

During the period that we were receiving nothing from Home, we were obliged from time to time to procure in the local market various works that were exciting general attention. About fifty volumes have in this way been added to the Library. If to these we add sixty volumes of serials, we find that the accessions to the Library by purchase this year amount, in all, to 860 volumes, in the various departments of literature.

By way of exchange—Imperial, international, and intercolonial—the accessions amount this year to no less than 389 volumes, bound and unbound. Adding to these the official publications of our own Government, of each of which we receive at least two copies, we have to record an increase in our collection of parliamentary records, official statistics, and other works of a kindred character, of 420 volumes. And here I must not omit to take note of our various newspapers, the vast majority of which come under the head of exchanges, as they are received by the Library in return for the Parliamentary Papers regularly forwarded to their several proprietors. Of these 120 volumes are year by year being added to this department of the Library, which now amounts to 1,580 volumes.

Early in April last the Acting-Chairman received from His Excellency the Governor a letter, covering copy of a despatch from the Earl of Derby, Secretary for the Colonies, intimating that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury had been pleased to grant the application made by the Library Committee last session, through His Excellency, for a complete set of the “Journals of the House of Lords.” These were sent down to the Agent-General’s office last January for transmission to the Library, and lately arrived. They number 114 large folio volumes, and fill up an important gap in our collection of parliamentary records. From the Trustees of the British Museum we have received, as usual, the publications issued by them during the year, consisting of four volumes.

The only private donations I have to announce in my present report are: A collection of the Cobden Club publications, from the Hon. the Premier, Major Atkinson; a series of pamphlets on the Contagious Diseases Act, from Sir William Fox; “Rambles with a Philosopher,” from the author, J. T. Thomson, Esq.; “Mr. Spencer’s Unification of Knowledge,” from the author, Malcolm Guthrie; and an additional supplement to Brand’s Decisions, from Mr. Blackmore, Clerk of Parliament, Adelaide. The donations for the year thus amount to 126 volumes.

Summing up, then, I find that the additions to the Library, from all sources, for the present year, are 1,526 volumes, of all sizes and on all subjects; and that our total collection now numbers close on 24,200 volumes.

I have given these details in order that honourable members may have some idea of the rate at which the Library is growing, and of the demand that is made year after year on the limited space at our disposal. Indeed, to such a pass have things come that serious difficulty is beginning to be experienced in disposing of the constant accessions to our accumulated stores. Every available corner is now nearly full. In some of the cases, indeed, I am obliged to place the books in double rows—a mode of arrangement attended with many inconveniences. So that the question of additional accommodation must soon force itself once more on the attention of the Legislature.

By a resolution of the Joint Library Committee last session it was decided to accept an offer made to the Government by Lord Derby, in a circular despatch dated 19th June, 1883, to send us regularly all the Imperial official publications on condition of our sending in return, to the Librarian of the British Museum, all the official publications of this colony. Accordingly, as soon as all the Government publications for 1883 were ready, they were despatched by the “British Queen,” which left Wellington on the 6th March. In this way closer and more direct relations have been established between this Library and that great national institution.

A good deal of important and even necessary work has been overtaken during the present recess. The pamphlets in the Library have been carefully gone over, and a list of them prepared, so that they may be all printed together, instead of being interspersed with other books all through the catalogue. There are 377 of them in all, of which 196 have already been bound, while 181 are still unbound. It is matter of regret that no means have ever been devised to secure a more complete set of the pamphlets that appear from time to time in various parts of the colony, many of which, though published in this fugitive form, are of permanent value. A list of all the maps and charts in the Library, both geographical and geological, has now, for the first time, been made. A want much felt by many members, for some years back, has been supplied by the preparation of an index of subjects for the general Catalogue of 1880, and for the first Supplementary Catalogue of 1882; and, as usual, a fresh supplement, with which, for greater convenience, that of last year is incorporated, has been published. It contains all the books that have been added to the Library for the last two years, and has also a carefully-prepared index of subjects.

Stock was taken twice during the recess, and I am happy to be able to say that there were only ten volumes or so of those that were here three years ago of which we were unable to find any trace.

I have, &c.,

A. MACGREGOR,

Librarian.

The Acting-Chairman of the Recess Library Committee.