

1910.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY:

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1909-10.

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 1909-10 :—

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

At the first meeting of the Committee, W. Fraser, Esq., M.P., was elected Chairman for the recess. Two large orders for books were authorized by the sub-committee of selection. The majority of the volumes are now on the Library tables and shelves. Additional consignments are due to arrive from London very shortly.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY DURING THE YEAR.

During the period 8th June, 1909, to 7th June, 1910, 2,640 publications were added to the Library. This number includes volumes added by purchase, exchanges from other States, bound newspapers, official publications of New Zealand, and books sent to the Library in accordance with the General Assembly Library Act, now incorporated in the Copyright Act. Whilst many of the leading publishers and printers carefully observe the conditions of the Act, there are others who do not do so, especially where small pamphlets are issued. Many of these publications, of the issue of which I can only become aware through reading reviews or advertisements in the newspapers of the Dominion, constitute valuable sources of information for the social or political historian of the future. No publisher has yet been proceeded against for non-compliance with the Act, and I am naturally loth to recommend such action being taken. I would recommend that a special circular be sent—as I would suggest, by the Department of Internal Affairs—to every bookseller, printer, and publisher throughout the Dominion, and after this formal notice such persons as neglect or refuse to comply with the Act should be legally compelled to do so. A single prosecution under the Act would, I believe, result in the provisions of the measure being promptly complied with.

THE NEW ZEALAND AND POLYNESIAN SECTION.

A most interesting and valuable collection of books dealing with the early history of New Zealand and with various voyages and travels in the Pacific was presented by the Government to the Library during the recess. The volumes in question, which include several exceedingly rare works, copies of which the Library did not previously possess, were formerly the property of the late Dr. Meeson, of Christchurch, and were purchased in London from the executors of that gentleman. The volumes have been catalogued, and added to the special New Zealand reference section.

RECESS PRIVILEGES.

The usefulness of the Library has been fully taken advantage of during the recess, both by members—to whom an exceptionally large number of baskets of books were despatched—and by the recess-privilege holders. On the whole, the rules and regulations governing the issue of books to the privilege-holders have been conscientiously observed, but I should like to see in some few cases a stricter observance of the date upon which all books are required to be returned in

anticipation of the opening of Parliament. Despite the fact that the ordinary privilege-holder can only take out what I may term classic fiction, the number of applicants for reading-privileges was again very large—namely, 514. This, however, is a decrease of 200 as compared with the figures for last year.

It may interest the Committee to know the occupations of the privilege-holders. I have prepared the following list, which speaks for itself: Artists, 4; architects, 2; actuary, 1; agents and sharebrokers, 5; accountants and clerks, 55; bank officers, 8; Civil servants, 142; other Government servants, 18; ministers of religion, 14; chemist, 1; company-managers, 6; domestic duties, 43; doctors, 4; dentist, 1; draftsman, 1; electric linesman, 1; civil and electrical engineers, 3; Education Board officers, 4; hairdressers, 3; insurance officers, 2; journalists, 15; Judges' associate, 1; musician, 1; nurses, 2; naval and military officers, 5; organizing secretaries, 3; plumbers, 2; photographers, 4; other trades, 2; private incomes, 53; solicitors and law-clerks, 21; school-teachers, 29; students, 20; settlers, 10; sign-writer, 1; storeman, 2; salesmen, 2; seaman, 1; typists, 10; theatrical agents, 2; visitors, 2; wholesale and retail merchants, 7.

WHAT THE PRIVILEGE-HOLDERS READ.

Out of the 514 persons granted the recess privileges, 123 made use of the library mainly for reference purposes. Of the remaining 391, who took books out to read at home, 40 persons took out twenty books and over; 42 took ten books and over; 104 took five books and over; 205 fewer than five books. Altogether 3,669 books were issued to privilege-holders during the recess, the following being a rough classification of the character of the works borrowed:—

Biography, autobiography, memoirs, &c.	...	...	...	800
Voyages and travels	...	...	...	634
History	...	...	...	518
Sociology	...	...	...	210
Theology	...	...	...	23
Psychology	...	...	...	18
Philology	...	...	...	7
Pure and applied science	...	...	...	189
Fiction	...	...	...	518
General literature (poetry, essays, and belles lettres)	...	...	...	752

3,669

No current fiction is issued to the ordinary privilege-holders.

ART BOOKS AND THE MONRAD COLLECTION.

The increasing interest which is being manifested throughout the Dominion in art is responsible no doubt for the frequent applications I receive for permission to consult many valuable art publications in the Library. Visitors to Wellington from other parts of the Dominion have been allowed to consult art and other reference-books without a special privilege permit being granted. When, however, the visitor remains in the city for more than a few days, and desires to regularly frequent the institution, application for a formal permit is insisted upon. Whilst referring to art books, I would seize the opportunity of drawing attention to the exceedingly valuable collection of etchings and engravings presented to the Library now many years ago by the late Bishop Monrad. This collection, which is contained in three large portfolios or volumes, includes original etchings by Rembrandt, Albrecht Dürer, Van Ostade, Jan Steen, and other masters of the graver's art. As a practical testimony to the value of this collection, I may mention that four or five Rembrandts, of which the Library possesses (in the collection to which I am referring) exceptionally brilliant proofs, were sold recently in London at prices varying from £25 to £75. I am of opinion that the time has now arrived when this exceedingly valuable collection, superior, I believe, to any other single collection of etchings, mezzotints, and engravings to be found in Australasia, should be carefully classified, and that the choicer examples (the Rembrandts and the Dürers especially) should be mounted on frames or revolving stands, similar to those employed for the purpose of exhibiting prints at the British and South Kensington Museums, and at the National Art Gallery in Sydney, and at the Auckland Art Gallery. I would roughly estimate the cost of providing such stands—say two or three—at about £50; this amount to include the cost of framing the selected etchings in sunk mounts, lettering, &c. I would respectfully suggest that a small sub-committee be set up to consider the suggestions I have made, and to report to the Joint Committee as to the desirability of my project being carried out, and as to the best means of providing for the cost thereof.

LIBRARIES CONFERENCE.

With the permission of the Recess Library Committee, I attended at Easter the Libraries Conference held at Dunedin under the auspices of the Library Committee of the Dunedin City Council. The Conference, which lasted three days, discussed a number of important matters connected with library-management. Several papers were read by librarians and others, my own contribution being a paper entitled "The Selection and Purchase of Books for Public and Semi-public Libraries." The paper was discussed at some length by the delegates, and was ordered to be printed in the official report of the Conference. A paper by Mr. James, Assistant Librarian of this Library, was also read, the subject being "The Dewey System of Classification." At the close of the Conference a committee was set up to arrange for the formation of a "Libraries Association" for the Dominion. The next meeting will be held at Auckland.

GENERAL REMARKS.

I would again impress upon members the necessity for entering in the day-books provided upstairs and in the staff-room the works they may take out. Every book taken out without entering means grave inconvenience and possible loss. I repeat what I said last year, that it is most unfair that the Library officers should be blamed for being unable to find a volume, when all the time it has been removed from the Library shelves and never entered.

Rebinding is proceeding steadily on a systematic plan. A buckram binding, plain, stout, and useful, is being adopted for many magazines and periodicals which at one time were clothed in calf or morocco. The saving effected by the cheaper rebinding of books not in frequent use or of no great permanent value, assists me to rebind a large number of valuable works which sadly needed renovation.

A bronze plaster replica of a bust of the late Sir John Hall has been placed upon a suitable pedestal in the main reading-room.

As in former years, I have to express my thanks to the High Commissioner and his staff; to our London Agents, Messrs. Sotheran and Co. and Messrs. Street and Co.; to the various members of my staff; and to the Chairman of the Recess Committee, W. Fraser, Esq., M.P., who, as in former years, has manifested a continuous and deep interest in the general control of the Library.

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

In an appendix will be found the Library balance-sheet for the year ended 31st March, 1910, with a copy of the auditor's certificate.

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

APPENDIX.

BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1910.

1909-10.					EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH, 1910.				
<i>Receipts.</i>					<i>Expenditure.</i>				
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
Balance brought forward, 31st March, 1909		276	0	5	Purchase of books and periodicals in London,				
Treasury grant	600	0	0		freight, and marine insurance	285	15	6	
Treasury private Bill fees ..	50	0	0		Purchase of American periodicals	12	5	6	
					Purchase of books, &c., locally	216	16	2	
					Stamp imprest	10	0	0	
					Insurance	18	0	0	
					Extra papers and advertising	16	4	11	
					Sundry small accounts	4	12	0	
					Balance in Bank of New Zealand, 31st March,				
					1909	362	6	4	
		£926	0	5			£926	0	5

COPY OF AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATE.

Account to the 31st March, 1910, has been examined and found correct, and the balance as shown is found to coincide with the bank pass-book.

R. J. COLLINS,
Controller and Auditor-General.

NOTE.—The balance shown at the end of the financial year (£362 6s. 4d.) will be 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 15s.

Price 3d.]

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1910.

