

1903.

NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY:

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1902-3.

Laid on the Table by Leave.

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

SIR,—

Wellington, 10th July, 1903.

I have the honour to submit to you the following report for the year 1902-3:—

REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF MISSING BOOKS.

In my last year's report I stated that the number of missing books reported after the completion of the stocktaking "must not be considered a final estimate." The correctness of this forecast has been verified, for I am pleased to be able to inform you that quite a number of the volumes supposed to have been lost have been and are finding their way back to the shelves.

I would, however, respectfully but most earnestly impress upon honourable members who use the Library the importance of never failing to have the books they take out of the Library properly entered in the day-books. These books are kept both upstairs and downstairs, where members of the staff are always to be found night and day so long as the Library is open. As the delay caused by having a book entered (and thus securing a registration which renders a volume traceable when missing) is only momentary, I sincerely trust that members will scrupulously observe this very necessary safeguard against loss. A book which is duly entered may be temporarily mislaid, it is true, but the chances of permanent loss become greatly diminished. On the other hand, if a volume once leaves the Library unentered in the day-book, the task which may then devolve upon me of ascertaining its whereabouts and securing its safe return may not improbably become one of considerable difficulty, or even impossible of accomplishment.

RECESS PRIVILEGES TO NON-MEMBERS.

The Recess Library Committee followed the course pursued by its predecessor in extending Library privileges to the public, books being lent to such persons as were approved by the Chairman on the recommendation of members of Parliament; also, in the case of Government officials, by heads of Departments. I am glad to say that in no case has the privilege been abused; and so far no complaint has reached me of the condition in which the volumes issued have been returned. As members of the Committee are doubtless aware, works of fiction are not issued to others than members, so that the books lent to privilege-holders have all been of an instructive and educative character. The facilities thus afforded to students and others who would otherwise have had no opportunity of making acquaintance with all that is best in modern literature have, I know, been greatly appreciated. The Library has also been of material service to many who have been allowed to consult valuable works of reference, art books, and other publications which are not allowed to be taken out of the Library. In several instances members of the Supreme Court Bench and of the legal profession have been enabled to find information which was not attainable elsewhere; and, as usual, during the recess I have received and answered letters from all parts of the colony from persons seeking information which was only to be found in the newspaper-files which constitute such a valuable feature of the Library.

Two hundred and eighty persons received permission to borrow books during the recess, the average number of volumes issued being fifteen, which shows a total circulation of 4,250 separate volumes. This does not include the books issued to permanent officers of the House and others, such as the members of the Government House staff, the Judges, &c., who are specially privileged to make use of the Library by vote of the Joint Committee.

The work of attending to the requirements of privilege-holders and persons consulting newspapers and reference works, combined with the task of classifying and cataloguing the exceptionally large number of new books, has made the last recess a very busy time for the Library staff. Eighty-five boxes of books, representing about six hundred volumes, have been sent out to members

during the recess, and a number of books dealing with Polynesian history and travel were supplied to the steamer "Mapourika" on the occasion of the Islands trip.

NEW BOOKS.

Since the date of my last report the number of accessions to the Library stands at 3,080, made up as follows: Books by purchase, 1,700; books presented or received as exchanges from the Imperial and American Governments, the Smithsonian Institute, from the other colonies, and from various other sources, 1,380. This considerably exceeds the estimate I ventured to make in last year's report. This great and sustained increase in the number of books obtained for the Library has been rendered possible by avoiding expensive bindings, except in special instances where the books were of a very valuable character, and by better arrangements as to terms with the various firms which supply us.

I have devoted a large amount of spare time during the recess to a careful study of the catalogues issued every month by the English second-hand and "remainder" booksellers. Many second-hand books, of good editions, which are long ago out of print and difficult to procure, have been bought in this way. Where rebinding was necessary this was done at very moderate cost. I have here to thank Mr. Mackay, the Government Printer, for the keen personal interest he always displays in the work done for the Library. Much of the binding done for the Library by the Printing Office compares well, as to finish, with binding done in London, and my wishes as to colour and style have been carried out with great care.

I have been greatly assisted in my task of selecting and ordering new books by the Chairman and members of the Recess Selection Committee, which held seven meetings and devoted much time to considering the lists prepared by myself. Whilst very properly, I think, devoting chief attention to procuring the very latest works in every class of modern literature, I have not been unmindful of the fact that the library required strengthening by the purchase of standard works not necessarily of very recent publication. Amongst others, I was able to secure, at very reasonable prices, sets of the publications of the Old and New Shakespeare Societies, the Percy Society's scarce and valuable collection of Old English ballads and romances, the still more scarce publications of the Early English Text Society, the first variorum edition of Shakespeare; also Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes and Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*. I have also added new library editions of the works of Hazlitt (the first complete edition), Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, Thackeray (the biographical edition), George Eliot, and George Borrow. Where there are duplicates the best edition has been placed in the literature section of the main reading-room, and will be treated as a reference set, the other and inferior edition being placed in the fiction department for the purpose of circulation. Amongst notable additions to the library during the recess I may mention the following: The extra volumes of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Larned's *History for Ready Reference*; Professor Woodrow Wilson's *History of the United States*; Cust's *National Portrait Gallery*; the Goupil monographs on Charles the First, Charles the Second, and Henry the Eighth; Crawford's *Industries of Russia*; Uhle's *Industries and Arts of South America*; Wright and Smith's *Parliament Past and Present*; recent additions to the "Great Musicians" and "Masters of Medicine" series; Dent's "Mediæval Cities" series; the *Jewish Encyclopædia*; the *Oxford History of Music*; the first volumes of the *Cambridge Modern History*; a variety of books dealing with the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy; and many other new and important works in all branches of literature. Continued attention has been given to the Sociology class, so important a feature in a library of this kind. In this section we can, I think, fairly consider we are thoroughly up to date. The following additions have been made to the periodicals list: *The Sphere*, the *Navy and Army Illustrated*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Munsey's Magazine*, *McClure's Magazine*, the *Investors' Review*, and "M.A.P."

Our London agents, Messrs. Sotheran and Co. (books) and Messrs. Street and Co. (periodicals) have executed the library orders throughout the year with most praiseworthy care and promptitude, my special thanks being due to the first-mentioned firm for the trouble they have taken in hunting up many works which were out of print. The packing of the periodicals has been much improved by Messrs. Street, and the papers and magazines now arrive in much better order than was formerly the case. I must also express my thanks to the Agent-General, who has sent out many interesting pamphlets, and to his staff, my requests, sometimes giving, I fear, no little trouble, being most carefully attended to.

In addition to the accessions to be found on the tables in the main reading-room, several consignments of new books will arrive during the session. The Recess Committee has continued the system under which I am allowed, under the control of the Chairman, to purchase not more than ten pounds' worth of books locally per month. This system has worked very well, and enables me to obtain many new books with a minimum of delay, and I respectfully recommend its continuance during the present session. A list of books purchased each month is placed, it may be remembered, before the Committee at each meeting. I have also attended several local book-sales by auction, and have secured, with the approval of the Committee, many valuable works at exceedingly low prices. During the recess several works which had been in the "missing" list, and which I was authorised to replace as opportunity offered, have been bought and placed on the shelves.

ROOMS AND FURNISHINGS: ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Since last session the top stack-room (which has been standing empty since the Library was built) has been fitted with iron standards and shelving. Experience having proved that stronger shelving was desirable to accommodate folios and quartos, this requirement has been attended to, the standards being now closer together and the shelves of an improved and stronger construction. I am now utilising this room to diminish the overcrowding of the lower rooms, and hope to still further improve the whole of the classification arrangements next recess.

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.

“REFERENCE” BOOKS

On the motion of Mr. James Allen, it was decided by the Joint Committee last year that the Chief Librarian should have a list prepared showing which books ought, in his opinion, to be treated as “reference” books, and not allowed to be taken out of the Library. This list has been prepared, and is at the disposal of the Chairman.

DEATH OF AN EX-CHAIRMAN OF THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

During the recess occurred, I regret to say, the death of the Hon. M. S. Grace, M.L.C., for many years Chairman of the Joint Library Committee and of the Recess Committee. I thought fit to officially represent the Library staff at the funeral, as the deceased gentleman had always taken a great interest in the Library, and was a good friend to the staff.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.

The Hon. John Rigg, M.L.C.

APPENDIX.

BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1903.

1902.		<i>Receipts.</i>		£	s.	d.	1902-3.	<i>Expenditure.</i>		£	s.	d.
31 March.	Balance in hand	..	..	737	11	9		Purchase of books and periodicals in London	..	742	19	7
17 Nov.	Cash from Treasury—Annual grant	..	..	600	0	0	"	Purchase of books and periodicals locally	..	284	12	4
17 "	Cash from private Bill proceeds	..	..	45	0	0	"	Freight and marine insurance..	..	7	3	4
1903.							"	Fire-insurance premiums	..	20	0	0
9 March.	Refund Stamp imprest	..	..	30	0	0	"	Advertising	..	2	0	0
							"	W. F. Kennedy (photographs)..	..	4	10	0
							"	Wellington Tinware Company	..	1	0	0
							"	E. J. Le Grove, “Bar-lock” duplicator and typewriter fittings..	..	3	14	0
							"	Cash balance on 31st March, 1903	..	346	12	6
				<u>£1,412</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>				<u>£1,412</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,410 copies), £2 9s

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1903.

Price 3d.]