

## SENATE....No. 49.

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### Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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IN SENATE, March 5th, 1852.

The Joint Standing Committee on the Library, to whom was recommitteed the Resolve providing for the temporary deposit in the Boston Athenæum of the Books, Engravings, &c., received by the State from M. Vattemare,

#### REPORT:

That in recommending such disposition of the Books and other property thus received, they were governed by two motives. In the first place, they were convinced that the room now taken up by the books received from M. Vattemare was imperatively required for other purposes. The State Library was established for the use of the several branches of the State Government, and therefore should consist, and does consist, principally, of works relating to Government: of historical and legal works, of volumes of legislative documents, of files of newspapers, and of other similar productions. How valuable soever the works received from M. Vattemare may be, it will hardly be contended that they, or any large portion of them, relate to the science of Government, or are likely to be consulted by members of the Legislature, or of the Executive branch of the Government, in course of their labors in the public service. They occupy room that the public interest demands should be used for the careful preservation of works for the

collection and keeping of which the State Library was originally formed, and has since been kept up, and is annually increased. Works of value are now receiving injury in the Library because there are no proper places in which to deposit them,—places in which they can be preserved from rapid decay; and if the books received through the system of international exchanges should be removed, the room required for the regular and legitimate purposes of the Library would be obtained, to some extent, for the present. For these reasons, the Committee, after examining the state of the Library, and acquainting themselves with the character of the works received from M. Vattermare, came to the conclusion that it was proper to recommend that those works should be removed from the State Library to some convenient place of deposit, where their safety should be well cared for, and where they would be easily accessible to all who have now the right to use them.

Convinced that the books referred to should be, at least temporarily, removed from the State Library, the Committee had next to consider the most proper place to recommend as that of their deposit. After due consideration, they came to the conclusion that the Boston Athenæum was the institution in which they should be placed. The admirable manner in which the business of that institution is discharged by experienced officers,—men of character and of high standing in the literary world,—afforded, in the estimation of the Committee, all the security that could be desired that the property of the State would be safe in its custody. No one who is acquainted with the condition of the books and other valuable property in the Athenæum can suppose that any damage could there befall the books of the State, beyond such as might happen from causes beyond human control, and which would be as likely to happen in one place as in another. The Athenæum building is substantially a fire-proof structure, and therefore one source of danger to the books would be avoided should they be deposited in it.

The Committee have never been of opinion that the State would be conferring a favor on the Athenæum by committing to the careful charge of its officers property of value, to be used in the same manner that it now is, and in no other way. They

only desired to recommend what they believed would be the safest place of deposit, without reference to the question of obligation, which they believe would be found, on close examination, entirely on the side of the State, and not on that of the Athenæum.

The Committee are decidedly of opinion that the books should not be divided, if removed from the State Library. The chances of injury befalling them would be doubled in the event of their being deposited in two places; and though the Committee cannot see that there would be any other than the remotest and most improbable chances of their being exposed to injury from being deposited in the Library of the Athenæum, they are of opinion that their being placed in some new institution, the rules and practices of which are yet to acquire the force that comes from experience and time, would be to expose them to risks which the property of the State should not encounter, especially when no counterbalancing good can be named against such exposure to injury of articles requiring the utmost care and attention to preserve them from destruction.

The Committee recommend the adoption of the following resolve.

For the Committee,

CHARLES C. HAZEWELL, *Chairman.*

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[Reported by the Committee on the Library.]

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## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty-  
Two.

### RESOLVE

Relative to the Removal of Books received from M.  
Vattemare to the Boston Athenæum.

*Resolved,* That the Trustees of the State Library be authorized to deposit such books, maps and engravings received by International Exchanges through M. Vattemare, or otherwise, as they may deem least suitable for its purposes, in the Library of the Boston Athenæum, subject to be recalled at pleasure, and to be used under the rules of that institution, by any person having a right to use either of said libraries.