

1924.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR, 1923-24.

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 1923-24:—

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

The Recess Library Committee, under the Chairmanship of Sir John Luke, M.P., 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.

The Accessions Register shows that during the year the number of catalogued accessions was 2,767 (including the Herries Bequest), this being a substantial increase, which compares most favourably with the augmentation recorded during the post-war yearly periods.

British publishing enterprise appears to have now regained its full pre-war activity, and in most branches of literature new and valuable works are now being constantly issued. There will be noticed this year a substantial increase in the bulk of new literature in which political and sociological questions are dealt with. The additions to the Library include the majority of the works of real importance issued during the year. Owing to the improved state of the Library finances, due to the reception of an increased grant, and to the probable income arising from private Bill fees, the revenue for book-purchasing purposes this year is higher than usual. The Accessions Register next year will, I trust, reflect this by an exceptionally substantial advance in the number of volumes added.

Through the generosity of the late Sir William Herries, whose official and personal interest in the Library was of long standing, the institution received last year some four hundred volumes. For the most part, the collection contained little of permanent importance and value, and a large number of the books stood in urgent need of repairs. There were not a few duplicates, and some of the fiction was of so relatively minor an importance and in such a bad state as to be, for the purposes of the Library, almost negligible. The collection, however, contains many volumes which are to be regarded as of permanent interest and value. As the volumes are being repaired, they are being placed upon the shelves.

LIBRARY STAFF.

In last year's report allusion was made to the necessity for the appointment of a cadet of some special personal intelligence and taste for literature. A resolution of the Joint Library Committee (9th August, 1923) in favour of such an appointment being made has not yet been acted upon. The question of appointing a thoroughly well educated suitable person as Assistant Librarian has still to be settled. The work of the Library has of late years considerably increased in many directions, and it is here worthy of record that whereas in 1901—when the present Chief Librarian took charge—the number of catalogued volumes was under forty thousand, the number to-day is 108,000-odd. This numerical proof of the growth of the institution will, I trust, be accepted in support of the plea for an increased staff.

RECESS PRIVILEGES, ETC.

The number of recess-privilege holders for the current year was 740, as against 618 last year. This is the largest number yet recorded. The number of books lent to recess-privilege holders was close upon seven thousand, as against 5,681 for the immediately preceding year. Save to members