

1860-1.

VICTORIA.

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# PUBLIC LIBRARY.

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REPLY to Question put by Mr. Don, 16th April, 1861, for—

Copy of the Correspondence between the Trustees of the Public Library and the Government respecting additional accommodation.

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*Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 7th May, 1861.*

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No. 81.

SIR,

Public Library, 16th July, 1860.

I have the honor to submit the accompanying estimates of the proposed expenditure for the Melbourne Public Library for the year 1861, recommended by the trustees; and beg leave to subjoin the following remarks:—The number of books already in the library exceeds nineteen thousand (the Anglesea has brought nearly two thousand volumes within the last week), and before the end of this year, will, in all probability amount in number twenty-three thousand.

The number of readers during this year will, according to the present ratio of attendance, exceed one hundred and sixty thousand, and as the attractions presented by additions to the library department and those to be offered by the opening of the department of Fine Arts, increase, the numbers, it is reasonable to expect, will be considerably augmented.

Before the opening of the Queen's room much inconvenience was felt in consequence of actual want of space; this gave rise to repeated remonstrance on the part of the public, and was a source of perpetual anxiety to the trustees as to the supervision absolutely indispensable for due preservation of the valuable property committed to their care, could not be adequately conducted in a confined and crowded chamber. Similar inconvenience must ensue when the books have quintupled in number, and the large additions come in which are expected from foreign governments, public and literary institutions, with which the trustees are in correspondence, and when the number of visitors is more than trebled. It is highly desirable, therefore, to prevent by timely anticipation, a recurrence of such well-founded cause for dissatisfaction.

There are, however, other reasons which may be respectfully pressed upon the attention of Her Majesty's Government.

Application has been made to the Commissioners of the Patent Office for a complete set of works published under their authority. Of these highly important publications the country already possesses two complete sets; but one lies in the Library of the Houses of Parliament, neither arranged nor bound, and accessible only to those who enjoy the exclusive privilege of membership; the other lies in the office of patents, for the sole use of the officers of that department, so that the country at large derives comparatively little benefit from the liberality of the Commissioners, and to the public they remain sealed volumes.

The fact of two copies having been already supplied influenced the Commissioners in refusing an application already made by the trustees; however, not discouraged by the refusal they have again addressed themselves to the Commissioners, and have the honor to acknowledge the ready and energetic support of His Excellency Sir Henry Barkly, in aid of their exertions to secure this valuable acquisition; upon this they now strongly rely for a successful result.

A.—No. 40.

£1,500.

The mere money value of these works is fifteen hundred pounds; but the intrinsic worth of the publication to the people of this country is incalculable, as so much remains here to be accomplished in economising manual and other labor, in preventing the wasteful expenditure of power already employed in the great industria' operations of the country, and in guiding aright the intellectual ability and energy now misdirected or occupied upon the painful elaboration of ideas, hasty or obstructed by reason of the absence of complete information on the subject of the progress hitherto made in mechanical and scientific improvements—information which such a collection of works alone can supply.

Should the trustees be so fortunate as to secure this collection, it is proposed to place them together with works relating to physical and applied science, the practical arts, and other kindred and allied subjects, in a separate chamber, in which will also be deposited small illustrative working models. To this department of literature a particular class of visitors would resort: such students would necessarily move from place to place when consulting the authorities and comparing the operations of the models; this would distract the attention of others engaged in more quiet pursuits, and interfere with the order (so essential to their comfort and convenience) which at present prevails in so marked a manner in the institution.

Again, the introduction of the works of art ordered from Europe will call for increase of accommodation. To produce the desired impression these must be exhibited under conditions most favorable for illustrating their respective and relative merits, and the contemplated effect to be wrought upon the public mind and taste will be seriously marred if the different and dissimilar objects be huddled together without the classification and arrangement so indispensable for their appropriate display as well as for the instructive illustration of the historical development of art. I may further remark that it is considered highly desirable to appropriate an apartment for such students as wish to make extracts, and who require the use of ink, which has hitherto been necessarily excluded from the library for the protection of the books from injury.

The want of such an apartment is being more and more felt, as resort is had to the library for the purpose of research and extract, and it is a source of regret that the trustees cannot yet comply with the frequent applications made to them on the subject. Independent of these considerations, which it is hoped will have due weight, the trustees are extremely anxious to be enabled to carry out their undertaking with the librarian (made on his accepting office) that he should be supplied with chambers for residence, justice to this gentleman to whom an inadequate compensation by way of house allowance is at present made, would, of itself, suggest the propriety of this proposal; but the trustees may be permitted to urge it respectfully and strongly on public ground, and also on those personal to themselves. It has been for a long time to them a subject of anxiety, increasing as the property increases in value, that they cannot secure the continuous supervision of the affairs of the institution by the gentleman to whose direction they are committed. This can only be done by giving him a residence upon the premises, which would enable him to make an occasional interchange of duty with the sub-librarian, (now engaged daily without relief from 4 p.m. until after 11 o'clock at night), and give to the trustees the additional assurance of his presence to protect the property, for the due conservancy of which they are responsible.

130. The trustees are by no means insensible of the fact that many and various pressing calls upon the General Revenue for necessary works exist, and that objections have, perhaps, without due consideration been directed against the alleged disproportionate expenditure in adorning the capital, they would, however, submit that as this institution has firmly established itself in public favor, as its success in meeting the intellectual wants of the community has exceeded the hopes of the most sanguine, as it is now pre-eminently in advance of any similar institution in any of the Australian dependencies of the Crown, as it may take rank before one hundred and thirty public libraries in Europe, exceeding in liberality of internal management any yet established, and as the benefits it is capable of conferring admit of almost unlimited expansion at a cost minutely trifling in comparison with the ample resources at the command of the people of this country. The trustees have established what may be esteemed a fair claim on your good offices and on the sympathies of Her Majesty's Government for a continuance of the favorable disposition with which the library has been hitherto regarded.

In conclusion, I must ask to be excused for having so far trespassed on your attention, and to subjoin an account of the proceedings which took place when His Excellency Sir Henry Barkly was pleased to open the Queen's room.

The trustees have, on all occasions, had much reason to be grateful for the aid which His Excellency has been pleased to extend to them, and it is their hope that they may find Her Majesty's Government animated by the like intention.

I also subjoin some statistical information which may prove of interest.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) REDMOND BARRY,

One of the Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library.

The Honorable the Commissioner of Public Works.

## NUMBER OF VISITORS TO THE MELBOURNE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

1856	...	...	...	...	...	...	23,769
1857	...	...	...	...	...	...	49,226
1858	...	...	...	...	...	...	77,925
1859	...	...	...	...	...	...	127,897
1860 (to date)	...	...	...	...	...	...	68,750

(Signed) REDMOND BARRY,  
One of the Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library.

## ESTIMATES 1860.—PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Additional wing for the purpose of exhibiting objects of Fine Art—

Models and Works on Patents and the Natural and Applied Sciences	...	£14,000	0	0
Furniture and fittings for the above including chandeliers ..	...	1,000	0	0
Furniture for the present building	... ..	500	0	0

14th July, 1860.

(Signed) REDMOND BARRY.

## ESTIMATES 1859.—PUBLIC LIBRARY.

The completion of the south wing to include Ladies' Reading Room and Lavatory, Trustees' Room, Apartments for Librarian and Housekeeper

...	£11,000	0	0
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## REMARKS.

There is an increasing demand for accommodation for ladies desirous to visit the library, who, from a disinclination to pursue studies in the chamber now over-crowded with gentleman, are virtually excluded from the benefits the institution affords.

The trustees have no private room in which to meet and conduct business.

The library is at the present time completely unprotected at night. No person resides on the premises, as no provision has hitherto been made for apartments for the librarian. This is a cause of constant anxiety to the trustees, increasing as additions are made to the valuable property entrusted to their charge. The librarian is paid at present an inadequate sum as house allowance in consequence of the inability of the trustees to fulfil the terms of their engagement with him respecting a residence.

(Signed) REDMOND BARRY.