

1909.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY:

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1908-9.

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 the following report for the year 1908-9 :—

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

At the first meeting of the Committee W. Fraser, Esq., M.P., was elected Chairman for the recess. The Committee held four meetings during the first recess, and two meetings during the shorter period which followed the first session. Several orders for books were authorised by the sub-committee of selection, the majority of the works being now on the Library tables in the main reading-room. An additional consignment of new works is due to arrive very shortly from London.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY DURING THE YEAR.

Since my last report no fewer than 3,675 books and other publications have been added to the Library and duly catalogued. The accessions included the usual proportion of exchanges, donations, and contributions under the General Assembly Library Act. I am systematically requiring all publishers in New Zealand to comply with the provisions of the Act, and many more or less valuable books, and periodicals, and pamphlets are thus being added to the Library. Special and careful attention has been paid throughout the year to the selection and acquisition of the latest books and pamphlets in various branches of sociology, education, constitutional history, political economy, statistics, banking and finance, and in those classes I think I may fairly claim that the Library is well up to date. I have made arrangements by which all the publications of the Liberal Publications Department, the National Conservative Union, and the Independent Labour Party (Great Britain) will be regularly supplied to the Library as they are issued. The pamphlets and other publications of these important political organizations frequently contain statistical and other information which throws an interesting light upon legislative and administrative issues of considerable moment not only to the British but to colonial Legislatures.

In the section headed "Useful Arts," which includes technology in all its branches, many notable additions have been made; whilst in the following classes—History, Biography, and Voyages and Travels—I can safely assert that very few new works of any real eminence have been overlooked. Due attention has also been paid to science, although in this direction we can hardly be expected to specialise. Applied rather than natural science provides a class of work more generally useful in a library such as this.

RECESS PRIVILEGES.

The total number of persons to whom permits to use the Library during the recess were issued was 745, which is more than three hundred in excess of the number registered last year. As a separate ledger account has to be kept for each person taking out books, the additional clerical work cast on the Library is somewhat considerable. The number given above does not include those persons who are on the "Full Privilege List," nor the numerous officials of State Departments, journalists, and students who so largely use the newspaper-files and other publications for the purpose of reference. The task of attending to the requirements of the privilege-holders and others undoubtedly, to some extent, prevents the concentration of the staff on certain work which might and ought to be done in order to make the Library of the greatest possible utility to members during the session. On the whole I have no complaint to make as to the way in which the books borrowed are treated by the privilege-holders, but of course there is necessarily some additional wear-and-tear involved by this extended circulation. During the first recess two plates were cut