiquities and religious ceremonials.....	4,145	4,316
Prehistoric anthropology.....	153,424	203,520
Mammals (skins and alcoholics).....	12,948	14,432
Birds.....	b 73,325	78,824
Birds' eggs and nests.....	58,041	60,064
Reptiles and batrachians.....	34,215	35,308
Fishes.....	125,000	131,000
Vertebrate fossils.....	1,595	1,660
Mollusks (including Cenozoic fossils).....	510,256	524,388
Insects.....	610,000	623,000
Marine invertebrates.....	520,000	522,378
Helminthological collection.....		106
Comparative anatomy:		
Osteology.....	} 14,828	15,078
Anatomy.....		
Paleozoic fossils.....	95,631	} 305,451
Mesozoic fossils.....	89,493	
Fossil plants.....	113,685	
Recent plants.....	252,111	269,008
Minerals.....	c 25,431	26,484
Geology.....	d 63,606	66,846
Total.....	3,279,531	3,406,920

a The reduction in the total for this department is due to the fact that a large number of specimens have been transferred from time to time to the department of arts and industries. In many cases the material so transferred has formed the nucleus of a new section.

b No estimate of the number of specimens in the duplicate series can be given at this time.

c In addition there is a large quantity of material in storage.

d These figures include the duplicates, which are estimated at 12,000.

The intrinsic value of such collections as these can not well be expressed in figures. There are single specimens worth hundreds, others worth thousands, of dollars, and still others which are unique and priceless. Many series of specimens which owe their value to their completeness and to the labor which has been expended on them can not be replaced at any price. The collections at a forced sale would realize more than has been expended on them, and a fair appraisal of their value would amount to several millions of dollars.

In the direct purchase of specimens but little money has been spent, less, perhaps, in fifty years than either France, England, Germany, or Austria expends in a single year on similar objects. The entire museum is the outgrowth of Government expeditions and expositions, and of the gifts prompted by the generosity of the American people.

If there were more space it would be possible to devote a special hall to the collections illustrating the life of the races of the far North, the Esquimos and their kin. A large hall might be filled with the wonderful groups of models of the races of mankind, and particularly of the different tribes of the North American Indians, clothed in their characteristic costumes and engaged in the arts and occupations peculiar to each. These groups are recognized in Europe as having no equal, and are now temporarily placed in the lecture room and in various out-of-the-way corners, where their effect and usefulness are largely lost. No other museum in the world has such rich material in this field, but at present only a small number of exhibition cases can be devoted to them, and the remainder of the material is stowed away in drawers and packing boxes.

The magnificent mounted groups of the larger animals of America, unsurpassed by anything of the kind in the world, are now so crowded together in the midst of other collections that they are scarcely visible, and some of which are packed away. The great fossil vertebrate animals of North America, of which there is a magnificent series. A considerable portion of this collection is now stored in the basement of the museum at Yale College for lack of room to receive it here, although it is much needed by the geologists of the Geological Survey for purposes of study.

Another hall is needed which might well be devoted to economic geology, illustrating the wonderful material wealth of our country and its utilization; and still another is needed to illustrate the material resources of the country, classified by States. With the present accommodations the materials and ores of each State are confined to one or two small cases. A hall of proper extent, arranged upon this geographical plan, would be one of the most impressive displays of the kind to be seen anywhere in the world.

The building devoted especially to the Museum was erected after the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, as a temporary accommodation for the collections given to the United States by the foreign Governments and private exhibitors represented on that occasion. It is the cheapest public building of a permanent character ever erected, having cost only \$2.25 a square foot of floor space available for exhibition. The museum buildings in Central Park, New York, have cost from \$30 to \$40 a square foot.

The building in Washington has served a good purpose, but is deficient in one of the most important particulars; it has no cellars whatever, and very little provision for workshops and laboratories. In consequence of this it has been necessary to use all kinds of devices for storing material which can not be exhibited in the exhibition halls, in the bases under the exhibition cases, in small recesses, so ingeniously

contrived that their presence is not suspected. It has been necessary to do this, but the result has been to still further increase the crowded condition.

Another disagreeable result is that much noisy work has to be done in the Museum halls in spaces shut off from the public by screens, and that when preparations for exhibitions or unpacking are going on, not only are portions of the collections closed to the public, but there is a constant and unpleasant noise of hammers.

A temporary relief was secured some years ago by placing the great herbarium, one of the most important collections of American plants in the world, in the custody of the Agricultural Department; but last year the Secretary of Agriculture found himself unable to longer give these collections houseroom; and since the building in which they were kept is not fireproof, and the destruction of the collection would be an incalculable loss to science, there was nothing to do but to receive this, and up to the present time a considerable portion of the collection still remains in danger of destruction by fire, at the Department of Agriculture. There is also a large amount of other material which ought to be arranged for public exhibition in a fireproof building which is now in the inflammable wooden structure adjoining the Department of Agriculture, and which the Secretary is desirous of transferring if accommodation can be found for it.

All the collections of the Geological Survey are stored in this building, and a considerable number of the scientific experts employed by the Survey have office room and accommodations to enable them to study in the Museum building. These accommodations have become absolutely inadequate and there is no more room to receive the collections, which the Director of the Survey deems absolutely necessary to have here in Washington in connection with his investigations of the material wealth of the country.

The crowded condition of the exhibition halls has been dwelt upon, but that of the storage rooms is still more congested. In the basement of the old Smithsonian building, in its towers, and in various small rooms about the new building, there is a space equivalent to perhaps 200,000 cubic feet, crowded to its utmost capacity with boxed material. This material is all carefully recorded, and the location and contents of every box is definitely fixed, so that when necessary any desired object can be referred to; but satisfactory use of the collections is impossible. In one basement room, for instance, are crowded 50,000 skins of birds, and 50,000 in an adjacent gallery, altogether twelve times as many as are shown in the exhibition hall. So closely are they crowded that it is impossible even to rearrange them, and their study is attended with great difficulty. It is desired to separate from among these the duplicates for distribution to the colleges and schools throughout the country, and an attempt has been made to accomplish this, but it has been found practically impossible.

The great collection of alcoholic fishes (the result in part of the explorations of the Fish Commission), the most extensive in America and one of the most extensive in the world, is stored in two basement rooms and only accessible with the greatest difficulty. Furthermore, the crowding of such a mass of alcoholic material in a small space is very dangerous, and in case of fire would lead to disastrous results. Properly equipped museums, like the British Museum in London, have a special fireproof building for collections of this kind, separate from other buildings, and provided with special devices for the prevention of fire.

In addition to the storage within the fireproof buildings there are a

number of sheds whose capacity is roughly estimated at 170,000 cubic feet, which are packed with valuable material, and in which most of the workshops are placed. Two of these are immediately south of the Smithsonian building, another at the southeast corner of the Museum building, two others to the southwest of the old Armory building, and another, temporarily hired, halfway between the Museum and the Capitol. Until 1888 two floors of the old Armory building were used for the storage of Museum material. It then became necessary to give up one floor to accommodate the increasing necessities of the Fish Commission, and in 1894 to give it up entirely to the Commission. At that time an appropriation was made to rent storage rooms in the city. Suitable storage rooms can not be rented; we have had to move twice and are now being forced to a third move. These moves are destructive and expensive.

The two sheds adjoining the Armory building are getting old and some of the timbers are rotting away. They can not be repaired because there is no place to put the material they contain while the work is being done, and they are so crowded that temporary readjustments for this purpose are not possible.

All of the wooden storage sheds are in constant danger from destruction by fire. This is a matter especially serious in connection with two long sheds near the Smithsonian building. In his report to the regents, presented to Congress in 1894, Secretary Langley made an earnest appeal for relief in the following words:

I have the assurance of experts that a fire communicated to these rooms would sweep through the entire length of the building, and although the building itself is fireproof as against any ordinary danger, it may well be doubted whether any of the collections therein exhibited can be regarded as safe, if the rooms immediately below should be exposed to so peculiarly severe a conflagration as would be caused by the ignition of these large quantities of inflammable material. Besides this, these wooden sheds, which (as I have already intimated) are used not only for storerooms, but for workshops, for the preservation of specimens, and also as sheds for the carpenters, are likewise liable to cause serious losses should a fire be kindled in any of them, and all of these, I repeat, are immediately under the windows of the Smithsonian building.

In a report recently submitted by one of the inspectors of the Association of Fire Underwriters, in response to a request from me for a statement as to what insurance rates would be fixed upon the sheds in question, the Smithsonian building is referred to as an undesirable risk, owing solely to the presence of all this inflammable material underneath and in the adjoining sheds, on which latter insurance can not be placed for less than \$40 per \$1,000. This is, I am informed, nearly ten times the rate which would be charged on an ordinary warehouse. The chief danger, however, is not to the sheds themselves or their contents, but to the adjoining collections which, without reference to their scientific interest but merely to their intrinsic value, represent a very large sum of money.

The result of all this crowding and lack of facility for work is that what is accomplished for public education by the Museum requires unnecessary and unusual effort, and that the fullest results are not realized from the appropriations which are made for this branch of the public service.

Another result is that the value of the collections, the property of the nation, is not increasing as rapidly as it would otherwise do. The amount of valuable material presented and bequeathed to the Museum is not as great as it seemed likely to be a few years ago. Nothing which is offered is refused, but the authorities of the Museum do not feel at liberty to ask for gifts when they can not assure the givers that they can be suitably cared for; and persons having collections to give, being aware of the lack of room, naturally prefer to place their gifts in institutions where there is room to receive them.

Notwithstanding these hindrances to the Museum's progress, the

increment from legitimate sources, especially from the various Departments of the Government, which are required by law to deposit their accumulations here, was during the year 1895 about 127,000 specimens. In 1894 the accessions were more numerous, the total exceeding 171,000. This large increase was in part at least due to the fact that a large number of collections were acquired at the close of the World's Fair in Chicago. These were almost without exception collections which had been prepared by foreign exhibitors with the Smithsonian Institution in mind as the ultimate place of deposit.

It would have been possible to have obtained an immense number of specimens on this occasion, but it was deemed proper to refrain from efforts in this direction, not only because of the considerations just referred to, but also on account of the desire of the people of Chicago to retain such objects in their own city as a beginning toward a great civic museum which might serve as a permanent memorial of the World's Columbian Exposition. It has always been the policy of the Smithsonian Institution to encourage the development of such institutions throughout the United States, and to assist in developing them, and on this account many proffers of specimens were declined, with the recommendation that they be offered to the Chicago Museum, and, so far as it was possible to do so, the attention of exhibitors who had collections to dispose of was directed toward that institution.

A census of the number of specimens now contained in the various departments of the Museum shows that the total is about 3,500,000, almost all of which have been acquired by gift, in exchange for other specimens, or as an equivalent for publications.

The following statement shows the number of specimens received during the years 1893-94 and 1894-95:

Department.	1893-94.	1894-95.
Arts and industries:		
Textiles	18	2
Animal products	34
Graphic arts	270	70
Forestry	1	23
Transportation and engineering	19	6
Naval architecture	202
Historical collections	608	298
Musical instruments	138	81
Modern pottery, porcelain, bronzes, etc.	39	14
Physical apparatus	75
Domestic animals	28	41
Ethnology	5,088	2,642
American aboriginal pottery	99	75
Oriental antiquities and religious ceremonials ..	200	171
Prehistoric anthropology	13,242	50,096
Mammals (skins and alcoholics)	2,744	1,484
Birds	4,367	5,499
Birds' eggs and nests	4,133	2,023
Reptiles and batrachians	894	1,093
Fishes	6,200	6,000
Mollusks (including Cenozoic fossils)	21,931	14,132
Insects	11,800	13,000
Marine invertebrates	3,684	2,378
Helminthological collection	106
Comparative anatomy:		
Mammals	} 1,643	} 250
Birds		
Reptiles and batrachians		
Fishes		
Paleozoic fossils	592	} 6,642
Mesozoic fossils	200	
Fossil plants	1,000	
Recent plants	85,000	16,897
Minerals	5,900	1,053
Geology	1,465	3,240
Total	171,614	127,389

The State of New York this year gives \$500,000 for a new wing to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, a building which had already cost nearly \$1,000,000. New York City has also expended since the erection of our Washington building over \$1,000,000 for its Museum of Art. The city of Cincinnati has built a museum costing three times as much as that in Washington. San Francisco, Milwaukee, and Pittsburg have also recently put up buildings—the exact cost of which I can not at this moment give—all of a more expensive character than the one which it is now proposed to build in Washington. The building completed in 1882 for the British Museum at South Kensington cost \$2,500,000. In Vienna, in Paris and Berlin, since our building was put up, buildings costing from four to ten times as much have been constructed.

The British Museum every year expends as much for the purchase of collections as has been expended from the Treasury of the United States for its Museum in fifty years. Since 1893 the sum of \$1,486,537 in cash has been given to the Field-Columbian Museum in Chicago, mostly by residents of that city.

