

LIBRARY STAFF.

During the greater part of last year's recess the Chief Librarian was absent in Australia in quest of better health; and he may be pardoned, I trust, for here expressing his personal gratitude to the Minister in Charge of the Legislative Department (the Hon. Mr. Nosworthy) and the then Prime Minister (the Right Hon. W. F. Massey), for the great consideration and kindness these gentlemen displayed in granting him the necessary leave of absence.

Until the Chief Librarian's return, early in October, Mr. W. S. Wauchop, M.A., who in August assumed the duties of First Assistant in the Library, had charge of the institution, under the Joint Library Committee. Mr. Wauchop has proved himself a most obliging member of the staff.

RECESS PRIVILEGES.

The number of persons to whom recess privileges were granted during the recess, 1924-25, was 670, as against 740 in the previous year; the latter number being exceptionally large owing to the greater length of the recess in the earlier period.

The number of books lent to recess-privilege holders for the year 1924-25 was 6,135, as against 6,587 in the previous recess period. As a rule, the class of books taken out by recess-privilege holders (and here it may be noted that the New Zealand General Assembly Library is the only legislative library in the world from which volumes may be taken out during the recess) is of such a character as proves that the privilege is greatly valued by the best class of readers.

No fiction, it should again be recorded, is lent out save to members of Parliament, and those on the full-privilege list—a relatively small number.

A detailed list showing the professions, trades, occupations, &c., of those to whom the recess privileges are granted is at the disposal of members.

During the recess, I regret to say, it has been found that a few plates were purloined from art and other magazines, and cuttings made in the newspaper files. Whenever a case of this kind is detected, an attempt—unfortunately up to now abortive—has been made to detect the offender, and the art magazines are now filed in the staff-room, and not issued to those who use the Library during the recess, save members of Parliament. On the whole, however, the cases of vandalism are exceedingly few, and it gives me pleasure to testify to the care and good usage which is almost uniformly displayed by those who are honoured by being granted the recess privileges.

STOCK-TAKING.

As usual, stock-taking was proceeded with during the recess, the classes dealt with being Class 910-919 (Voyages and Travels) and Class 920-929 (Biography, Memoirs, &c.). Mr. W. F. Johnson, who conducted this particular work with great care, furnishes the following report:—

"I have the honour to report that, with Mr. Dighton, I have completed the stock-taking of the two classes mentioned above, with results as follows:—

"Class 910-919 (Voyages and Travels): This class—one of the largest in the Library—was last taken stock of in the year 1918, when twenty-two volumes were reported missing. Since that date 419 volumes have been added to this class, making the total number in this section 5,326. The result of this stock-taking shows that eleven volumes were unaccounted-for, a list of which is appended.

"Class 920-929 (Biography, &c.): This class also was last taken in 1918, when fourteen volumes were reported as missing. Since that time 360 volumes have been added to this class, making the total number in this section 4,157. At this stock-taking the number unaccounted-for is twenty-two, several of which are quite recent accessions to the Library. It is difficult to believe that many of these books are lost to the Library, as, of the fourteen reported lost at last stock-taking, several were found in their places upon the shelves. The utmost care has been taken in verifying the stock-sheets with the registers, and with checking the volumes themselves. A list of books not accounted for in each class is appended hereto, and I hand you herewith the working stock-sheets."

BINDING.

There must always be a certain degree of wear-and-tear upon the volumes, either those used during the session or during the recess; and there are unquestionably a large number of volumes in the Library which urgently stand in need of being rebound, rebacked, or otherwise repaired. The number, too, of periodicals of various kinds, the back numbers of which are of great value to members, has largely increased of late years, and, as a substantially increased charge is now made for binding, the annual vote for this purpose is being found markedly inadequate. A large number of magazines have been withdrawn from the binding-list, but the enormous increase in the number of books, periodicals, pamphlets, &c., and the files of newspapers, which certainly should be bound if the Library is to meet the requirements of members, has certainly made the position much more serious. In view of the increased cost of binding, the existing annual vote can only be regarded as insufficient, and I would respectfully plead for a fairly substantial increase.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The correspondence of the Library has quite materially increased in volume. Inquiries from all parts of the Dominion for information as to the value of certain rare books, requests for assistance in literary matters, and on questions relative to the Copyright Act, have involved considerable work, Mr. W. F. Johnson having rendered valuable aid in assisting the Chief Librarian in this matter.

Officials of various State Departments continue to make considerable use of the Library during the recess, and in several instances have acknowledged the assistance rendered them in their researches by the Library staff.

The usual monthly lists of accessions have been sent out during the recess.