

been presented but not paid, amount to £115 more. Were these discharged, the expenditure would have reached £900, and the debit balance would be £120. It should be stated, however, that two Treasury vouchers for £112 stood over from last year, and were paid out of this year's income. This deduction being made, the expenditure proper to the year would be (in round numbers) £790, as against an income of £780. The difference of less than £10 represents the excess of expenditure over income. It is due, and much more than that small sum is due, to a rather lavish outlay on the purchase of the Wellington newspapers. Of all three of these a larger number than had been usual was for the convenience of members taken in, and the occurrence of two Parliamentary sessions in the same year made the expenditure on this head mount up to nearly £80.

The occasional donations have been fairly numerous, and as the colonial character of the Library for about two-thirds of every year gets to be known will doubtless become, as in other central libraries, an important source of accessions. One windfall hardly comes within the year, but may be noted. The centralization of the administration of Crown lands has led to the transfer of over fifty Imperial Parliamentary Papers, most of them of older date than those already in the Library, from the Crown Lands Office at Christchurch. The Smithsonian Institution continues regularly to transmit valuable publications which could hardly have seen the light but for its agency. Donations from the British Museum, and (other than Blue Books) from the Imperial Government have for some time altogether ceased. The cause of the cessation has been discovered on inquiry. In a circular despatch dated the 19th June, 1883, Lord Derby engaged that all English Official Publications should be regularly transmitted to colonies which, on their part, undertook to transmit copies of all their Official Publications to the British Museum. The offer of the British Government was "accepted with much satisfaction" by the then Premier, Sir F. Whitaker, who undertook that "in future, copies of all New Zealand Government Official Publications will be punctually forwarded to the Librarian of the British Museum, commencing with the publications of the present year" (1883). The complete non-fulfilment of this undertaking, which adds a touch of irony to the pledge of punctuality, naturally led to the non-fulfilment of the engagement into which the Home Government was willing to enter. The consequence has been that, while the valuable series issued under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, and the important Calendars of State Papers, with prefaces by the greatest historical scholars of the day, have been scattered broadcast, not a single copy of them has come to New Zealand. The Agent-General was some months ago requested to make application for the two series named, and he has not failed to do so; but the most effectual means of obtaining them, and the best security for regularly receiving them in future, will be for the Colonial Government to make good its share in the agreement. The British Museum, which has also been expressly applied to, will then too, no doubt, be less reluctant to transmit publications that have a peculiar value for a library which fulfils many of the functions of a National Library.

Here, and not later, should fitting acknowledgment be made of the services of one whom his eminent ability, his diversified experience and literary gifts, have made the *doyen* of the Agents-General. It is fortunate for the Library that for some years past it has had Sir Francis Dillon Bell for its representative in England. Until he took over the direction of its Home agency it had little else than a succession of adverse experiences. Now the arrangements for the despatch of books, magazines, and newspapers are all that can be desired, and where an influential application has been needed the Agent-General's interposition was invariably successful.

The great cost of binding the large number of colonial newspapers hitherto bound, and the disproportionate space they occupy, have often engaged the attention of the Committee. In the second session of last year the list was carefully revised, and twenty-four journals out of sixty-seven were selected for binding. These will in future be, as until the last three or four years they were, bound at the Government Printing Office. There, too, are regularly bound all of the periodicals of which bound volumes are not sent from England, together with a quantity of miscellaneous matter received in paper covers. So much it seems needful to state, the total cost of the Library to the Colony not being represented by the expenditure given in the balance-sheet.

The proper housing of so large a collection—30,000 volumes, all told—has been a yearly increasing embarrassment. Not only has anything approaching a scientific classification of books on the shelves become impossible, but space enough for the placing of them in almost any order has for some time been lacking. A sixth room liberally granted by the Speakers—in a somewhat out-of-the-way part of the Buildings, it is true—will for a year or two postpone the necessity for still more extensive accommodation. To it will be removed the United States and Canadian official publications now in the smaller Reference Room, and to the latter, then to become the most attractive room in the Library, the larger illustrated and other works now in the Central Room. The problem, however, is only postponed, not solved. Libraries, which necessarily cannot stand still, are always crying out for more space; and Parliamentary Libraries, with their bulky official volumes and bound newspapers, are even more exacting than other libraries. It is to be hoped that a return of prosperity will make a durable building a possibility of the near future.

During the last short Recess forty-five visitors were granted admission to the Library—twenty-six as ordinary Readers, and nineteen as Students with the privilege of taking away books; if to these are added the admissions from June to October, 1887, the numbers would be found to be quite up to the average of the last two or three years. In one respect they rise above it. The number of outsiders to whom books have lately been issued has been greater than for years past. The fact may seem to need explanation. During the Recess of 1885–86, and some previous Recesses, the following resolution was in force: "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." By the Hon. Mr. Randall Johnson, the elected Recess Chairman, this resolution was liberally construed to mean that books might be taken out by individuals so favoured. The Hon. Mr. Mantell, who acted as Chairman for almost half of the long Recess, interpreted the rule literally,