

1925.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1924-25.

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*Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.*

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The CHIEF LIBRARIAN to the CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year 1924-25 :—

## RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

The Recess Library Committee, the constitution of which was altered by resolution passed by both Chambers of the Legislature at the close of last session, held three meetings during the recess, under the chairmanship of the Hon. the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Charles E. Statham. Two of these meetings were informal, as a full quorum was unobtainable. At the third meeting, however, there was a full quorum, and the business done at the previous meetings was duly confirmed. In view of the great difficulty which obtains of securing a quorum at the meetings as called, the question is worth consideration as to the desirableness of making some slight alteration in the rule under which the Recess Committee is now constituted.

## ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

The number of new accessions since the date of the last report is 2,089, which is lower than that in the previous Library year, the previous total having been 2,700. This latter, however, includes some 500 volumes of the Herries bequest. Owing to the financial position of the Library being much better at the end of the financial year, it is more than probable that next year's report will chronicle a substantially higher increase.

The various volumes of the Herries bequest have been repaired and rebound where necessary, and have been added to the shelves in their respective classes.

The total number of catalogued books and other accessions on the 18th June was over 109,705— which, in view of the fact of the greatly enhanced cost of books (the Library vote, £700, being to-day only £100 a year more than it was thirty years ago), must be deemed satisfactory.

Important orders for new books are now in course of execution, the volumes being due early in this year's session. An attempt has been made to cover all the more important additions in literature on the great problems of the day; and, whilst economy has had to be practised, and a careful selection made of the books and publications generally which really count, it will, I think, be found that very few works of outstanding merit and importance have been overlooked.

In accordance with the policy of not clashing with the Alexander H. Turnbull Library, rare and expensive works of literature dealing with the early history of New Zealand, Australia, and the Pacific have not been bought, but all works of recent and current interest on the Dominion and the Commonwealth, or affecting the various problems of the Pacific, are regularly added.

Works on various political and social problems continue to be more specially favoured by members of both branches of the Legislature, to whom baskets of books are forwarded during the recess. After these, biography is most in favour.

## 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.



I have to express my thanks to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Joint Library Committee (the Hon. the Speaker of the House of Representatives and J. McE. Dickson, Esq., M.P.) and to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the House Library Committee (the Hon. the Speaker and the Hon. Dr. Collins, M.P.) for the attention these gentlemen have given to Library matters during the year; also to the High Commissioner and his staff for the promptitude and care with which they have attended to Library business in London.

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

In an appendix will be found the Library balance-sheet for the year ended 31st March 1925, together with a copy of the Auditor's certificate.

I have, &c.,  
CHARLES WILSON,  
Chief Librarian.

APPENDIX

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

Balance-sheet for the year ended 31st March 1925.

Receipts		Expenditure	
Balance 1st April 1924	£ 112 10 3	Purchase books and periodicals Great Britain	£ 336 9 10
Annual rates	760 0 0	Purchase periodicals America	12 12 10
Private gifts	150 0 0	Purchase books and periodicals New Zealand	156 0 4
		State first impressions	2 2 0
		Library expenses	0 4 0
		Balance 31st March 1925	£ 381 19 3
		Bank of New Zealand	2 8 1
		(with in hand)	
	£ 1,208 19 3		£ 1,208 19 3

NOTE BY CHIEF LIBRARIAN.—The balance at Bank of New Zealand 31st March 1925, will probably be exhausted by existing commitments before the next grant is received.

CHARLES WILSON,  
Chief Librarian.

Examined and found correct—G. H. C. CARRUTHERS, Controller and Auditor-General.

By Authority, Government Printer, Wellington.—1925.