

1904.

NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY:

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1903-4, AND SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT.

Laid on the Table by Leave.

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

SIR,—

Wellington, 1st July, 1904.

I have the honour to submit to you the following report for the year 1903-4 :—

CHIEF LIBRARIAN'S TRIP TO ENGLAND.

Having been granted six months' leave of absence by the Government, such leave being confirmed by the Library Committee, I left Wellington for London (*via* Sydney and Vancouver) on the 21st November, 1903, and, having visited Canada, the United States, England, and Australia, returned to the colony on the 25th May, 1904, resuming duty the following day. During my trip I visited some of the leading libraries in the countries through which I journeyed, and gained much information of an interesting and, I trust, a valuable character. A detailed account of my travels will be found in a separate report, which I have the honour to submit herewith. Before leaving New Zealand I made such arrangements as seemed desirable in the interests of the Library, the work being so distributed as to insure efficiency without necessitating any expense for extra assistance during the recess. Under the heading, "Library Staff," I refer to the work done during my absence by the staff under the superintendence of the Acting-Librarian, Mr. H. James.

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

This Committee held five meetings during the recess. At its first meeting a new set of rules for the control of the Library during the recess was passed. The rules in question have worked well, and will, I hope, be confirmed and again enforced next recess. A sub-committee of selection also sat and considered lists of suggestions made by the Acting-Librarian and by members.

RECESS PRIVILEGES.

The number of persons admitted to Library privileges during the recess (independent of those connected with Parliament, heads of departments, &c.) was 269.

BOXES TO MEMBERS.

The usual number of boxes of books and magazines was despatched to members. New arrangements were made by the Committee with the postal authorities. Wicker baskets, which meet the requirements of the Post Office, have been provided, and the slight delay which arose at the beginning of the recess in the despatch of books to members will not again occur. Such delay as did occur was in no way the fault of the Acting-Librarian or his staff, but was owing to the boxes being stopped at the post-office on the ground of overweight.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY.

During the period commencing the 15th May, 1903, and ending 15th June, 1904, 1,940 volumes were added to the Library, 1,100 by purchase and 840 as exchanges or donations. In addition to the above volumes the usual number of bound volumes of newspapers was added to the stock in the basement. During the year 1902-3 the number of additions to the Library was 3,080. It must be remembered, however, that this year's total does not include the Smithsonian publications and the State publications of the United States Government. These publications the staff has not yet had time to classify and catalogue. They will swell next year's list. Large consignments of books have arrived from London since the compilation of the accession list shortly to be issued in the usual printed form. These books will be at the disposition of members early in the present session. Messrs. Sotheran and Co., London, have executed the various Library orders with care and promptitude, and the same remark applies to the orders for English and foreign periodicals which have as usual been entrusted to Messrs. Street and Sons. I have to thank the Agent-General and his staff for the expedition and care shown in the transmission of the Library orders to our London agents, and the lively interest shown by them at all times in all matters upon which we communicate with them in connection with the Library. The system under which a certain number of new books is purchased locally each month has again been adopted and has worked well, a number of interesting and useful works in all branches of literature having been secured by the Acting-Librarian, under the authorisation of the Chairman.