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1801-1900,

WITH A FEW OF EARLIER DATE

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THE following Catalogue does not pretend to be a complete exhaustive list of all the Papers ordered to be printed by Parliament, but it is claimed that the most important Papers, Diplomatic Correspondence, the Reports of Commissions and Select Committees are given here in a form more easily referred to than in the Official General Indexes.

An attempt also has been made to give some idea of the contents of the Papers, in those many cases where the title does not give special indication of, or suggest the nature and variety of, the information to be found within.

This publication is an amalgamation of a number of separate Catalogues, dealing with special subjects, which have been issued by our firm during the last fifty years. The task of checking these, bringing them up to date, and arranging the subjects under proper headings, has been a work of considerable magnitude and taken a long time to perform. It is due to the patience, skill, and intelligence of the compiler, Miss Hilda Vernon Jones, that the result has been so creditably accomplished.

The Publishers believe that this Catalogue will be of service to Librarians and Students, as showing the information which has been collected together by Parliament, during the course of a century, on questions of Government, Economics, and the numerous Social subjects connected with the well-being of the Peoples and Countries of the world.

For the sake of reference and convenience of Librarians, a list is appended of the Official Indexes of the Parliamentary Papers printed both by the House of Lords and House of Commons, since 1801. (Page iv.)

The Catalogue has been printed on paper with wide margins, and the Publishers hope that this will be a convenience to Librarians, as it will enable them to place the press-mark, shelf or reference number against any of the Papers they may have in their possession.

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General Index to the Sessional Papers printed by order of the
House of Lords, or presented by Special Command, from
1801 to 1859. 1 vol. folio - - - - *Out of Print.*

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Annual Alphabetical Index for each year, 1886 to 1901. *Each, 2s.*

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS were not sold to the public until Session 1836, shortly before the accession of Queen Victoria. Previous to 1801, it was customary to insert Reports, Estimates, and other material papers in the Journals, but the question of their publication elsewhere than as such insertions formed the subject of more than one Report.

In 1773 a selection of valuable Reports of Committees, which had not been printed in the Journals, was made, and the selection published in four large volumes. These were followed in 1803 by a further eleven volumes selected by a Committee, who at the same time drew attention to the necessity of an Index to the Volumes.

Mr Hansard, Printer to the House of Commons, undertook the task of making the Index, which appeared in 1803; to it he added a list of Reports inserted in the Journals of the House, during the last century (1696 to 1800), but not reprinted in the above selection; giving, in each case, an abstract or précis of their subject-matter.

This Index is a large folio volume with the subject-headings printed in Old English type. The short analyses, with dates inserted, are invaluable to the student, to whose mind the volumes, undigested, and with an apparently irrelevant connection of subjects, must present a forbidding aspect (see No. 5556).

This first series of reprints, comprising with the Index sixteen volumes, was restricted to Reports of Committees only; but a Committee appointed in 1825 recommended a selection of the Parliamentary Papers to be made and issued, in which Reports of Commissioners and other Papers of interest and importance were to be included. A classified list of these Papers was added as an Appendix to the Committee's Report.

"In these Reports," so runs the quaint prefacing Memoir, "there is scarcely a subject connected with the Laws, Institutions, Commerce, and Morals of the Country, but what will be found treated on:—Administration of Justice, Privileges of Parliament, the National Church, Education, Arts and Manufactures, Agriculture, Trade, Criminal Law, Police, &c., . . . all have their place . . . and the important and useful information they contain justifies the enlargement of the field of selection."

Expenses of printing the Papers, Proceedings, &c., occupied the attention of the House in 1828, and a Committee was appointed to consider the means of lessening them. A curious observation is made by this Committee on the printing of Petitions presented to Parliament: While in no way wishing to restrain the fair expression of public opinion, they recommend that Petitions which are more in the nature of general disquisitions upon controversial subjects should be published through the medium of the newspapers and at the Petitioners' expense. Complaints of the insufficiency of Statistical information relating to the British Empire, caused an

Inquiry to be made in 1833, as to the supply and arrangement of Public Documents and the facility of access to them afforded to Members of Parliament.

A digest of Statistics by John Marshall, abstracted from more than 600 Parliamentary Papers, Journals, &c., and containing figures from 1799 onwards, was in existence already, and this was followed by the publication of a series of Statistical Tables from 1820 to 1852 compiled by Messrs G. R. Porter and A. W. Fonblanque, of the Board of Trade. These Tables are usually known as "Porter's Tables."

A suggestive letter on the formation of a Statistical Department was written to the Committee by Dr (afterwards Sir John) Bowring. He proposed that Statistics should be collected from all parts of the world by a special Department and arranged in such a manner as to furnish reliable information to Parliament and the general public. He divided his Department into six branches—Finance, Commerce, Education, Jurisprudence, Public Works, and Public Opinion :

A Public Opinion Branch seems to open up a wide field. "Governments," he said, "are always occupied in ascertaining the state of the public mind upon subjects of public interest, and through the medium of accredited newspapers and periodicals, proceedings and debates in foreign legislatures, &c., much valuable information might be obtained."

Charles Manners Sutton, then Speaker, in giving evidence before this Committee said he saw no reason why the general public should not be supplied with printed copies of Parliamentary Papers, in cases where any general interest in their subject had been aroused ; and he pointed out that they already had a right to be furnished with a manuscript copy of the proceedings of Public Committees.

It would appear from questions put to all the witnesses, that the question of the supply of Parliamentary Papers now began to have a wider issue.

Early in 1834 a Select Committee of the House of Lords, in deliberating upon Printing expenses, &c., resolved that it would be "generally convenient and might lead to a further saving of the public money," if the Parliamentary Printers were allowed to execute orders from booksellers for copies of the Papers printed for the use of the House. Members' Papers were at this time exempt from postage, but this privilege was not to be extended to the additional copies for the use of the public.

At this time there was also much discussion on the privileges of printing and selling Acts of Parliament. This question and that of the supply and sale of Parliamentary Papers form the subject of three Reports of a House of Commons Committee presided over by Joseph Hume, which sat in 1835. "The duty of Parliament," says this Committee, "is to give facilities for the distribution of Acts of Parliament, so that the laws of the country may be

known to the people who obey them. But this cannot be done unless the Acts are sold in a convenient form and at a low price."

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had not for many years availed themselves of their perpetual right to publish the Statutes at Large, and at this time the privilege was solely exercised by the King's Printer under Royal Patent.

Both in England, Scotland, and Ireland, the exclusive right of printing and selling every Act of Parliament had been claimed under that Patent, and acted upon in such a way as to secure to the Patentees the complete monopoly both of the Acts of Parliament and of the Statutes at Large. These monopolising privileges were not considered reasonable or necessary by the Committee, and the disadvantage of increased price both to the trade and to the Government was pointed out by them. It is however worth noting, that the monopoly continued to be vested in the Queen's Printer up till 1886, when the rights were transferred to H.M. Stationery Office, and the new red cloth edition of the Statutes, "published by authority," made its appearance.

The Second Report of this Committee of 1835 contains the following important recommendation: "That the Reports and Parliamentary Papers printed for the use of the House should be rendered accessible to the public, by purchase, at the lowest possible price at which they can be furnished; that a sufficient number of copies should be printed for the purpose; and that they should be sold by agents in London from whom the country demand can be supplied."

The Report says that there had been on the part of the public a considerable demand for the Sessional Papers, a demand chiefly supplied by Members giving their own copies to constituents and friends, or procuring them by order of the Speaker.

Papers could certainly be bought at the Vote Office, but the fact was not generally known, nor could any Paper be had singly, as complete Sets only were supplied. It was also thought that Public Institutions, Libraries, &c., might now be induced to buy Parliamentary Papers.

In 1835 Charles Knight (publisher to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge) had in his list for sale the following Parliamentary Papers:—

Tables of Revenue, Population, and Commerce (1820-33), folio, 36s.

Tables of Revenue of Colonies, folio, 15s.

Report on Municipal Corporations, 1833. Four parts, folio, 25s. each.

A note is added, "By permission of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, a limited number has been taken for public sale."

A Committee having finally settled various details with regard to printing, prices, &c., by May 1837 the public circulation of Parliamentary Papers was fully established.