

1913.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1912-13.

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 1912-13 :—

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

The Recess Library Committee, under the chairmanship of W. H. D. Bell, Esq., M.P., held meetings during the recess. Lists of books suggested for order were brought forward by the Chief Librarian and duly considered.

RECESS PRIVILEGES.

The number of permits issued to non-members during the recess was 478, as against 462 in 1911-12. The number of books issued to ordinary recess-privilege holders was 5,213. Besides these volumes lent to recess-privilege holders, books were as usual issued to persons whose names had been placed on the full-privilege list by the Joint Committee, such as the Judges, the officers of the House, and others. Books issued to these persons are not included in the above total. The vocations of the 478 ordinary recess-privilege holders were as follows: Government employees, 23; Civil servants, 77; barristers and solicitors, 16; commercial men—agents, 45; law clerks, 17; clerks, 25; secretaries, 37; bank clerks, 25; insurance clerks, 23; estate agent, 1—total, 173; importers, 3; boot-importer, 1; draper, 1; grocer, 1; warehouseman, 1; private means, 78; hotel employees, 2; merchants, 2; doctors, 5; chemists, 2; masseurs, 2; dentists, 2; nurses, 3; artisans, 3; caretaker, 1; gardener, 1; labourer, 1; Harbour Board officials, 3; architects, 3; civil and marine engineers, 4; domestic duties, 17; musicians, 2; visitors, 2; clergymen, 10; School Inspector, 1; Native Land Court Judge, 1; students, 16; journalists, 5; surveyors, 3; photographers, 2; artists, 5; art students, 5; officer, 1.

The books issued to the privilege-holders come mainly under the following heads: Biography, history, voyages and travels, science, poetry, and belles lettres. No fiction was issued save to persons on the full-privilege list. Differently coloured tickets were issued, in accordance with the instructions of the Joint Committee, to the two classes of privilege-holders.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

The Accessions List for the year 1912-13, copies of which have been issued to members of both Houses, includes all books and other publications added to the Library during the period 24th May, 1912, to 9th June, 1913, the total number being 2,647, as against 2,730 for the preceding year. From the 9th June to date of this report (22nd July), 405 additional books and publications of various kinds have been catalogued and entered on the Accessions Ledger. A "Check Reception-book" is now kept, in which each officer through whose hands new books added by purchase pass signs for the same, the process being continued until the volumes, duly stamped, leave the Library bindery.

The winter and spring publishing seasons 1911-12 were not remarkable for the appearance of many really notable books, the publication of several important books being postponed owing to the disturbing influences upon the publishing trade of the Balkan War and the strikes. Nevertheless, as will be seen by reference to the Accessions List, a large number of interesting and instructive works in all classes of literature have been added to the Library.

THE STAFF AND ITS WORK.

The principal work of the recess has been the stocktaking, which was carried out in the most systematic and exhaustive manner, and to which I refer in detail elsewhere. Next recess I hope to carry out a complete indexing of the valuable collection of pamphlets. Towards the close of the recess Mr. T. Roberts, the Library binder, fell seriously ill, and had to relinquish his work. I regret to say that the illness terminated fatally early in July. Mr. Roberts had been employed in the Library for some twelve years, and was a most efficient and industrious officer. Mr. A. J. Vaughan was appointed to the position temporarily, and his work has given me such satisfaction that I have recommended his permanent appointment. The new messenger, H. J. Millan, appointed last year, has discharged his duties with exceptional care and intelligence. The control of the Library post-office, and the reception, distribution, and expedition of mail-matter are now in the hands of the Postal Department. The mailman appointed last session has given every satisfaction.

THE SPACE QUESTION.

I must again emphasize the urgent necessity which exists for an addition to the shelving-space in the Library. During the recess considerable alterations have been effected in the shelving in the basement, with the result that the splendid collection of bound newspapers can now be more conveniently arranged, and that additional space is afforded for the storing of British and other parliamentary papers and official publications generally. But this is not enough. Certain sections of the Library are now so overcrowded that the transference of the older and less frequently consulted volumes is imperative, in order that room may be found for the heavy annual additions in these classes. The large attic room over the main reading-room of the Library would, if fitted up with suitable shelving, provide accommodation for some thousands of volumes. To the room in question could be transferred, for example, the contents of the No. 2 stack-room, at present fully occupied by the American official publications, which are but rarely consulted by members and others using the Library and might well be placed elsewhere, the space thus saved being devoted to "overflows" from other classes of works in more frequent demand. I have made formal application to the Public Works Department for the room above alluded to to be fitted up with shelving. At present the only access to this room is through the offices occupied by the Valuation Department. I have therefore proposed that a circular iron staircase should be erected in the small lobby at the head of the main staircase, thus affording a quick and convenient access to the room in question. The District Engineer has, I understand, given an estimate of the cost, and I would recommend that the Public Works Department should be asked to carry out the necessary alterations immediately after the close of the present session.

If this room be not fitted up and utilized in the manner suggested, the only course by which the overcrowding difficulty could be met would be to carry the book-stacks in the main reading-room to one-third more than, or even double, their present height. In this way shelving-space for some thousands of additional volumes would be provided. But the change would involve the use of step-ladders, and the general appearance of the reading-room would necessarily not be so handsome as it is at present.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Additions to the portraits hung in the lobby and newspaper-room include enlarged photographs of three ex-Governors of New Zealand—namely, the Marquis of Normanby, Sir Thomas Gore Browne, and Sir George Ferguson Bowen.

A safe and some enclosed book-shelves have been placed in the Chief Librarian's office.

In accordance with instructions from the Joint Committee, the Assistant Librarian's desk in the main reading-room has been shifted to a position nearer the door. The register for the entering of books taken out has also been placed near the door.

The new rules passed last session by the Joint Library Committee have been enforced, and appear to work out well in practice.

I have to tender my thanks to the Chairman of the Joint Committee, G. J. Anderson, Esq., M.P., and the Chairman of the Recess Committee, W. H. D. Bell, Esq., M.P., each of whom has devoted much attention to Library matters; to the Government Printer, and to the High Commissioner's staff.

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

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

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

I have, &c.,

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.

APPENDIX.

BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1913.

| <i>Receipts.</i> | | | <i>Expenditure.</i> | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | £ | s. d. | | £ | s. d. |
| 1912. | | | High Commissioner's imprests for | | |
| March 31. Balance at the Bank of | | | books and periodicals, packing, | | |
| New Zealand .. | 471 | 15 2 | freight, and insurance.. .. | 266 | 6 5 |
| Treasury— | | | Books and periodicals purchased | | |
| Private Bill fees .. | 25 | 0 0 | locally | 243 | 19 2 |
| Annual grant .. | 600 | 0 0 | American periodicals, newspapers, | | |
| Stamp imprest refund | 10 | 0 0 | &c. | 11 | 19 1 |
| | | | Second-hand and other books | | |
| | | | bought at auction sales .. | 23 | 0 0 |
| | | | Fire insurance | 18 | 0 0 |
| | | | Extra newspapers, advertising, &c. | 7 | 18 6 |
| | | | Sundry small accounts | 3 | 15 6 |
| | | | Stamp imprest.. .. | 10 | 0 0 |
| | | | Cheque-book | 0 | 5 0 |
| | | | Balance at Bank of New Zealand, | | |
| | | | less unrepresented cheque .. | 521 | 11 6 |
| | <u>£1,106</u> | <u>15 2</u> | | <u>£1,106</u> | <u>15 2</u> |

Copy of Auditor's Certificate.

Account to the 31st March, 1913, has been examined and found correct, and the balance as shown, plus outstanding cheque, 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 (£521 lls. 6d.) will be exhausted (in meeting current accounts and commitments) before the receipt of this year's grant.

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON STOCK-TAKING, 1913.

To the Chairman of the Joint Library Committee.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report as follows upon the stock-taking of the Library carried out in accordance with the resolution passed last session by the Joint Library Committee.

THE METHOD ADOPTED.

The work was mainly carried out, under my general supervision, by Messrs. A. B. Thomson and P. McColl; the Assistant Librarian, Mr. H. L. James, having charge of the New Zealand and American sections. The system followed was—first, to take down the accession or circulation number of every book in the shelves or in the cases; second, to arrange these numbers in ten-thousands; third, to tick off in the Accession Ledgers, each of which contains 10,000 entries, the books the numbers of which were recorded on the stock-sheets. All books not so ticked off were then searched for, all those not accounted for being entered on the final sheets, which are a record of the volumes missing on the 28th May, 1913. By this means the possibility of books being overlooked was obviated.

That the work upon which Messrs. Thomson and McColl were almost wholly occupied for the greater part of the recess was done most thoroughly may be seen by the stock-sheets, in their various stages, which have been preserved and may be examined by the Committee. At the

stock-taking of 1902 three extra clerks were employed for some months. This year the work has been done without any outside assistance.

Mr. Thomson reports as follows:—

“ Sir,—

“ 28th May, 1913.

“ I have the honour to report that the stock-taking which I have carried out under your instructions has now practically been completed. The Accession Books, which are a record of all books that has been received into the Library since its initiation, were taken as the basis for the work. This work has been a long and arduous one. All care has been taken to search for books that appeared as missing; the circulating-cards containing the names of books now in circulation have also been consulted, and books appearing in these have been recorded as in the library for the purposes of stock-taking. The fiction section has not yet been completed, as I wish to have a final search for missing books in this section, but I will furnish you with an additional report upon this section a little later on. The same may be said of the American and New Zealand sections. These sections are under the immediate control of the Assistant Librarian (Mr. James). I have furnished him with a list of apparently missing books in these two sections, and upon the receipt of his report, after a final search, I will communicate the results to you.

“ The Library was divided into four classes, as follows: (i) Books in request generally—that is, literature generally; (ii) official publications; (iii) American publications and New Zealand case; (iv) newspapers and bound periodicals. In addition, fiction has been considered as a separate class.

“ I find that in Class i 594 volumes are missing; in Class ii 21 volumes are missing; in Class iv 23 volumes are missing (being newspapers 12, magazines 11). Also, in addition, miscellaneous official papers, 39. American and New Zealand and fiction will be reported on in a short time.

“ The main part of the Library comes under Class i. It does not follow that all books reported as missing are lost; in fact, these books are appearing weekly, returned from Committee-rooms, private houses, &c., so that the number returned as missing, 594, is the maximum of loss in this large and important part of the Library. This represents the missing books for a period of at least twenty-five years. With an open Library like ours this is but a very small percentage of loss.

“ For your information I have classified the missing volumes into their various classes. The following table gives the approximate result:—

| Dewey Classification. | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 0-099 | General works | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 13 |
| 100-199 | Philosophy | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 20 |
| 200-299 | Religion | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 15 |
| 300-399 | Sociology | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 152 |
| 400-499 | Philology | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 |
| 500-599 | Natural science | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 21 |
| 600-699 | Useful arts | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 48 |
| 700-799 | Fine arts | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 28 |
| 800-899 | General literature | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 106 |
| History (900-909—Class i) | | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Voyages and travels | | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 63 |
| Biography | | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 55 |
| History (930-999—Class ii) | | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 64 |
| Total | | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 594 |

“ I hand to you all lists, records, and memoranda connected with this work. The amount of clerical work alone in these is conclusive evidence of the exhaustive and searching nature of the search that has been made, which I trust will meet with your approval. I may state that during the whole period I have found the assistance rendered by Mr. P. McColl, who has been associated with me in this work, most valuable, and his industry has been most commendable.

“ I have, &c.,

“ ARCH. B. THOMSON, Assistant.”

OTHER SECTIONS.

There remained to be dealt with the New Zealand and Polynesian books, the American official section, and the fiction. The Assistant Librarian checked the stock-sheets of the two first sections, and Mr. McColl those referring to fiction. The losses reported were as follows: The New Zealand and Polynesian section, 52; American official section, 40; fiction, 354.

With regard to the American section Mr. James reports as follows: Errors in the Accession Registers or on the book plates, made years ago by extra clerks temporarily employed in the Library, are responsible for the most of the at-first-sight missing books that I have since found; it is possible that a few of those I have not found may be for the same reason only apparently missing. Several of the books still recorded as missing are of no value whatever, and cannot be regarded as real losses.

In the fiction department Mr. McColl reports that a large proportion of the missing volumes are very old novels, and the loss of books of comparatively recent acquisition is very small.

THE 1902 AND 1913 STOCK-TAKINGS: A COMPARISON.

I would draw the attention of the Committee to the comparison made below of the stock-taking commenced in 1902, about a year after I had assumed the position of Chief Librarian, and the stock-taking recently concluded:—

| Dewey Classification. | | | | Volumes missing. | |
|------------------------------------|--|-----|-----|------------------|-------|
| | | | | 1902. | 1913. |
| 0-099 | General works | ... | ... | 7 | 13 |
| 100-199 | Philosophy, metaphysics | ... | ... | 6 | 20 |
| 200-299 | Religion, mythology, &c. | ... | ... | 15 | 15 |
| 300-399 | Sociology | ... | ... | 157 | 152 |
| 400-499 | Philology | ... | ... | 14 | 8 |
| 500-599 | Natural science | ... | ... | 21 | 21 |
| 600-699 | Useful arts | ... | ... | 36 | 48 |
| 700-799 | Fine arts, stage, sport, &c. | ... | ... | 15 | 28 |
| 800-899 | General literature, poetry, essays, and belles lettres | ... | ... | 77 | 106 |
| 900-909 | Class i—General history | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 930-999 | Class ii—History by countries | ... | ... | 35 | 65 |
| 910-919 | Voyages and travels | ... | ... | 44 | 63 |
| 920-929 | Biography, autobiography | ... | ... | 24 | 55 |
| New Zealand and Polynesian section | | | | ... | 52 |
| American section | | | | ... | 40 |
| Fiction | | | | 259 | 354 |
| | | | | 710 | 1,040 |

Also, not classed amongst the above, 12 newspapers and 71 miscellaneous official publications. Works on New Zealand and Polynesia and the American official publications were not in 1902 classed separately for stock-taking purposes, but were included in various other classes, according to their subject-matter.

EXTENT OF LOSSES.

I desire to point out that in 1902 the number of books in the Library was approximately 45,000; in 1913 the number is 81,000—that is, an increase in the eleven years since I took charge of the Library of 36,000 catalogued books and publications generally.

It will be seen by referring to the comparison given in the above table that the percentage of loss recorded in 1902 was 1·58. In 1913 the percentage was 1·38. The percentage this year is really much less than 1·38, for the loss, when the previous 710 is taken into account, has only been increased by 413—less than 38 books a year. This really means a loss of something less than 1 per cent. during the past eleven years. It must be borne in mind that the whole of the figures in the stock-taking report deal not with the period 1902–13, but with a period of practically twenty-five years.

Of the books and publications reported as missing on the 28th May, 1913, several have now been returned; others are daily arriving from various sources.

It will be noticed that, outside fiction, the heaviest losses have been in sociology, general literature (essays, poetry, belles lettres, &c.), and history.

PROBABLE CAUSES OF LOSSES.

The heavy loss, noticeable also in 1902, in the sociology class is most significant. The use of the sociology-room is during the session strictly confined to members. During the recess no privilege-holder is allowed to enter this room unless in the company of a Library assistant. Yet, outside fiction, the worst loss is of books shelved in this room. This is doubtless accounted for, to some extent at least, by the fact that the books in this room, dealing as they do with subjects such as law, education, finance, land, labour, statistics, and sociology generally, are necessarily in frequent demand. It must be assumed; therefore, that the loss is here chiefly due to persons taking out books without entering them in the Day-books provided for that purpose. The books get taken into the House, into the Committee-rooms, and elsewhere, are overlooked and lost. Once lost, there being no record of their having been taken out, the difficulty of recovering the missing volumes is rendered exceptionally great.

Time after time in my annual reports I have drawn attention to the importance of persons having the use of the Library seeing that the books they take out are duly entered. Circulars to this effect have been issued and notices put up, but that the old evil still exists there is regrettable but unassailable proof in this report.

The case is somewhat but not wholly different with regard to the missing list in the general literature and history classes. These classes are stored in the main reading-room, to which, during the recess, the privilege-holders have access. Here a certain proportion of the loss may be due to the carelessness, or worse, of visitors.

Coming now to the subject of the loss in fiction, it must be noted that far more fiction is demanded by members and has to be purchased than was at one time the case. The value of the ordinary novel is small, and many of the books lost are not worth replacing on the shelves. The loss is here again, so I am convinced, mainly due to books being taken out without being entered. They are taken away to hotels and boardinghouses, and are picked up by unauthorized persons, and all trace of them is lost. I wish to emphasize the fact that no fiction is issued to recess-privilege holders, save to a very limited number of persons on the full-privilege list. As

showing how extremely careless some persons can be with regard to books borrowed from the Library, I may state that on one occasion a member having died a number of Library books were returned by his relatives. There were over twenty books in the parcel, and not one of these books had ever been entered.

Were this Library, like so many British and American libraries, a non-access library—that is, a library where books are asked for from the catalogue and handed out over a counter—I would guarantee that not five books would be missing each year. In a free-access library there must always be a certain proportion of loss. This Library consists of eight separate rooms, not counting the two lobbies and the basement. To have an assistant stationed night and day in each and every one of the Library rooms would necessitate doubling the staff.

When the new Library comes to be built, if it be constructed according to the recommendations made by me some years ago, this system of having a number of separate rooms should not be followed. The present Library was most inconveniently designed so far as provision for proper supervision was concerned. This mistake will not, I hope, be repeated.

Last session special instructions were given to the Library assistants to be most careful in seeing that all books were duly entered. As I have said above, the Day-books are kept upstairs and downstairs, and there can be no excuse for books not being duly entered. When a book is entered and is unfortunately lost there is always a chance of its being traced. But an unentered book may not be missed for some time, and its recovery may then have become almost hopeless.

It is an open question whether many books now recorded as missing may not have gone astray on the occasion of the fire at the Old Parliament Buildings. As may be remembered, when the fire was at its height and threatened to spread to the roof of the Library wing, several thousands of volumes were hurriedly removed from the rooms and temporarily stored elsewhere. It is more than possible that a certain proportion of the loss occurred on this occasion.

FUTURE STOCK-TAKINGS.

I propose for the future to take stock of certain classes of the Library books yearly. By doing this a complete stock-taking will be completed every four years, and such a course will obviate the necessity of employing extra help, and will not interfere with the usual duties of the staff. I propose to divide the Library into four sections: (1) Sociology; (2) parliamentary publications, the main reading-room, which contains history, biography, voyages and travels, and general literature (including classics and foreign literature); (3) the various stack-rooms, containing philosophy, religion, science, and useful arts; and (4) the basement, containing the bound newspapers, &c. One of these divisions being taken each year a general stock-taking will be completed in a four-years period, which in my opinion is sufficient. I trust the Committee will approve of this practical proposal, which has been carefully thought out, which is definite, and which should meet all our requirements.

In conclusion, I wish formally to express my thanks to the staff for having worked so industriously and carefully at the stock-taking, which, as I have said, extended over nearly the whole of the recess. In particular, I desire to mention the names of Messrs. Thomson and McColl, upon whom the bulk of the work was thrown, and who spared neither time nor trouble in carrying out a most exhaustive overhaul.

I am, &c.,

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,400 copies), £4 10s.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1914.

Price 6d.]