

volumes; so that, including the bound volumes of serials, we have added to the Library this year by purchase 960, or close on a thousand, volumes.

Of parliamentary records and official publications—Imperial, Colonial, and American—we have received 326 volumes, bound and unbound. Counting in with these the usual number of volumes of newspapers annually bound, we have, under the head of “exchanges,” an increase of 446 volumes.

I have very little to report this year in the way of donations, but the little I have is of rather an interesting nature. Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to present to the Library through His Excellency the Governor a copy of her latest work, “More Leaves from our Journal in the Highlands,” bearing her own autograph. Through the same channel we have received from the Right Hon. the Earl of Derby, Secretary of State for the Colonies, a copy of a most rare and valuable work entitled, “The Epinal Glossary, Latin and Old English, of the Eighth Century,” photo-lithographed from the original manuscript; and also a copy of the Collected Works of the late Dr. Sibson, of the East India Company’s Service, in four volumes. Then, the trustees of the British Museum have, as in previous years, presented us with the publications issued by them during the year, consisting of six volumes. The only private donor is Edward S. Dodgson, Esq., M.A., at present sojourning in Wellington. In grateful recognition of the privilege of reading in the Library he has presented the Committee with nine volumes, consisting of eight copies of the New Testament in various Norse languages, Icelandic, Swedish, &c.—and a Russian grammar in French. These donations, numbering twenty-one volumes in all, were duly acknowledged in the usual way.

The aggregate increase, then, for the year from all sources is 1,436, as against 1,526 in 1884; so that the Library now numbers over 25,600 volumes. Next to the Public Library of Victoria, it is by far the most valuable collection of books south of the line, as is uniformly admitted by the crowds of travellers from all parts of the world who weekly visit it in passing through Wellington.

Increasing as it is doing, I need hardly say that it taxes my ingenuity to the very utmost how to dispose satisfactorily of the additions ceaselessly pouring in. Last year I reported that almost every available corner was then nearly full. You will not be surprised, therefore, to learn that every case, except in two or three compartments, is *now* not only quite full, but many of them full even to overflowing. If the cry for a new library was loud enough ten years ago to call for the appointment of a Royal Commission to arrange for the erection of suitable and commodious buildings, how vastly more urgent is our case now. In the interval the Library has more than doubled itself both in size and in value. It is true the accommodation at the Committee’s disposal now is much greater than it was then; but the increase in accommodation has not at all kept pace with the increase in the number of books. For another year we may manage to get on; but after that we shall be perfectly blocked, and there will remain nothing for us, unless Parliament comes to our rescue, but to relegate a large quantity of our parliamentary records once more to some of those remote and almost inaccessible chambers where they were so long bestowed before.

As usual during the recess, the books have undergone a thorough inspection, and stock has been carefully taken. This is done twice every year: first immediately after Parliament rises, and again immediately before it meets. I note that since the erection of the new wing the books suffer greatly more from damp and white mould than before. The Library is more in the shade than ever. This entails a good deal of additional labour in looking after the state of the books, and necessitates constant fires almost all the year through. In taking stock it was pleasing to find that so few books were missing. There were not more than half a dozen that we could not account for. I may also mention here that two or three of the books reported as lost last year have since been brought back.

In addition to the ordinary routine work of the Library, I have been closely engaged for the last few months in preparing, under your supervision, a new edition of the catalogue of the Library, incorporating with it the various supplements of the last five years. Though the Alphabetical Catalogue is that most in favour with librarians, yet, as members have become accustomed to the present Classified Catalogue, and as this form has, besides, many advantages of its own to recommend it, it was decided that the new edition should be prepared pretty much on the lines of the two previous ones. This has accordingly been done. I have made the Classified Catalogue the body or main part of the work. Then follows an Index of Authors. Here, along with the authors’ names, which is all that is usually given, I have also inserted the short titles of as many of their works as we happen to have, and thus imparted to it something of the nature and value of an Alphabetical Catalogue. The third and last part of the work is the Index of Subjects. Every effort has been made to render it as perfect as possible—to make it, in fact, coextensive with the first part or Classified Catalogue. But, while proceeding on the old lines, I have not hesitated to make alterations wherever I thought them desirable. The changes made are fully explained in the preface to the new edition.

I regret that the extreme pressure of work in the Government Printing Office has precluded the possibility of having the Catalogue in its entirety ready for the session. The Classified Catalogue, with an appendix containing the names of the new books received too late for insertion, will be ready; and I hope that in the course of a week or two the complete catalogue will be in the hands of members.

Owing to the dimensions the Library has now attained, the compilation of a new Catalogue has become a task of no ordinary magnitude. All I hope is that the result of our labours may meet with the approval of honourable members, and that the new edition of the Catalogue will enable them to make use, with greater ease, of the varied treasures the Library contains, and so raise their estimate of its value that they will not rest satisfied until they have erected for it a Hall worthy at once of it and of themselves.

I have, &c.,

A. MACGREGOR,

Librarian.

The Chairman of the Recess Library Committee.