

The wooden shelving which was erected temporarily in the second stack-room, which is mainly devoted to American official publications, has been taken out and erected in the basement, where it will afford further accommodation for the newspapers and old-dated official publications of the Imperial Government and the other colonies there stored. Iron standards and shelving of the improved kind have now been erected in this room, and outside the basement every shelf in the library is now of iron.

The walls of the main staircase have been beautified by the hanging of panoramic views of the principal cities, obtained by purchase, and smaller views of various picturesque beauty-spots throughout the colony. These latter were presented to the Library by the Tourists and Health Resorts Department, under instructions from the Minister in charge, the Hon. Sir Joseph Ward, K.C.M.G., and I have to thank that gentleman and Mr. Donne for them. The Minister for Public Works, the Hon. W. Hall-Jones, also presented a fine panoramic view of the Makohine Viaduct; the Timaru Harbour Board sent a view of the breakwater and harbour-works at that place; and Mr. Carnell, formerly member for Napier, donated fine portraits of the late Sir George Grey and the late Rev. William Colenso. A full-length portrait of the ex-Speaker of the House of Representatives, Sir G. M. O'Rorke, K.C.M.G., was purchased by the Recess Committee, and has been hung at the top of the main staircase. The Minister for Public Works, I may here say, has intimated that granite pedestals for the busts of the late Sir Harry Atkinson and Sir John McKenzie are being procured. Three large and handsome wirework stands have been supplied, at my request, by the Public Works Department. These stands, filled with ferns and pot-plants, have been placed at the foot and at the top of the staircase, and, with the pictures, serve, I think, to greatly diminish the previously existing monotony of bare white walls. The ferns and plants now in the stands have been procured by myself privately in order to make a start, but I would venture to suggest that members from country districts can greatly assist by making occasional donations of ferns and flowers. Two additional electric-light clusters have been placed on the staircase.

The basement has been fitted throughout with radiator heating-apparatus, and when something is done to permanently prevent the water coming in through the broken prism lights the basement should be perfectly immune from damp. These prism lights are continually getting broken, and if a heavy rainstorm occurs before the breakage is discovered and a new prism put in the water comes in.

Before leaving this subject of the furnishings, I must express my thanks to the Ministerial head and officers of the Public Works Department. I have sent in a large number of requisitions for various small works through the year, and these have always met with very prompt attention.

THE STAFF AND ITS WORK.

The Assistant Librarian, Mr. James, having been engaged throughout the major part of the recess in continuing and completing the work, commenced last session, of compiling a dictionary index (by means of a card catalogue) of the American official publications, the ordinary work of classifying and cataloguing the accessions to the Library has fallen upon myself. A word of praise is due to Mr. James for the thoroughness with which he performed a lengthy and somewhat tedious task. Mr. Thomson, who has again proved himself a most useful and assiduous officer, has had charge of the Accession Register, and has assisted me at times with the cataloguing. He also assisted me very materially in the compilation of the new Accession List, which was issued to members at the commencement of the session. The task of selecting books for consideration by the Selection Committee has been, as usual, my own, and I have also done nearly all the correspondence and exercised a general supervision. Messrs. Costall and Sampson have carried on their regular work of arranging and filing the newspapers and official publications, and Messrs. McColl and Fish (messenger) have both done good work. The binder, Mr. Roberts, has repaired and rebacked a large number of volumes, some of his rebinding work being very handsome. I again urge that a stamping-press be procured for the use of the binder. This would save much time now wasted in sending books to the Printing Office and returning them, also some clerical work.

Each member of the staff, excepting myself, has had the usual month's holiday.

Throughout the recess the Library has been visited by no fewer than 2,169 persons who signed the Visitors' Book, and there were others who did not sign. During the tourist season at least two of the staff are occupied for quite half the day in showing these visitors round the Library rooms.

No extra clerks or assistants have been employed during the recess, nor are any being employed this session. Now that the Library is in fair working-order, and that we have overtaken much of the work that was, unavoidably no doubt, in arrears, I do not feel justified in incurring more expense than is strictly necessary. By the end of this session a sum of nearly £300 will have been saved by doing without extra clerks. I do not, however, wish it to be understood that no more "arrears" work remains to be picked up. On the contrary, there are the pamphlets to be catalogued, and some three thousand volumes of newspapers and old official publications to be placed on the new register; but this and other work is (with the exception of the cataloguing of the pamphlets) not of any urgent importance, and I hope to get it done by degrees and complete it without extra assistance.

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

In an appendix to this report will be found a balance-sheet for the year ending the 31st March last. The Library accounts were audited by an officer of the Audit Department on the 29th May, and certified to as being correct. A credit balance is shown, but the whole of this will be absorbed by current orders before the time when the annual vote is passed.