

SESSION II.

1912.

NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1911-12.

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 herewith the following report for the year 1911-12.

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

The Recess Library Committee, under the chairmanship of W. Fraser, Esq., M.P., held several meetings during the recess. Lists of books suggested for order were brought forward and duly considered.

RECESS PRIVILEGES.

The number of permits issued to non-members during the recess was 462, a substantial decrease on the number for last year—799. This rather striking decrease is probably accounted for by two reasons: first, the fact that the short session came during what is the usual recess period; and, second, the decision of the Recess Library Committee, acting in accordance with the resolution passed by the House on the 31st August, 1911, that no works of fiction should be issued to other than members.

Of the 462 holders of recess privileges, 430 actually borrowed books. The number of volumes issued to these borrowers was 3,646, giving an average of 8.46 per borrower. Besides those volumes lent to recess-privilege holders, books were, as usual, issued to those placed under the full-privilege list by the Committee, such as the Judges, naval officers, the officers of the House, and others, and books issued to these are not included in the above figures. The books lent to recess-privilege holders have all been returned, save in three or four instances where they are in use by officers of the State Departments, who are consulting them in connection with official work. Such books are, however, "on call" at any time if required by members. There was no notable case of damage being done to the books lent. As I remarked on previous occasions, the system of lending books naturally necessitates a certain amount of additional wear-and-tear. In this connection I may say that steady work is done all the year round by the library binder, and also by the Government Printing Office, in repairing and rebinding volumes which stand in need of renovation. Quite a large number of books have been rebound during the year.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

The last Accession List issued included additions made to the Library up to the 5th July, 1911; but in order to have this year's list available for the use of members on the first day of the session I deemed it desirable to close the present list on the 24th May, 1912, thus making the period covered by this year's list about ten months. From the 5th July, 1911, to the 24th May, 1912, the number of volumes acquired by purchase, exchanges, and donations, and under the provisions of the Copyright Act (Consolidated Statutes, 1908, No. 29) was 2,445. Since the closing of the Accession List 285 additional volumes have been received in the Library, making the whole number for the year 2,730.

Special attention was again paid to the all-important subject of sociology, many interesting and valuable works on eugenics, on crime and its causes and treatment, town-planning, proportional representation, education, and other subjects of special interest to legislators having been added. Under the heading of "Useful Arts," which covers technology in general, many interesting additions have been made to the Library. The ever-increasing interest taken in art has prompted the purchase of not a few works of notable value. Biography does not bulk so largely amongst the purchases as last year, a fact accounted for by the paucity of new biographies of any notable interest during the last two publishing seasons; but under the heading of "Voyages and Travels" quite a number of most interesting works have been catalogued. A complete set of that good old classic in British topography, "Grose's Antiquities" (twelve volumes) was secured at a very reasonable price. Under the heading of "General Literature" there are some interesting items.

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.

APPENDIX.

BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1912.

1911.	Receipts.	£	s.	d.	Expenditure.	£	s.	d.
Mar. 31.	Balance at Bank of New Zealand	576	1	0	High Commissioner's accounts for books, periodicals, packing, freight, and insurance	445	5	6
	Cash in hand	5	0	0	New Zealand Shipping Company—Freight ..	1	2	2
	Treasury—				Books and periodicals purchased locally ..	273	1	0
	Private Bill fees	70	0	0	American periodicals, newspapers, &c. ..	12	13	3
	Annual grant	600	0	0	Fire insurance	18	0	0
	Stamp imprest refund	10	0	0	Extra newspapers, advertising, &c. ..	16	14	8
					Stamp imprest	10	0	0
					Sundry small accounts	12	7	3
					Bank cheque-book	0	2	0
					Balance in Bank of New Zealand on 31st March, 1912 (less unrepresented cheques) ..	471	15	2
		<u>£1,261</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>		<u>£1,261</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

Copy of Auditor's Certificate.

Account to the 31st March, 1912, has been examined and found correct, and the balance as shown, plus outstanding cheques, is found to coincide with the bank pass-book.

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

NOTE.—The balance shown at end of financial year (£471 15s. 2d.) will be exhausted (in meeting current accounts and commitments) before the receipt of this year's grant.

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,400 copies), £2.

By Authority : JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1912.

Price 3d.]

