

1940.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1940.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

To the Chairman, Joint Library Committee.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report on the operations of the General Assembly Library for the year 1939-40.

ACCESSIONS.

During the financial year 1939-40 we added to our stock 3,837 volumes, as compared with 5,236 in the previous year, 4,994 in the year before, and an average of 3,460 for the last ten years. At the end of May the number of books accessioned was 156,200.

The outbreak of the war in September, 1939, had a considerable effect on the policy of book selection; many books which were of interest in pre-war months suddenly lost favour and gave place to a demand for quite a different class of literature. There was a considerable demand for maps and reference books dealing with each of the countries as they became involved in the war, and the Library was able to meet most of the demands in this direction, both from members of Parliament and from the services. The fine collection of maps and charts which has been built up in the last few years was found of very great value. This collection includes the official maps and charts of the British Ordnance Survey, the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, the U.S. Hydrographic Office, and the corresponding departments in Canada and the Australian Commonwealth.

Owing to difficulties of exchange and other war restrictions we had less freedom in purchasing abroad and, as last year, we have tended to get a larger proportion of our books in New Zealand.

DONATIONS.

We have received a good number of donations during the year from various sources. Amongst these are the following: American Association for Adult Education (New York), Dr. F. A. Bett (Nelson), Biblioteca y Archivo (Mexico), R. G. Black (Wellington), C. G. Botha (Capetown), P. F. Brodrick (Martinborough), Carnegie Corporation of New York, China Information Service (Washington, D.C.), the Consuls for the Netherlands (Wellington) and Norway (Wellington), the Consul-General of Japan (Wellington), Sir Arthur Du Cros (Sussex), the Interdepartmental Committee on the Royal Visit (Ottawa), Cyrus Kehr (Washington, D.C.), M. Mason (Waimarama), New Zealand Shipping Company (Wellington), the Countess of Northbrook (Winchester, England), Puerto Rico Government (Puerto Rico), Dr. W. E. Redman (Spring Creek), Royal Mail Lines, Limited (London), William Satchell (Auckland), T. E. Y. Seddon (Wellington), Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company (Wellington), Social Science Research Council (New York), Sir Ronald Storrs (England), Trades Union Congress (London), University of Tasmania (Hobart) and Mr. C. Morgan Williams, M.P.

STAFF WORK.

During this year again the Library was used to a generous extent by the staff of the Centennial Branch of the Internal Affairs Department, and many other students and historians, in the compilation of publications associated with the Centennial. This work disclosed in a very satisfactory manner the rich resources of the Library bearing on New Zealand history. The great use which was made of the Archive material assembled in the Library encourages the hope that in the near future some steps may be taken to place this branch on a more satisfactory basis.

The extra rooms which have been made available for library purposes through the removal of the Health Department to new premises has enabled us to make a further redistribution of the book stock, which it is hoped will meet the requirements for some years to come. This process has involved a new division of sections in certain parts of the Library, but this is quite unavoidable in view of the congestion from which we have suffered for the last twenty years.

Advantage was taken of the demand for reading matter for the troops on active service to make a complete overhaul of the fiction stock. This was carried out during the recess at the beginning of this year, and as a result 965 volumes, all in fit condition for reading, were transferred to the Country Library Service for the use of the troops. This weeding out has enabled us to bring together in one place most of our collection of standard English literature, in which the General Assembly Library is particularly strong.