

SESSION II.
1923.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY

(REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1922-23).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

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

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year 1922-23:—

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

The Recess Library Committee, under the chairmanship of the Hon. Sir William Hall-Jones, K.C.M.G., M.L.C., held three meetings during the recess. Lists of books suggested for order by the Chief Librarian were brought before the Committee and duly considered.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

I am pleased to be able to chronicle a considerable increase in the number of catalogued accessions for the last twelve months as compared with the number of similar accessions during the immediately preceding annual period, the Accession Register showing a total of 2,684 catalogued items, as against 1,663 for the preceding year, 1921-22. This very substantial increase is to be accounted for in some degree by the fact that the annual grant was supplemented last year by £100, and also as a result of considerable savings effected in the expenditure upon periodicals, thus allowing more money to be expended on publications of more permanent interest and value.

The Library grant this year, £700, is still, so I feel it my duty to point out, much below the sum really necessary if the Library is to be kept thoroughly well up to date. Even now, with the additional £100 voted last year, it is only £100 more than it was in 1875—forty-eight years ago. Apart from the fact that there has been of late years a most substantial increase in the prices of all kinds of books and periodicals (in many instances as high as 30 to 40 per cent.), which has greatly reduced the purchasing-power of the sum available, the numerous new political, economic, industrial, and social problems which have come into prominence since the Great War have been responsible for a huge bulk of new literature, much if not all of which it is most desirable should be available for reference and study by members of the Legislature. Special attention has been paid during the year to strengthening, as far as funds would allow, the Sociology and Economics section, but much more could and ought to be done in this direction did the Library finances permit. The Library is so important a part of the legislative machine that I would again point out that the means at present as the disposal of the Selection Committee are still insufficient to keep the institution adequately supplied with the best literature on the more important questions of the day.

LIBRARY STAFF CHANGES.

During the year Messrs. H. L. James and J. J. Costall have resigned their positions on the staff, the former, I am sorry to say, through continued ill health. Mr. James's scholarly attainments, his expert knowledge of bibliography, and the zeal with which he performed his duties had made him for many years a most valuable member of the staff. It is only fitting that mention should be made here of the splendid bibliographical work he did some years ago in the compilation and editing of the Library main catalogue and its supplements, work which was most favourably commented upon by library experts in Great Britain and the United States.

Mr. Costall's place will be greatly missed, especially by the older members of the Legislature. He had been employed in the Library for over forty years, and had earned an excellent reputation as a public servant by the unfailing industry and courtesy which he exhibited in the discharge of his duties.

Since Mr. James's retirement most of the work formerly performed by him has fallen upon Mr. P. McColl, another old officer of the Library staff. Much additional work has been thrown upon the staff by the retirement of Messrs. James and Costall, and I desire to express my thanks to the various officers for the assiduity they have all displayed in coping with the extra work thrown upon them.

During the year Mr. W. Wood joined the Library staff. A well-educated man, he has quickly picked up routine details, and bids fair to become a very valuable member of the staff.

It would be of great advantage to the efficient working of the Library were a junior, a cadet, either male or female, to be appointed, one who is capable of taking a moderately quick shorthand note and who is a good typist. The correspondence has of late years increased to such an extent as to entail a serious demand upon my time. Were a regular typist appointed he or she would be able to fill in his or her time with typewriting the catalogue cards. At present these are written, but in

all up-to-date libraries they are typewritten, and this is desirable here. Were a junior officer attached to the Library I should be relieved of much detail work, and have more time to spare for general supervision of the institution, and for the important task of looking up information on various subjects for Ministers and members. The old post-office, next to the Chief Librarian's office, could be readily and inexpensively converted into an office for the typist.

ANNUAL STOCK-TAKING.

Messrs. W. Baine and W. Johnson, the two assistants charged with the work of taking stock, report as follows :—

“Stock was taken this year of Class 800 (General Literature, Poetry, Essays, Literary Criticism, &c.). The number of volumes in this class is over nine thousand, each of which was carefully checked. The number of volumes found to be missing was thirty-three, as against forty-five in 1917, and 106 in 1913. The result is even better than the figures would seem to indicate, as, since the previous stock-taking in this class in 1917, 430 new books have been added to this section.”

RECESS-PRIVILEGE HOLDERS.

The number of persons to whom recess-privilege permits were issued during the year was 618, as against 549 in the preceding recess. The total number of volumes issued to the privilege holders was 5,681. I am pleased to be able to state that all the books lent out have been returned in good order. No fiction is issued save to members of the Legislature and to persons whose names are on the full-privilege list.

LIBRARY FURNITURE, ETC.

I would again direct attention to the necessity which exists for the walls of the Library to be repainted, and for the furniture to be either renovated or replaced by new articles. The Library walls have not been painted and decorated since 1906. In many places the paint has peeled off, causing a very unsightly appearance. The furniture also in some of the rooms badly requires replacement. Some of the arm-chairs have been in use nearly thirty years. In one room there are eleven chairs of nine different patterns. Since the opening of the new Parliament Buildings, with their tasteful and comfortable furnishings, the necessity for renovations in the Library has become specially apparent. I trust that this matter will receive attention during the coming recess.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Through the courtesy of Mr. S. F. McLean, Riddiford Street, Newtown, Wellington, a new portrait shield of the Parliament of 1891–93, to replace the one destroyed in the fire at Parliament Buildings, has been prepared by the firm of Andrews and Co., photographers, and has been hung in the Library.

The usual monthly lists of accessions have been issued to members during the recess, and a large number of baskets of books have been sent out to members all over the Dominion.

The Library orders for books and periodicals purchased in Great Britain have been entrusted as usual to Messrs. Henry Sotheran and Co. and Messrs. Street and Co., and have received due attention.

I have to express my thanks to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Joint Library Committee, the Hon. W. H. Triggs, M.L.C., and Mr. J. McC. Dickson, M.P., and to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Recess Library Committee, the Hon. Sir William Hall-Jones, K.C.M.G., M.L.C., and the Hon. Dr. Collins, M.L.C., for the attention these gentlemen have given to Library matters during the year; also to the High Commissioner and his staff for the promptitude and care which they have displayed in attending to Library business in London.

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

In an appendix will be found the Library balance-sheet for the year ended 31st March, 1923, together with a copy of the Auditor's certificate.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.

APPENDIX.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1923.

<i>Receipts.</i>			<i>Expenditure.</i>		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Balance, 1st April, 1922	155	13 7	Purchase books and periodicals in Great Britain	309	2 3
Annual grant	700	0 0	Purchase periodicals, United States of America	26	13 2
Bank of New Zealand—Refund commission	0	5 0	Purchase books and periodicals in New Zealand	194	14 8
			Fire-insurance	9	6 8
			Sundries	1	6 9
			Balance, Bank of New Zealand, 31st March, 1923	314	15 1
	<u>£855</u>	<u>18 7</u>		<u>£855</u>	<u>18 7</u>

Examined and found correct.—J. H. FOWLER, Deputy Controller and Auditor-General.—30th July, 1923.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (475 copies), £3 10s.