

1885.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY

(REPORT ON).

*Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Stout, by leave of the House.*

## The LIBRARIAN'S Report.

SIR,—

General Assembly Library, 28th May, 1885.

I have the honour, in accordance with your instructions, to submit to you the following report on the work and general administration of the Library during the recess, and on its present position:—

The following resolutions were passed by the Joint Library Committee, and confirmed by the General Assembly at the close of last session: 1. That members of both Houses of Parliament residing in or within fifteen miles of Wellington be the Library Committee for the recess; three to be a quorum. 2. That the following persons have the full privileges of the Library in the recess, viz: (1.) Members of Parliament. (2.) The following persons, holding official positions, viz: The Governor's Staff, Judges of the Supreme Court, Auditor-General, Solicitor-General, Clerks of the two Houses of the Legislature, two Clerk-Assistants of each House of the Legislature, Reader of the House of Representatives, Record Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, Director of the Geological Survey, Chief of the Reporting Staff, Captains of Her Majesty's ships on the Station, Officers of Her Majesty's ships on the Station, Major Cautley, R.E., Clerk of the Executive Council, Secretary to the Cabinet, the Under-Secretary, Assistant Controller and Auditor, Registrar-General, Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, Government Printer, Secretary to the Treasury, Property-Tax Commissioner, Under-Secretary (Department of Justice), Inspector of Prisons, Superintendent (Post Office and Telegraphs), Under-Secretary (Post Office and Telegraphs), Secretary and Inspector (Customs), Secretary for Education, Inspector-General of Schools, Under-Secretary for Native Affairs, Under-Secretary for Land Purchase, Under-Secretary for Gold Fields and Mines, Under-Secretary for Public Works, Under-Secretary for Defence, Under-Secretary for Railways, General Manager for Railways, Colonial Architect, Marine Engineer, Surveyor-General, Under-Secretary for Crown Lands, Government Insurance Commissioner, Public Trustee, Governors of the New Zealand Institute, Assistant Law Officer, the Law Draftsman, the Medical Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum. 3. That students may, at the discretion of the Chairman of the Library Committee, be allowed to refer to any special works in a special room set apart for that purpose.

At the first meeting of the Recess Committee, on the 12th November, 1884, the Hon. G. Randall Johnson was appointed Chairman, and was requested to take steps to give effect to these resolutions. At the next meeting, on the 18th November, the following rules regulating admission to Library during the recess were adopted: (1.) The Library will be open, to those who receive the privilege of admission, from 12 to 5 p.m. daily, save on Saturdays, when it closes at 4 o'clock. (2.) The only room to be used by them will be the entrance-room. (3.) No books may be taken by students or visitors from the shelves. The Librarian or his assistants will supply them with any they may wish to consult. (4.) Any persons taking notes or making extracts must use pencil only.

It will thus be seen that the arrangements for the recess this year have been of a somewhat more liberal character than those of the last year or two. The full privileges of the Library have been extended to a larger number of individuals, and its doors thrown open to the public for five hours daily, instead of two. Over and above this, special facilities have been offered to students, and others engaged in the prosecution of any particular line of study. About forty availed themselves of the privileges thus placed within their reach. Four of these were students.

The Hon. the Chairman, the Hon. W. B. Mantell, and Dr. Newman were appointed the Selection Committee during the recess. Meetings were held regularly every month on the week of the departure of the San Francisco mail, and an order for transmission by it prepared.

I am happy to be able to report that the arrangements made by the Agent-General last year for conducting the Committee's business in England are giving entire satisfaction. Our orders are executed with the utmost regularity and despatch. A steady and continuous supply of books reaches us from month to month by the direct steamers. Our agents have now overtaken all arrears, and disposed of every order up to the very end of 1884. Since the commencement of the present year four additional orders, of an approximate aggregate value of £200, have been forwarded by the Committee; so that we may confidently look forward to the arrival of one or two additional consignments during the session. The Recess Committee has thus done everything in its power to provide, for the perusal of honourable members during the session, a full supply of the latest publications of the season. The Agent-General, too, has now devised a plan whereby, without unduly taxing his time—already so fully occupied—he is able to give effect to the Committee's wish that he would forward, without waiting for orders from this side, works of such special importance or surpassing interest as would be sure to be acceptable to members.

The additions to the Library as a whole have not been quite so large this year as last; but the number of new books added in every department of literature (save that of parliamentary records) is greater than for many years past. From our agents at Home we have received nearly 900

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.