

1901.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1900-1901.

Laid on the Table by Mr. Guinness, by leave, 13th August, 1901.

SIR,—

Wellington, 1st July, 1901.

I have the honour to submit to you the following report for the year 1900-1 :—

Removal of Books to New Library.—In accordance with the terms of my appointment I assumed charge of the Library on the 1st February, 1901, and at once commenced to make arrangements for the removal of the books to the new Library. The removal was effected in the month of March. The books were arranged in the various rooms in accordance with the scheme authorised by the Joint Library Committee, only such modifications being made as were found absolutely necessary. For instance, it was considered desirable to take out the quarto and folio volumes from the history and travel classes; these volumes are now temporarily housed in No. 2 stack-room, and will be removed shortly to No. 3 stack-room, where special shelving of suitable strength to carry such books is now being erected.

More Iron Shelving.—Finding that the available space provided in the various rooms already fitted with shelving was insufficient, I applied to the Public Works Department for additional iron shelving, to be ordered from America, for stack-room No. 2, and for that portion of stack No. 1 unoccupied by the bindery. This shelving has, I understand, been ordered. Meanwhile stack-room No. 3 is being fitted with temporary wooden shelving, which, when the iron shelving arrives, will be transferred to the basement, completing the stands already erected for the accommodation of bound newspapers and the earlier parliamentary papers of Great Britain and the Australasian Colonies. Speaking generally, the iron shelving has given satisfaction. In a few cases, however, the standards have warped a little, and I have requested the Public Works Department to insist upon stronger pins, running right through the shelves, being supplied in future. For folio and quarto volumes there should be a specially strong and shorter shelf. This requirement will, I understand, be provided for in ordering new shelving in the future.

Furnishings.—The furnishing of the new Library is now practically complete. The building has been connected with the Telephone Exchange, and the main reading-room, staff-room, bindery, and Librarian's office have been connected by "domestic telephones." Three photogram reproductions of classical subjects, issued by the British Museum, have been framed and hung in the reading-room. Group photographs of members of previous Parliaments have been newly framed, and will be hung at the head of the main stairs. With the permission of the Committee, I propose to have two stands of ferns and pot-plants, one at the foot and one at the head of the main staircase. The question of carpeting the main reading-room is left to the decision of your Committee.

Basement.—The basement in the new building is mainly devoted to the bound newspapers, but space had to be found therein for the housing of some thousands of volumes of parliamentary records of this and other colonies. It is an open question whether the *Gazettes* of the Australasian Colonies, South Africa, Canada, &c., should be preserved after a certain time has elapsed. If these *Gazettes* are to be permanently preserved, the problem of "want of space" must again come up in a very few years. My personal opinion is that the *Gazettes* of New Zealand should always be preserved, but that five years is a sufficiently long period to retain those of other colonies, it being reasonable to assume that by that time every record of permanent value appearing in the older *Gazettes* will be incorporated, either in the debates or in the Acts of the colonies in question. The bound newspapers in the basement are arranged, as far as possible, by provinces. The present system will be improved upon when there is more shelving at our disposal. Portable electric lights are being supplied, which will afford facility for reader reference. There is now, practically, no damp in the basement, but the strong-rooms will not be ready for use for some time, and some better method of drying these rooms is desirable. They are not, however, at present urgently needed for library purposes. The area prism-lights, complained of in last year's report, have been repaired. In this, as in all other matters pertaining to the furnishing and general equipment of the Library, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the officers of the Public Works Department, acting under the direction of the Hon. W. Hall-Jones, Minister for Public Works.

The Bindery.—A bindery is now established in the No. 1 stack-room, a portion of which was specially fitted up for that purpose. A large number of books have been rebacked or otherwise neatly repaired by the officer in charge of this department, who has also stamped the classification numbers upon several thousand volumes, renovated the binding of many leather-covered books, and performed much other useful work.

New Books.—The number of books added to the library (by purchase) from the 16th June, 1900, to the 31st May, 1901, was 628. Since the latter date to the date of this report 146 volumes have been added by purchase. The usual exchanges from the British Museum, Smithsonian Institution, and the British, Canadian, Australasian, and other Governments have been received and duly placed on the Library shelves. A few donations by private persons have also been made, and the same suitably acknowledged.

Books on Order.—The special vote of £500 passed last session has been utilised in the purchase of a large number of volumes in various classes of literature. Special attention was paid by the Selection Committee, which held six meetings during the recess, to the purchase of books on law, sociology, science, education, medicine, useful arts, and other branches in which there was