

THE STAFF AND ITS WORK.

The permanent staff has received an addition in the person of Mr. W. Baine, who was appointed an assistant in the Library by the Government on the 1st April, 1912.

I have been able during the recess to effect a long-desired consolidation of the two card catalogues, which should prove of great service in securing prompt consultation of the catalogue. I have ordered a new card-catalogue cabinet, and after this comes to hand I hope to separate the "author and title" cards from the "subject" cards. This, when done, will greatly facilitate the consultation of the card catalogue.

Directly the present session is concluded I propose that the staff shall commence the task of indexing the pamphlets, of which the Library possesses an extensive and valuable collection. Mr. James, the Assistant Librarian, has, as in former years, done the bulk of the cataloguing, and the other members of the staff have given me every satisfaction with their work.

THE SPACE QUESTION.

Owing to the overcrowding of various sections, especially on the shelves of the main reading-room, I have been obliged to arrange for the transference of many of the works less in general request and use to the stack-room on the same floor. I had hoped during the recess to transfer the major portion of the American official publications to the basement, but I have not as yet been able to secure the necessary additional shelving. It may be necessary also to transfer to some other room the art library, at present stored in what is known as the sociology room. The annual accessions to the 300 Class (works on legislation, finance, education, and sociology generally) are now becoming so numerous that the whole room must perforce be devoted to this class of literature. Already I have had to transfer some of the older law-books from this room; but even when further transference is made of works now largely out of date the space available will be all too limited.

THE QUESTION OF A NATIONAL REFERENCE LIBRARY AND THE PROPOSED NEW LIBRARY WING.

At the annual conference of the New Zealand Libraries Association, held at Wellington at Easter, a resolution was carried to the effect that the General Assembly Library should be considered as the nucleus of a National Reference Library, provision for which should be made by the State in connection with the new Parliament Buildings. The subject is one which is too many-sided to allow of my discussing it in detail in a report of this kind, but, should the Committee consider it desirable, I should be glad to prepare a special report on the matter. All I wish to point out at present is, first, that a very large proportion of the books now bought for the Library are bought with the idea that sooner or later they will form part of a national reference library; and, second, that should it be decided that such a library be established in connection with the Parliamentary Library, the plans as at present drawn for the Library section of the new Parliament House would have to be very materially altered. In a National Reference Library provision would have to be made for a large public reading-room, and the non-access system would have to be adopted. Such a system could not, I feel sure, be worked in a building constructed on the lines laid down for the new Parliament Library. It is quite possible to combine a purely Legislative Library and a National Reference Library, but before it is too late to alter the plans I desire to place upon record my opinion that such a combination would be practically unworkable in a building such as that as at present planned.

MISCELLANEOUS.

During the recent recess the Library was visited by the Hon. James Bryce, British Ambassador to the United States. Mr. Bryce was pleased to express high satisfaction at finding so extensive and well-equipped a library. He was also kind enough to make some suggestions as to certain additional American "exchanges" which could, he thought, be secured.

For the convenience of new members I am having a chart or plan prepared which will show the disposition of the various classes of literature in the Library. I hope to have this chart ready by the time this report comes before the Committee.

Several specimen water-colour drawings and monochrome drawings from what is known as the Chevalier collection have been hung temporarily in the downstairs lobby. The collection, which includes some four to five hundred items—water-colour drawings, monochrome drawings, and special sketches—executed by the late Nicholas Chevalier during the years 1865 to 1868, and presented to the Dominion by the artist's widow, is, it is understood, eventually to be housed in the National Art Gallery.

Mr. W. L. Wyllie's picture of the New Zealand Dreadnought lying in the Thames, which the artist has generously presented to the Government and people of New Zealand, has been hung on the wall of the main staircase. This has necessitated a rearrangement of the pictures and portrait shields.

As usual, I have to tender my thanks to the Chairman of the Joint and the Recess Library Committees, the Hon. W. Fraser, M.P. (who has devoted a considerable amount of his private time to Library matters), to the members of the two Committees, to the Government Printer, and to the staff of the High Commissioner's office.

The Library orders for books and periodicals purchased in London have, as usual, received prompt attention from Messrs. Sotheran and Co. and Street and Co.

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

In an appendix will be found the Library balance-sheet for the year ended on the 31st March, 1912, with a copy of the Auditor's certificate.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.