

through the Colonial Secretary to the Agent-General, for deduction from the amount of that gentleman's next invoice; and by your direction I wrote to the Colonial Secretary, requesting him to instruct the Agent-General in future only to pay 75 per cent. of the amount of the invoice on its presentation, leaving the balance, or so much as may really be due, to be paid on receipt of a certificate from the Chairman of Library Committee or the Librarian (as the case may be determined) that the goods have been received, examined, and found correct. I have received a reply from the Colonial Secretary informing me that effect has been given to your request, and that payments will in future be made in the way recommended.

I have now to refer to the additions that have been made to the library during the recess. These have been neither few nor unimportant. From Mr. Stock four cases have been received, containing 874 volumes of general literature, besides seven containing eighty-four volumes of the back numbers of *The Times* from 1844 to 1864; one case from the Home Government with eighty-three volumes of the Imperial Papers of 1880; one case from the Smithsonian Institution, containing some fifty volumes of Senate and Executive documents, along with a number of other Government publications. I am happy also to state that the application made by the Committee last year through the Chairman of the Joint Library Committee (the Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Council) to Sir George Jessel, Master of the Rolls, for the "Acts of the Scottish Parliament, from 1124 to 1707," has been successful. I have received, through His Excellency the Governor, a communication from Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, stating that the Lords Commissioners had been pleased to present the General Assembly of New Zealand with a handsomely-bound set of the volumes containing them. Still more recently the Agent-General has informed me, through the Colonial Secretary, that he had received the volumes, and would forward them by the earliest opportunity. The Trustees of the British Museum have sent us three additional volumes of their publications, and the Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library have forwarded a very handsome copy of their new catalogue in two volumes. In addition to these benefactions, I think it only right to mention that Mr. Justice Gillies has presented the library with a copy of a very rare book, "Wade's Travels in New Zealand in 1842"; Mr. Lewis, of the Native Office, with an edition of Homer, 330 years old; Mr. Edwin Stowe, with his little work on Velasquez; and Mr. John Costall, with "The Public Parks and Gardens of the World." I have acknowledged these various donations, and tendered the thanks of the Committee to the several donors. I believe—indeed, I have been expressly told—that if we only had a proper building for the accommodation and safe-keeping of our books we should receive many more such gifts year by year.

Reckoning up all these, and including also our own Government publications and our exchanges from other Governments, I find that not less than 1,300 bound volumes have been added to the library within the past year. This brings the total number of volumes now on our shelves up to something over 21,000; and their value may be estimated at £17,000 at the least.

As usual, a Supplement to the Catalogue has been prepared and printed for the use of honorable members. For convenience, I have incorporated last year's Supplement with it. It has assumed somewhat larger proportions this year than usual, for two reasons: first, because the actual additions to the library have been considerably larger than for some years back; and, secondly, because in taking stock I found a considerable number of books on the shelves that had hitherto never been catalogued.

I now refer to the arrangements with regard to the admission of visitors to the library during the recess. By a resolution passed at the last meeting of the Joint Committee it was decided that, instead of being managed, as in previous years, by a Recess Committee—consisting of the members in and near Wellington—the library should be placed under the care of the Hon. the Speakers of both Houses, with certain discretionary powers as to admission; and, after communicating with each other, they decided that, when the new rooms were completed and the necessary changes consequent thereon made, admissions should be granted to applicants for the privilege, under certain restrictions. The following are the rules drawn up to regulate those admissions:—

*"Rules regulating Admission to the General Assembly Library during the Recess."*

"1. The library will be open to those who receive the privilege of admission from 3 to 5 p.m. daily, save on Saturdays, when it closes at 4 o'clock.

"2. The only room to be used by them will be the entrance-room.

"3. No books may be taken by students or visitors from the shelves. The Librarian or his assistants will supply them with any they may wish either to consult or take with them.

"4. Any persons taking notes or making extracts must use pencil only.

"By order.

"A. MACGREGOR, Librarian."

This arrangement was found to answer well, and, though a few were still discontented at not being allowed the free run of the library as heretofore, the great majority were perfectly satisfied and even grateful for the privilege allowed them. About one hundred availed themselves of it; and enjoyed the use of the works on our shelves during the recess. It was pleasant to note that the books most in demand were works of travel, biography, and science. I am happy to be able to add that the books were all duly returned, and, except in one solitary instance, which I reported to you, in good order.

I have thus endeavoured to give some account of the work in which we have been engaged during the recess, and the results we have attained. But I cannot close this report without expressing my sense of the obligations under which I lie to my chief assistant, Mr. Smith, without whose aid it would simply have been impossible to undertake all the work that had to be done. Night after night, and quite spontaneously, he sacrificed his rest and his leisure to push on the various works that required to be attended to.

If we have succeeded in putting the library into such order as shall promote the comfort and convenience of honorable members, and secure their approbation, our labours will be more than rewarded.

I have, &c.,

A. MACGREGOR,

Librarian.