

1909.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY:

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

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

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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

out of an art book in the main reading-room, and several magazines were removed from the tables and have not been returned. Detection of theft of plates is practically impossible, as weeks may elapse between the commission of the act and its discovery. With regard to the loss of magazines, should the same thing happen next recess, I propose to ask the Recess Committee to authorise the removal of all the reviews and magazines from the open tables and their issue to members only. The same remark applies to the illustrated papers, which have occasionally suffered at the hands of some mean despoiler.

Despite the publication, in two issues of the three local papers, of a notice that all books out to privilege-holders were to be returned by a certain date (about a fortnight previous to the opening of Parliament) several persons totally disregarded the announcement. There has, I fear, gradually grown up an inclination on the part of a few of the privilege-holders to regard the privilege as a right rather than as a courtesy, and to treat the rules and regulations governing their admittance to and use of the Library with an almost openly displayed contempt. Several have grumbled at their being excluded from the Sociology Room, which is kept strictly for the use of members who may be living in or passing through Wellington during the recess. I wish to emphasize the fact once again that in no other legislative library in Australasia is the privilege of using the institution and taking out books therefrom extended to the general public. I am personally of opinion that any person who does not comply on the proper date with the request made for the return of books should be firmly debarred, for a time at least, from again being the recipient of a permit. And this rule should be applied without respect of persons. In conclusion, in order to avoid any misconception on the part of new members, I desire to put it on record that no novels (save what might be called classic fiction) are issued to the ordinary recess privilege-holder. The class of works taken out by privilege-holders during the recess shows that the vast majority of those enjoying the privilege greatly value and must intellectually profit by the generous concession granted to them. It is therefore all the more annoying that there should be a minority who do not apparently know how to properly regard the necessary and by no means irksome rules laid down by the Recess Committee for the governance of the institution during the period Parliament is not in session.

#### BOOKS SENT TO MEMBERS.

The number of baskets of books sent to members in various parts of the Dominion during the recess has been largely above the average of previous years. I would again urge upon members that they should not return these baskets through the express companies or similar channels, but through the Post Office with which the Library has a specially favourable arrangement. Owing to some of the baskets having gone astray, mainly at the close of the last Parliament, I have had to order an additional supply. These are marked "G. A. L." on one side, and a register of them will be kept, in addition to the usual ledger account in which all books sent away are entered.

#### BOOKS KEPT OUT TOO LONG.

The ledger accounts of some members display an unduly large number of entries of books issued and not yet returned. I need hardly point out that the retention of a book by a member after he has once read it is apt to cause inconvenience and annoyance to other members who may be anxious to consult the same work. There are, I regret to say, certain cases where a request for the return of the books has met with no response. Before the present session closes it may become my duty to supply the Library Committee with a full list of members who have failed to return books they have had out for some time, and to request that the Committee take some definite action in the matter.

The objectionable practice of taking books out of the Library without entering them in the day-books provided, both upstairs and downstairs, for that purpose is, I regret to say, increasing every year. Every such omission means inconvenience to members and to the staff of the Library, and adds greatly to the chances of a book being lost beyond all possibility of recovery. The time occupied in entering a book is so small that there is really no excuse for any disregard of the rules. It is most unfair that the staff should sometimes be blamed for being unable to find a volume, when all the time it has been removed from the shelves and never entered.

#### BINDING.

Arrangements have been made with the Government Printer for the substitution of an equally substantial but less costly style of binding for many magazines, official papers, and periodicals which are regularly placed on the shelves in volume or completed form, but are thereafter not frequently consulted. By this means a very considerable saving will be effected on the binding vote, the amount so saved being expended on the rebinding, in many cases so urgently required, of books which are of permanent value, and which are in frequent use. I have recently "weeded out" some three hundred volumes for rebinding, and the work is now in progress at the Printing Office. The Library binder has repaired a large number of volumes during the year, and has also done all the lettering and stamping on the new books. He has done excellent work throughout the year.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

The bound newspapers and other books in the basement have been rearranged, and the whole place cleaned up and given a thorough overhaul. The result is that reference to any work required is now much more speedy than was previously the case.

The heavy annual increase in various classes of books necessitates the transfer, from time to time, of volumes from the main reading-room to what are known as the stack-rooms, a similar transference being necessary from the stack-rooms to the basement, which is steadily filling up. It will be necessary very soon—next year, in all probability—to remove the whole of the American official publi-

cations, which are not very frequently consulted, to the basement. This would give us much more room for the shelving of works more frequently in demand. I propose to ask the Public Works Department to carry out some considerable additions to the shelf-space in the basement. Were this done the space difficulty would be postponed for three or four years to come.

In conclusion, I desire to express my thanks to the High Commissioner and his staff for their careful attention to my numerous requests during the year; to our London agents, Messrs. Sotheran and Co. and Messrs. Street and Co. for their promptness in executing the orders which have been sent to them; to the various members of the Library staff, whose work during the recess has been considerably increased by reason of the larger number of privilege-holders; and, finally, to the Chairman of the Recess Committee, Mr. W. Fraser, M.P., who has been unsparing in his attention to the general supervision of the Library-management.

#### LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

In an appendix will be found the Library balance-sheet for the year ended 31st March, 1909, with a copy of the auditor's certificate.

I have, &c.,  
CHARLES WILSON, Chief Librarian.

### APPENDIX.

#### BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1909.

1908-9.	Receipts.	£	s.	d.	Expenditure.	£	s.	d.
Balance brought forward, 31st March, 1908..		462	6	6	Purchase of books and periodicals in London, freight, and marine insurance .. ..	383	6	5
Treasury grant .. ..	600	0	0		Purchase of American periodicals .. ..	26	10	8
Stamp imprest refund .. ..	15	0	0		Purchase of books locally .. ..	340	5	6
					Stamp imprest .. ..	15	0	0
					Insurance .. ..	18	0	0
					Cheque-book .. ..	0	5	0
					Advertising and extra papers .. ..	8	4	2
					Other small accounts .. ..	9	14	4
					Balance in Bank of New Zealand, 31st March, 1909 .. ..	276	0	5
		<u>£1,077</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>		<u>£1,077</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>

#### COPY OF AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATE.

Account to the 31st March, 1909, has been examined and found correct, and the balance as shown is found to coincide with the bank pass-book.

J. K. WARBURTON,  
Controller and Auditor-General.

NOTE.—The balance shown at the end of financial year (£276 Os. 5d.) will be entirely exhausted (in meeting accounts current) before the receipt of this year's grant.

CHARLES WILSON, Chief Librarian.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (1,500 copies), £2 19s.

By Authority : JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1909.

Price 3d.]

