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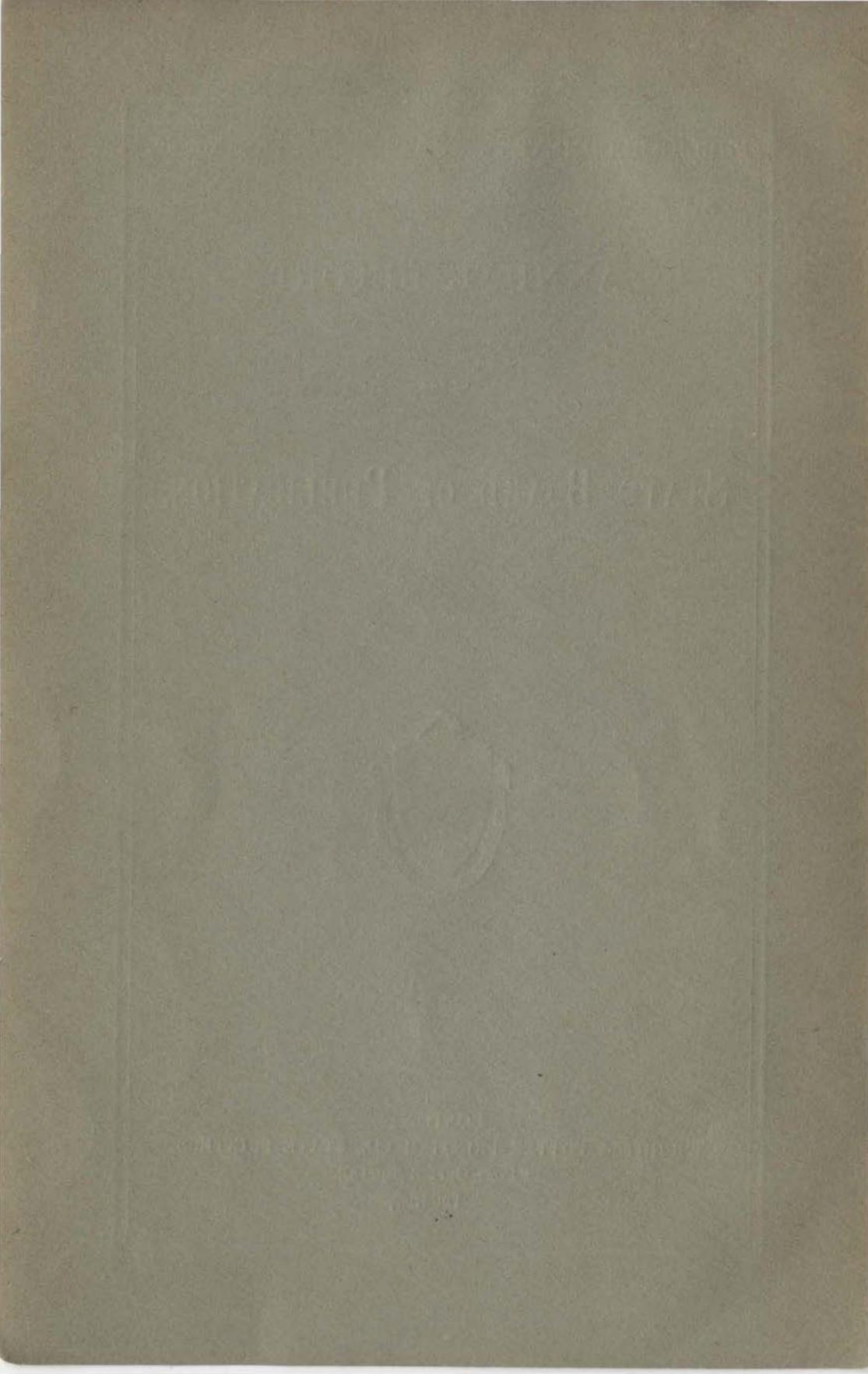
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

STATE BOARD OF PUBLICATION.



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

ANNUAL REPORT.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled.

The State Board of Publication, created by chapter 438 of the Acts of the year 1902, submits herewith its first report.

On July 16, 1902, William D. T. Trefry, James W. Kimball and John Woodbury were appointed members of the Board. Mr. Trefry, on account of additional duties imposed upon him by legislation in relation to the corporation laws of the State, felt compelled to resign the position on September 16, and William N. Davenport was appointed to fill the vacancy on September 17. The Board met for organization on October 1, and elected James W. Kimball chairman and William N. Davenport secretary. On October 6, the following circular letter was sent to the heads of departments:—

Your attention is called to chapter 438 of the Acts of the year 1902, creating this Board and defining its duties. A copy of the act is printed on the following page. An examination of the annual reports of the departments of the State leads this Board to make the following suggestions at this time. It seems desirable that the annual reports of departments and any appendix matter or illustrations should be limited to matters relating to the work of the department for the year covered by the report. It also appears that there has been a growing tendency to include in many of the reports a large amount of tabulated statistical matter, the printing of which has become a large item of expense. This Board, therefore, suggests a careful consideration by the departments of how far it is possible to limit the printing of such tables without diminishing the value of the reports as public documents. It also seems desirable that there should be a greater

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uniformity in the arrangement of the annual reports, and this Board suggests the following arrangement, where it is practicable: —

Title page, giving exact period covered by report.
 Table of contents, if report is subdivided.
 Names of Board and principal officers.
 Report of the Board.
 Reports of subordinate officers.
 Financial statement.
 Appendix matter.
 Index, if needed.

Communications to the Board may be addressed to the chairman, at the State House.

At the present time all but one of the departments covered by the law have submitted statements of the scope and estimates of the size of their annual reports, which, with some amendments, have been approved by the Board, and the reports themselves have either been printed or are in the hands of the printer. In cases where the Board desired any substantial changes to be made, the department was notified and a hearing given before reaching a decision. The Board desires to record the fact that it has, in general, met with hearty co-operation on the part of the various departments in the attempt to improve the reports on the lines suggested by the circular letter. Until all the reports are printed it is not possible to estimate the amount of matter that has been eliminated, but it is evident that a considerable saving has been made, without, in the opinion of the Board, diminishing the value of the reports as public documents.

Section 2 of the act creating the Board makes it the duty of the Board to pass upon not only reports, but also "other documents issued by or in behalf of the Commonwealth by any public officer, board or commission." The following opinion was obtained from the Attorney-General as to the meaning of the words "other documents," in relation to specific instances: —

BOSTON, Nov. 11, 1902.

WILLIAM N. DAVENPORT, Esq., *Secretary, State Board of Publication.*

DEAR SIR: — Your letter of October 27th requires my opinion as to the scope of the authority of the State Board of Publication under the provisions of Sts. 1902, c. 438. You state that the question

arises upon an application of a State officer for authority to print a compilation of the laws relating to the department under his charge, and upon a request of a State board for authority to publish certain information useful in the schools of the Commonwealth, and the specific question submitted by you is whether or not publications of the kind indicated are included within the words "other documents," as used in section 2.

Sts. 1902, c. 438, § 1, establishes a State Board of Publication. Section 2 (the section in question) provides that it shall be the duty of such Board "to examine the annual reports and all special reports and *other documents* issued by or on behalf of the Commonwealth by any public officer, board or commission, and to define the form and extent thereof," with certain exceptions thereafter made. Section 3 provides that public officers, boards or commissions may, in addition to their annual report, make such special reports as shall be deemed by the State Board of Publication to be of practical utility. Section 4 provides that all boards or commissions, before entering upon the preparation of any publication, shall submit to the State Board of Publication careful statements of the scope and estimates of the size of the intended publication, and such Board is given power to determine the number of pages, to decide upon the desirability of illustration and other details. By section 6, an appeal is permitted from the decisions of the Board to the Governor and Council.

The word "document," as used in this statute, has no technical signification. It is employed in its ordinary meaning, and denotes a written or printed paper containing an authoritative record or statement, or, more generally, a publication which is designed to serve as a source of evidence or information upon a particular subject or class of subjects.

Taken in this sense, I have no hesitation in advising you that the word "document" in Sts. 1902, c. 438, § 2, extends to and includes publications of the character referred to in your communication, and that such publications are subject to the examination and approval of your Board.

Very truly yours,

HERBERT PARKER,
Attorney-General.

In accordance with this opinion, this Board has been called upon to examine and approve a considerable amount of printed matter issued by various departments.

The Board does not make any recommendations for legislation on the subject of public documents at this time. In view

of the fact, however, that it appears to be impracticable to have all the annual reports in print in time to be of use to the Legislature to which they are made, it calls attention to the following statute: —

[REVISED LAWS, CHAPTER 18, SECTION 6.]

State boards and commissions shall annually, on or before the first Wednesday in January, deposit with the secretary of the commonwealth such parts of their annual reports which are required to be made to the governor and council or to the general court as contain recommendations or suggestions for legislative action; and the secretary shall forthwith transmit them to the governor and council or to the general court.

It seems to this Board that the above statute presents a method of eliminating the difficulty which often arises from unavoidable delay in the printing of annual reports; and it has, therefore, when requested so to do, approved portions of reports which could be intelligently considered separately, that they might be printed for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES W. KIMBALL.
WM. N. DAVENPORT.
JOHN WOODBURY.

MAY 12, 1903.

