

Mr. George L. Stedman, of Albany : I move that the report of the Treasurer be received and approved. Carried.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY.

Gentlemen of the New York State Bar Association :

As we have just entered the twentieth year of the existence of our Association under many gratifying circumstances, a brief review of its initial history and some of the work done in those years (while presenting other matters for your consideration) may be useful and not without interest.

Ours is one of the first, if not the first, State Bar Association organized in the Union.

The first Bar Association known in the history of this State was organized October 21, 1836; that eminent lawyer and peerless legal orator, Ogden Hoffman, was its first president, and a long list of the brightest legal luminaries composed its members. Its corporate name was the "Law Association of New York."

Chancellor James Kent, the great jurist and legal commentator, delivered the organic address, in which he said in part, "we cannot estimate too highly the work, usefulness and practicability of combination and association formed by the union of the members of the bar for the common object of the elevation of their profession, to which they have devoted their lives and their sacred honor. In every sense association and combination are as useful to the legal profession as it is to any other occupation."

The New York State Bar Association was organized under an act of the Legislature, passed May 3, 1876, which requires the Association to furnish a copy of its charter, constitution, by-laws and a volume of its an-

nual reports to the State Library at Albany, and to each of the libraries provided for the use of the justices of the Supreme Court and to each member of the Legislature annually. The act also makes it the duty of every local Bar Association in the State to deposit with the State Bar Association a copy of its act or certificate of incorporation, or its articles of association, its constitution, by-laws and annual report.

The Association went into operation under the approval of the judiciary; a large representation of the bar of the State, State officers and members of the Legislature. It began its work, as outlined in its constitution, under the most auspicious circumstances, with a large and distinguished charter membership.

The objects of the Association were deemed so commendable, useful and important, the duties and responsibilities placed upon it by the Legislature so great, it was brought into such close relationship with the State Library, the use of which was accorded its members, that the Legislature and the bar at once perceived that to facilitate its business a room or rooms in the Capitol ought to be assigned to it. Whereupon, the commissioners of that edifice, taking the same view of the matter, adopted the following preambles and resolution:

"At a meeting of the commissioners of the new Capitol, held at the office of the auditor on the 9th day of November, 1879,

Present—Lieutenant-Governor Dorsheimer, Auditor Schuyler, Attorney-General Schoonmaker.

The attorney-general offered the following preambles and resolution,

Whereas, The New York State Bar Association is required by its charter to furnish copies of its annual

report to the State Library, at Albany, and to each of the libraries provided in each of the counties in the State for the use of the justices of the Supreme Court, and to each member of the Legislature annually,

Whereas, It is a voluntary and public association for the benefit of the people of the State and the bench and bar thereof,

Therefore, be it resolved, That the architects of the Capitol be, and are, directed to designate and prepare for the use of the New York State Bar Association a convenient room in connection with those for the accommodation of the State Library, and connecting with the law department thereof, for the accommodation of the members of the Association, and such rooms shall be set apart for the sole use of the said Association.

JAMES McINTYRE,
Clerk to the Capitol Commission."

The distinguished Attorney-General and the equally distinguished Lieutenant-Governor, the authors of these preambles and the foregoing resolution, continued active, energetic members of the Association until death closed their eminent and, in many respects, historic careers. The last work Mr. Schoonmaker did for the Association was the preparation of a learned, elegantly written address, delivered at the annual meeting of 1894, entitled "Evolution of Judicial Power and Observations Touching the Judiciary." This address exhibited the mind of a profound lawyer, the erudition of a scholarly mind, and his confidence in the New York State Bar Association, and his perfect satisfaction with the work it had accomplished.

The reports of the association are adorned and en-

livened by the productions of the powerful pen of Mr. Dorsheimer.

Under the foregoing preambles and resolution the architects of the Capitol immediately prepared the room so ordered to be provided, and the Association went into possession of it. After occupying it three years changes were made in the rooms of the law department of the State Library, which rendered it necessary to assign other headquarters to the State Bar Association, and it was placed into possession of the room which it now occupies.

For twenty years and over the Association has fulfilled the demands of the Legislature of the State upon it, as expressed in the act of its incorporation. It has, by the most careful circumspection in the election of its members, continued to increase in numbers, influence and usefulness, until it has taken its place at the head of all legal organizations of the kind in the nation. It stands next in importance, if not equal, to the American Bar Association. As was said by an eminent jurist, in an address lately delivered in the city of New York, "It is an honor and an advantage to any lawyer, no matter how high his standing in the profession, to be a member of the New York State Bar Association."

The work of the Association has been manifested in promoting laws tending to the revision of the statutes, a careful and thorough examination of proposed laws, and preventing crude, ill-advised laws. Its work has also been manifested in various legal reforms, facilitating the administration of justice and elevating the standard of integrity, honor and courtesy in the legal profession.

Nineteen volumes of the reports of the proceedings

of the Association enrich the learning of the legal profession, give value and interest to the great library of the State of New York, to the libraries of many other states, and regarded as valuable additions to all public and private law libraries. Earnest requests for them annually come from colleges, universities, institutions of legal and classical learning from every part of the Union, and these demands are always promptly honored. Members of the Legislature are annually furnished the requisite volumes of the reports.

Every branch of information touching the judicial, legal, legislative and statistical history of the State can be obtained in the rooms of the Association in the Capitol.

During the twenty years of our corporate existence, from our membership there have been taken a President of the United States, a Governor of the State, two Lieutenant-Governors, two United States Senators, twenty-five members of Congress, two Chief Justices of the Court of Appeals, five Associate Justices thereof, twelve judges of the Supreme Court of the State, three Attorneys-General, a Secretary of the Navy and a Postmaster-General. The Association has always been honorably, ably and usefully represented in both branches of the Legislature.

The expenses of conducting the proceedings and work of the Association are very large, which have always been paid from the treasury of the Association. It is perfectly reasonable to say, that in view of the requirements which the act incorporating the Association devolved upon it, pecuniary aid from the Legislature might properly and successfully have been solicited, especially when it is a well-known certainty that there are very many departments in the Capitol,

sustained by appropriations from the State treasury, of far less importance and usefulness to the people, the judiciary and the Legislature than the State Bar Association. But the only aid it has ever asked or received from the State is the assignment to it of a room in the Capitol.

Among the many important measures advocated by the Association is the revision of the Code. The bill providing for the revision was unanimously sustained by the Association. It had a strong support in the Legislature, but, as it had no political essence in it, the men who feed and fatten on political and official aliment, smothered it, leaving our system of procedure in a condition derogatory to the honor of the jurisprudence of the State of New York. During the year the Association has successfully called the attention of the President of the United States Senators and Representatives in Congress and the civilized world to international arbitration; and it has the distinguished honor of being the pioneer in that great project.

The subject of a uniform system of examination for the admission of attorneys and counselors-at-law throughout the State has been agitated in the Association until the present law providing for such examinations was passed, and which meets the general approval of the judiciary and profession of the State.

These are some of the measures of reform which have been the work of the Association, to which time permits me to refer.

The subject of increasing the membership of the Association is exceedingly important. While the professional standing and character of members of the Association is more to be desired than a large mem-

bership wanting in the qualities that are demanded of practising lawyers, a membership commensurate with the number of lawyers is to be desired.

During the year accessions to our roll have been encouraging, considering that the number of local Bar Associations, and the project of organizing a Western New York Bar Association, have had some influence in deterring lawyers from becoming members of the State Bar Association.

It is a matter of pleasant retrospection that the State Bar Association has never been invaded by political dissension, by emulation for official power or emoluments, by the hunters after popularity, by men ambitious, not of the honor so much as the profits of office; demagogues whose principles hang loosely on them, and who follow whatever leads to temporary applause and cheap distinction.

Perfect freedom from internal dissension, jealousy and envy; generous recognition of personal worth, pleasure and the absence of the little feuds that so often find their way into many organizations like ours, forms a pleasing view of the past history of our Association.

The Secretary refers with pleasure to the successful administration of our present efficient executive officer, whose able administration is drawing to a close, with the united approbation of the members of the Association. With equal pleasure he refers to the admirable manner in which the fiscal affairs of the Association have been conducted by its efficient and well-qualified treasurer, whose careful management of our financial affairs has largely tended to the success and prosperity of the Association, and I mention, with sentiments of respectful consideration, the able manner in which the Chairman and Secretary of the Executive Committee

have administered the duties of their respective offices. For over twelve successive years he occupied, with credit to himself and advantage to the Association, and discharged the duties of his responsible office.

The Association is largely indebted to all its other officers and to its members generally for the success that has attended it during the year that has passed.

L. B. PROCTOR,

Secretary.

On motion the report was adopted.

The President : The report of standing committees is the next order of business.

Mr. Louis M. King, of Schenectady : The committee on admissions would respectfully recommend that the following named gentlemen be elected :

Stoddard M. Stevens, Rome, N. Y.; Norton Chase, George Lawyer, Nathaniel B. Spalding, Eugene Burlingame, Albany, N. Y.; Charles C. Van Kirk, Greenwich, N. Y.; Theodore R. Tuttle, Owego, N. Y.; Donald McLean, of New York.

On motion, the report was adopted and the members elected.

Hon. John Sanderson presented the following :

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GRIEVANCES.

To the New York State Bar Association :

The Committee on Grievances of the New York State Bar Association respectfully reports that during the past year but one case of alleged professional misconduct has been brought to their attention. The lawyer complained of was not a member of the Association, but the complaint was of such a character that it was deemed proper to take the matter up. The informa-