

1917.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: SUBSIDIES TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

(PAPERS RELATING TO DISTRIBUTION OF).

[In continuation of E.—10, 1915.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

I. EXTRACT FROM THE FORTIETH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

A GRANT on a more limited scale than was usually voted by Parliament before the present war for distribution to public libraries was made in 1916. Owing to the undue strain placed on the finances of the country no grant was made in 1915, and in 1916 the sum voted was £2,500, in lieu of £4,000 as in former years. The distribution of this grant, which was made in March, 1917, was confined to libraries situated in places having less than one thousand inhabitants, for the reason that small libraries in country districts are more dependent on financial assistance from the Government than are libraries supported by larger numbers of subscribers.

Notices were inserted in the *New Zealand Gazette* in September, October, and November of 1916 intimating that a grant was to be distributed to libraries in country districts, and all such libraries known to the Department were supplied with application forms. The applications for subsidy were accompanied by statements of the annual receipts and expenditure, of the books belonging to the libraries, and of the arrangements for the general conduct thereof.

A library participating in the vote must be public in the sense of not being under the control of an association, society, or club the membership of which is composed of only part of the community, and if a borough library a reading-room open to the public free of charge must be provided. In addition, the receipts from subscriptions and donations to the funds of the library during the year must not have been less than £2, this sum being regarded as a very low minimum to ensure that the library receives a certain amount of local support.

The amount received by each library during the year in the way of subscriptions, donations, and rates is taken as the basis of calculation in distributing the vote. To this amount is made a nominal addition of £25, but no library receives credit for a larger income than £25—that is, in no case does the amount on which subsidy is based exceed £50. In this manner the interests of smaller and less prosperous libraries are protected. The number of libraries among which the subsidy was divided in March, 1917, was 236, with a total income from donations and subscriptions of £2,185. The vote yielded a subsidy of 6s. 4½d. in the pound on the nominal income, the subsidies paid ranging from £8 12s. 4d. to £15 19s. 1d. The number of libraries participating in the vote in 1915 when larger libraries were included was 380, with a total income from donations and subscriptions of £18,602, and the vote yielded a subsidy of 4s. 11d. in the pound, the subsidies ranging from £6 12s. 7d. to £24 11s. 4d. It will thus be seen that the average income of the libraries participating in the vote in 1917 was much lower than in 1915, the figures for the two years being £9 5s. 2d. and £48 9s. 1d. respectively, also that the rate of subsidy paid was higher in 1917, and that there was a smaller variation in the grants made in that year.

In order that the purpose intended to be served by the vote may be attained, it is made a condition that the whole of the subsidy granted to each library must be expended in the purchase of books. It is further enjoined upon the authorities