1887.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY

(REPORT ON).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Sir R. Stout, with the Leave of the House.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT.

General Assembly Library, 21st April, 1887.

I HAVE the honour to submit the annual report on the Parliamentary Library.

The session was a period of much activity on the part of the Joint Library Committee. The plans for the projected Library buildings were threshed out; principles of the selection of books were discussed, and a very large number of books selected; and many matters of business, major and minor, were settled. Finally, a Committee of thirteen (subsequently increased by the Assembly to fifteen) members was appointed for the management of the Library during the recess. The Recess Library Committee elected the Hon. G. Randall Johnson its chairman, and nominated a working sub-committee of six members—the Chairman, the Hon. Dr. Grace, the Hon. Mr. Hart, the Hon Mr. Mantell, Mr. Fisher, and Dr. Newman. By this sub-committee, as during last recess, the Library was governed.

Far the most important part of the work of the recess was connected with the accessions to the Library. These have doubtless exceeded in number and importance those of any previous year, not excepting those of 1866, when Mr. Mantell's generosity endowed the Library with a hundred volumes, some of them rare and valuable. The Library has been enriched by a complete series of the Transactions of the Social Science Association in 29 volumes, and by a copy of the reprint of *Punch* from 1841 to 1867. Though original editions of Mr. Ruskin's earlier works have long been on the shelves, many of his later books were wanting, and these have been procured. Victor Hugo's Œuvres, in 33 volumes, and those of Châteaubriand, now strengthen the department of French literature. The English works of Hobbes fill a gap, and the 147 parts as yet published of the British Museum Catalogue constitute by themselves a library of bibliographical reference, which has already proved serviceable. Another catalogue, annotated with a wealth of learning, is that of the unique library presented by Sir George Grey to Capetown. Hogg's large and costly *Pomona* will gratify and, it is to be hoped, prove useful to Members interested in Horticulture. Incomplete series not a few have been completed; missing volumes have been replaced; and continuations hitherto neglected have been procured. At the instance of two classical scholars on the Committee, Sir Maurice O'Rorke and Mr. Rolleston, large additions have been made to the departments of Classical Literature and Philology, which have been thoroughly modernized, and to a great extent brought down to the present time. Some Members complained that, while the Library contained scientific treatises for the use of experts, popular expositions of science were wanting. That deficiency has been supplied, and there are few branches of science the results of which will not be found stated in books, often by masters of their craft, now in the Library. It was also complained that the Library collection on the Industrial Arts was antiquated: on the recommendation of Mr. Lake a number of books have been added to this section; while Agriculture and Horticulture have received their share of accessions. The indispensable Debretts and Burkes have been renewed, at some cost. A considerable number of publications relating to New Zealand, including some old books now difficult to be procured, have been got by purchase in various quarters, donation, and exchange; others are on order; the numerous essays on the same theme which are scattered through the periodical literature of the last fifty years have been sent for; and in course of time, it is expected, this particular department, the most interesting and certain to become the most valuable of all, will be made approximately complete. Those which ought to be the two strongest departments in the Library—Government and Political Economy—have been greatly augmented: a separately printed Appendix to the Annual Supplement to the Catalogue will show that one section, that of the literature of Free-trade and Protection, has attained a completeness little short of exhaustive. Altogether the accessions amount to 1,880 volumes, exclusive of official publications.

So extensive a series of additions to the Library has of course not been made without making a corresponding draught upon the funds—the appended analytical balance-sheet shows precisely to what extent. A balance of £59 9s. 4d. is disclosed, and that amount actually stood to the credit of the Library at the end of the financial year. But a Treasury voucher for £66 has been

presented, and a case of books costing £46 has been received: were both accounts discharged there would now be a deficit of over £50. This negative result is due in part to an unusually large outlay on the purchase of books. In a total expenditure of £1,285 no less than £930 was devoted to the purchase of books, their binding and freight. It may be frankly admitted that the amount, if not disproportionate, is in itself excessive. It would be not only inexpedient but impossible to expend an equal or approximate sum every year. A number of considerations may be urged in defence. (1.) Though the Library is deeply indebted to the successive Selection Committees and to particular members of them—Sir Maurice O'Rorke and the Hon. Dr. Menzies during the session, and Dr. Newman during the recess—for their vigilance in noting the issue of new books and their self-rewarding labour in procuring them for the Library, yet there has at no time been any *systematic* selection. While it may be safely asserted that few libraries are disfigured by a smaller proportion of ephemeral or inferior literature, it is not denied that deficiencies neither few nor inconsiderable were to be met with in almost every department. During the last eighteen months it has been attempted to fill up these gaps, and an inspection of the two last-issued Annual Supplements will show to how large an extent the purchases of the last year have been of books published in previous years. No small amount of the extra expenditure may thus be accounted for. (2.) In not a few cases series were incomplete: these have been completed. (3.) Books and single volumes which have been missing so long that they might be considered lost have been replaced. (4.) Six or eight sets costing from £4 or £5 to (three of them) over £20 bulk considerably in the total outlay. (5.) The additions to Philology and the Greek and Latin Classics cost £60. (6.) Books in Art and Engineering, though fewer, were costly. The amount of the *current* literature, however, has not been proportionately increased: the error committed—if error there has been—consists in having, with perhaps pardonable zeal, concentrated into eighteen months an activity in the supplementing of deficiencies which might well have been spread over at least twice that space.

The virtual deficit is, however, really due to one item of extraordinary expenditure. Until quite lately the binding of the colonial and intercolonial newspapers has been executed at the Government Printing Office. This year and last, owing to want of room in that building, it has been done by private contract, at a cost of nearly £100 for the two years, the whole of which, as it happens, has been added to the expenditure of a single—the last—financial year. The outlay is not in itself to be regretted. No part of the literature of a young country will ultimately have more value than its newspapers. They record the rise of settlements, the growth of townships, the progress of colonization, the incidents of public and the manners of private life. Taken all together they are such a mirror of the activity of the whole community in its length and breadth as historians of ancient and even of modern nations have desired in vain. Future histories will, by the help of those records, be written of these young republics which will make all past histories of old countries seem meagre and superficial. They are therefore a priceless part of the Library possessions, and may well claim the apparently exorbitant share of space they now occupy. But the cost of binding will not, it is to be hoped, figure in more than another Library budget, if in that. This charge deducted, the apparent credit balance would have been £160, and the actual £50.

The bulk of the books received has been supplied, as during the three previous years, by Messrs. Bell and Bradfute, of Edinburgh, who take extraordinary pains to fulfil, and who despatch with promptitude, the orders sent to them; the Library can never have been so well served. The Agent-General, under whose instructions they act, gives prompt and precise attention to all requests, and is indefatigable in the service of the Library. Large numbers of books have been procured from the United States through the agency of Messrs. Lyon and Blair. A few have been obtained from Melbourne, while others have been locally purchased.

The year has been unusually fertile in donations. Eighty or ninety volumes of Imperial and Colonial Parliamentary Papers—some of them duplicates, others old colonial publications of great value—were presented by the sons and the daughter-in-law of the late Mr. Justice Chapman. The Swedenborg Society liberally sent fifty volumes of the works of Swedenborg, books relating to Swedenborg, and books issued by the society. The Smithsonian Institution of Washington not only transmitted the publications of the year, but also, at request, presented a number of their earlier publications which had not previously been forwarded. Other donors presented single volumes.

Books were issued to twenty-three locally-resident Members, to three Members resident within short distances of Wellington, who personally returned the volumes which they personally took out, to sixty-one officers connected with Parliament Buildings and the General Government, and to eleven literary workers or students of specified subjects. Sixty-four readers, as against fifty-one last year and forty the year before, used for purposes of consultation the entrance-room, which, through the enforcement of more stringent regulations, was converted from a club-room for the accommodation of loungers into a place of serious reading and not seldom of genuine study.

Owing to the unusual number of accessions during the year the routine work of the Library has been unusually exacting. Yet it is agreeable to report that the Assistants, who work longer hours in session than any of the Parliamentary departments and longer hours in the recess than any Government department, attended regularly and performed their duties efficiently throughout the year.

In the session of 1875 Sir George Grey concluded an eloquent appeal by moving, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is absolutely necessary that suitable buildings should forthwith be erected for the accommodation and safe-keeping of the valuable library of the General Assembly;" and effect was given to the motion by placing £5,000 on the estimates for that purpose. That was not the first step, nor was it the last, by a very long way, which the Legislature took in this direction. Committee after Committee rained requests and remonstrances upon Ministry after Ministry. A Royal Commission reported; the Speakers waited on the Government; architects prepared plans. A sum of £10,000, in the session of 1882, was voted for a partial reconstruction of Parliament Buildings in which a new library was to be included: Parliament Buildings were

partially reconstructed, but a new library was not included. There the matter remained. At length, in the last days of the session of 1886, on the initiative of the Premier, the Assembly voted the modest sum of £5,000 for the erection of a library building. Designs were drafted after the best experience available; committees and sub-committees sat repeatedly to consider them; and every detail of structure and material was canvassed by busy men who gave their costly time in furtherance of an object they had at heart. Tenders were then called for, but, none having been accepted before the close of the financial year, the vote has necessarily lapsed. It would be idle to complain. A Government cannot erect buildings with money it does not possess, and among the necessities of a young colony there must be many that are more urgent than even a parliamentary library. Yet one remembers that a poor nation like Prussia, in an hour of defeat and humiliation, could conceive no more hopeful project than to found a university which has become one of the greatest seats of learning in the world; and it is just possible that, even from a commercial point of view, a country may make less remunerative investments than in an institution which is to instruct its law-makers and equip its administrators.

J. Collier, Librarian.

Appendix A.—Balance-sheet.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance from last year	626	1	6	By Books, binding, and freight	931	17	7
Repayment (for stamps)	10	0	0	English periodicals and newspapers ..	85	18	2
Annual appropriation	600	0	0	Australian newspapers and periodicals ..	23	18	9
Fees received on account of private Bills	110	0	0	New Zealand newspapers and periodicals	34	14	0
				Insurances	87	10	0
				Binding colonial papers	97	19	6
				American periodicals and newspapers ..	7	17	0
				Binders' stamps	4	17	6
				Printing	6	10	0
				Miscellaneous	5	9	8
				Balance	59	9	4
	£1,346	1	6		£1,346	1	6

Appendix B.—Donations.

Campbell, Major—
Dickenson, R. Summary of the rules and procedures of foreign Parliaments.

Canada, Government of the Dominion of—
Trail, Mrs. C. P. Studies of plant-life in Canada. 1885.
Dominion Annual Register. 2 vols. 1884 and 1885.

Chapman, F. R., Esq., and others—
Imperial and colonial parliamentary papers. 85 vols.

Company of Leathersellers of the City of London—
Black, W. H. History and Antiquities of the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers. 1871.

Fortescue, Hon. J. W.—
Fortescue, Hon. J. Records of stag-hunting on Exmoor. 1887.

Gibbes, Sir E. O., Bart.—
Imperial parliamentary papers (N.Z.).
Correspondence with Governor Grey.
New Zealand Company's Reports, Nos. 12, 16, 17, 18 (2 copies), 19, 20, 22, 23.
A collection of voyages to the Southern Hemisphere. Vol. I.
Adam, J. Twenty-five years of emigrant life in the South of New Zealand.
Whitworth, R. P. Martin's Bay Settlement.
New Zealand Constitution Act.

Horne, Captain—
A true account and declaration of the horrid conspiracy against the late King. London, 1685.

Johnson, Hon. G. R.—
Wilson, J. A. Life and times of Te Waharoa.
Full history of the Maungatapu murders.
Gregory, E. Sketch of the residence of James Morrill among the aborigines. (Transmitted to the Parliamentary Library, Queensland.)

Pope, J. H., Esq.—
Wells, B. History of Taranaki.

Swedenborg Society—
Swedenborg's works, books relating to Swedenborg, and other publications of the Society. 50 vols.

Wallace, J. Howard, Esq.—
Wallace, R. Antitrinitarian biography. 3 vols.

[*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, Nil; printing (1,350 copies), £2 15s.]

By Authority: George Didsbury, Government Printer, Wellington.—1887.