

1907.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY:

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1906-7.

Laid on the Table by Leave of the House.

The CHIEF LIBRARIAN to the CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit herewith the following report for the year 1906-7:—

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

This Committee, under the chairmanship of W. Fraser, Esq., M.H.R., held four meetings during the recess. Two special meetings were held, when lists of books for order were brought forward by the Chief Librarian and duly considered.

The books the purchase of which was authorised at the meeting held on the 19th December have arrived, and are now on the Library tables in the main reading-room. A second order was sent to London on the 17th May. The works enumerated in this order are expected here early next month.

Special attention has been paid this recess to scientific and technological works, and in two or three classes the Library has been brought much more up to date. Representations having been made to me, however, that the Law Library required strengthening, a number of law-books, selected by Mr. Hanan, M.H.R., have been ordered, and will be here before the end of the session. I would suggest that the amount of £50 be set aside for the immediate purchase of other law-books, such books to be selected by a special sub-committee, which might, if considered desirable, take the advice of some of the legal members of the two Chambers.

RECESS PRIVILEGES.

The number of persons (independent of those on the "full privilege" list) to whom the privileges of the Library have been granted during the recess was 452, the number of volumes taken out being over five thousand. There has been, so far as I can ascertain, no loss of or damage to the books so borrowed.

It is very pleasing to again note a steady improvement in the class of works favoured by borrowers. Technological and scientific works have been largely consulted, and there can be no doubt that the privilege is most gratefully appreciated by the more intellectual class among the reading people of Wellington. No novels, save what might be called classic English fiction, are issued to the holders of the ordinary recess privileges.

The value of the fine collection of bound newspapers and official records of all kinds stored in the Library has been increasingly testified to by the large numbers of persons, in many cases from distant parts of the colony, who have come here to consult and take extracts from these valuable records. It is quite evident that as years go by this Library will be regarded as a truly National Reference Library, serving the same purpose with regard to New Zealand as the British Museum does to the United Kingdom.

BOOKS SENT TO MEMBERS.

A large number of baskets, containing books of all kinds, have been sent out to members during the recess. I would ask members not to send back these baskets through the various express companies, but to forward them through the Post Office. Payment of the postage is made at this end by means of official stamps attached to debit vouchers issued to me by the Post Office.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

I am gratified to be able to state that the total number of volumes added to the Library during the year ending the 10th June was 2,873, the largest number for some years. The total number of books in the Library is now over 64,000.

Accession lists showing the classification of the books added from the 1st June, 1906, to the 10th June, 1907, have been issued to members.

Amongst other donations I would specially note a fine copy of the *édition de luxe* of Sir Herbert Maxwell's superb work, "The Story of the Tweed," the gift of A. H. Turnbull, Esq., of this city; and the "Novellinos" of Masuccio, presented by Captain Robinson, R.E. Mr. Alex. Rutherford has also presented some interesting and valuable records of fish-culture in Italy.

THE LIBRARY BUILDING, FITTINGS, ETC.

During the recess the ground lobby and rooms, the main staircase, and the upstairs lobby have been decorated in a simple colour-scheme, the result being considered very effective, and a welcome change from the old bare appearance of the plain white walls.

The steady increase in the number of books added in the classes housed in the main reading-room has necessitated the provision of additional shelf accommodation. This has been provided by the supply of bookcases which fill up the spaces below the various windows. By this means I have been able to arrange accommodation for fully fifteen hundred more volumes in this room. The increase of works in the Sociology Room, on the ground floor, will soon compel me to remove the Art Section books from this room, where they occupy considerable space in the gallery, and place them elsewhere. This could be done next recess.

The danger to the Library from fire breaking in through the windows at the Bellamy's end of the stack-rooms building had long been a source of anxiety to me, and had been unfavourably commented on by fire-insurance experts. During the recess I sent a memorandum, making certain suggestions on the subject, to the Minister for Public Works, the result being that the building was carefully inspected by the Government Architect and by Captain Hennah. It was eventually decided to brick up the windows; and this has been done. There is a slight loss of light in the later part of the afternoon, but this is met by the use of electric light; and in any case, during the winter months artificial light had always to be used, so there is no additional inconvenience, and the Library is now, in what was formerly its most vulnerable part, practically fireproof. My original recommendations provided for the substitution of iron for the wooden doors in the basement at the Hill Street side, and at the lobby entrance to the ground-floor stack-room, but this the officers of the Department did not consider necessary. With due deference to their opinion, I still hold that this additional precaution is most desirable.

INSURANCE OF THE LIBRARY.

I would again remind the Committee that the insurance on the books, printed documents, &c., stored in the Library is only £4,000. I am of opinion that the lowest insurance should be £10,000 to £12,000, and that the cost should be defrayed by the Government, and not be taken, as are the present premiums, from the Library vote of £600, which should, I maintain, be solely applied to the purchase of books and periodicals. I would respectfully suggest that a resolution on this subject be passed by the Committee and forwarded to the Government.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The thanks of the Library are due to the High Commissioner and his staff for their prompt compliance with my many requests during the year; to Messrs. Sotheran and Co. and Street and Co. for the careful attention given to our orders; to the Government Printer, Mr. Mackay; and to the officers of the Public Works Department for their promptness in meeting our requirements in various directions. The various members of the Library staff have worked well during the year; and I have also to thank the Chairman of the Recess Committee, Mr. W. Fraser, M.H.R., for the ungrudging manner in which he has devoted so much of his private time to the general interests of the institution.

As usual, during the recess the number of visitors from the United Kingdom, America, and Australia, as well as from all parts of New Zealand, has been very large. During the tourist season an assistant is kept fully occupied with the task of showing strangers round the Library.

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

In an Appendix will be found the Library balance-sheet for the year ended the 31st March, 1907, with a copy of the Auditor's certificate.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.

APPENDIX.

BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1907.

1906.		<i>Receipts.</i>		£ s. d.		<i>Expenditure.</i>		£ s. d.	
Mar. 31.	Balance from 1905-6	..	..	311	16	2	Repayments of High Commissioner's accounts	..	..
Nov. 16.	Annual grant	..	..	600	0	0	for books, periodicals, packing, freight, and	..	..
"	Private Bill fees	..	..	50	0	0	insurance	..	282 4 9
"	Refund, stamp imprest	..	..	15	0	0	Books and periodicals purchased locally	..	254 17 0
							San Francisco News Company, for American	..	..
							periodicals	..	14 6 10
							Fire insurance	..	18 0 0
							Stamp imprest	..	15 0 0
							Sundry small accounts	..	3 10 10
							Petty cash	..	3 0 0
							Balance in bank on 31st March	£399 11 9	
							Less unpaid cheque	..	13 15 0
									385 16 9
									£976 16 2
									£976 16 2

Copy of Auditor's Certificate.

Account to the 31st March, 1907, has been examined and found correct, and the balance as shown is found to coincide with the bank pass-book.

16th July, 1907.

J. K. WARBURTON,
Controller and Auditor-General.

NOTE.—The balance shown at end of financial year (£385 16s. 9d.) will be entirely exhausted (in meeting accounts current) before the receipt of this year's grant.

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,500 copies), #2 5s. 6d.

By Authority : JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1907.

Price 3d.]

