

1902.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY:

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1901-2.

Laid on the Table by Leave.

The CHIEF LIBRARIAN to the Hon. the CHAIRMAN of the LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

SIR,—

Chief Librarian's Office, Wellington, 10th July, 1902.

I have the honour to submit to you the following report for the year 1901-2:—

STOCKTAKING.

In accordance with the proposal made in my report last year, and indorsed by the Joint Library Committee, a careful and exhaustive stocktaking has been carried out during the recess. The Library was closed to the public for a month, during which period the actual taking of stock—or entering on stock-sheets the title of every book on the Library shelves—took place. Owing, doubtless, to the lengthy period—many years—which had elapsed since anything like a systematic and complete stocktaking was carried out, and the absence of all records or documents relating to such operation, the recent effort to obtain reliable information as to the exact number of books on the shelves, the number of those which were once on the shelves, but which for some reason or other had disappeared therefrom, and many other particulars of interest and value, proved a much more tedious and onerous task than I had anticipated. No pains have been spared to secure accuracy in the data arrived at, and the information gained has been tabulated and brought up to the opening of the session. Not only has the work of stocktaking proved valuable from a statistical point of view, but much has been learnt as to the weaknesses of the Library in different sections, a guide being thus afforded to the directions in which the Library should be strengthened.

But the indirect usefulness of the work does not end here. The officers of the Library engaged in this work have had an opportunity of getting what should be at once a minute and comprehensive knowledge of the books, and have necessarily made themselves more intimately conversant with the useful but somewhat complicated Dewey system upon which the majority of the books are classified. The increased knowledge gained by the experience of the last few months must prove invaluable in the future working of the Library.

The number of books in the Library when stock was taken, or satisfactorily accounted for, or which have been added to the Library since the stocktaking period, up to the 26th May, is 52,000. This number includes some 2,500 volumes of American official publications, which in future will be stored in the No. 2 Stack-room, and will be specially catalogued and indexed; also newspapers and official publications, which are stored in the basement; works at present uncatalogued; and new books recently added.

The table given below shows the number of works missing in each class, but the total number of books set down as missing must not be considered final. I think it is more than probable that a certain proportion of the missing volumes may yet be found.

Class.	Description.	Number of Volumes missing.
000	General works, bibliography, library economy, cyclopædias, general essays, periodicals, newspapers, and book rarities	7
100	Philosophy, metaphysics, logic, ethics	6
200	Religion and mythology, theology, Bible, &c.	15
300	Sociology, statistics, political economy, education, law, commerce, &c.	157
400	Philology	14
500	Natural science, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, botany, zoology	21
600	Useful arts, medicine, engineering, agriculture, manufactures, trades, building, &c.	36
700	Fine arts, gardening, architecture, music, painting, amusements	15
800	Literature of various countries	77
900	History of various countries	35
900	Biography and autobiography	24
900	Voyages and travels	44
	Fiction	259
	Total	710