

1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY

(REPORTS ON).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Rolleston with leave of the House.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT.

SIR,—

General Assembly Library, 2nd June, 1884.

In accordance with your instructions I have the honour to submit to you the following report on the administration of the Library during the recess, and on its present position :—

Immediately before the close of last session two resolutions were passed by the General Assembly for the management of the Library during the recess. By the first of these its administration was vested in a Committee consisting of all members of the Legislature residing in or within fifteen miles of Wellington. Of this Committee the Hon. Randall Johnson was appointed Chairman, the Hon. Mr. Mantell to act in his absence. By the second, the privileges of the Library were confined to members of the Assembly only, and to those who, along with them, enjoy these privileges during the session.

As soon as these resolutions were published, the Under-Secretary and the Secretary for Customs addressed a joint letter to the Committee, respectfully requesting that the privilege of using the Library during the recess, which they had enjoyed so long and appreciated so much, should not be withdrawn. This letter was considered at a meeting of the Committee on the 2nd October, and the following resolution was passed: "That the Committee request the Chairman to undertake the responsibility of granting admission to the full privileges of the Library to the Under-Secretaries and such heads of departments as he may think fit." This the Chairman agreed to do, and drew up the following list of Under-Secretaries and heads of departments to whom the freedom of the Library should be allowed, as in former years: Clerk of the Executive Council, Secretary to the Cabinet, the Under-Secretary, Assistant-Controller and Auditor, Registrar-General, Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, Government Printer, Secretary to the Treasury, Property-Tax Commissioner; Department of Justice—Under-Secretary, Inspector of Prisons; Post Office and Telegraphs—Superintendent, Under-Secretary; Customs—Secretary and Inspector; Secretary of Education, Inspector-General of Schools; Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, Under-Secretary for Land Purchase, Under-Secretary for Gold Fields and Mines; Public Works—Under-Secretary; Colonial Architect, Marine Engineer; Railways—Under-Secretary, General Manager; Defence—Under-Secretary; Crown Lands—Under-Secretary, Surveyor-General; Government Insurance Commissioner, Public Trustee, Governors of the New Zealand Institute. Most of these fully availed themselves of the privilege thus extended to them, no less than 700 works on various subjects having been issued to them during the recess. These were all returned in good order. I may add that during the same period 610 works, and 235 magazines, were issued to members of Assembly.

But, while the issue of books was thus restricted, the Library was open for two hours every day, for reference to any book on its shelves, to all who applied to the chairman for admission. Only forty persons, however, took advantage of this privilege.

The Joint Library Committee, having found it necessary last session to terminate Mr. Parsons' engagement as their Home agent, applied to the Government for permission to avail themselves of the services of the Agent-General for the management of their business in England, and the Government at once acceded to their request. As the Agent-General had previously, in the course of correspondence with the Committee, expressed his willingness to do anything in his power to promote the interests of the Library, the Chairman, at the request of the Committee, addressed a letter of instructions to him on the 1st August of last year, authorizing him to make such arrangements as he might deem best for the execution of the Committee's periodical orders for books, magazines, &c., from England. Enclosed in this letter was a copy of all the orders that had been sent Home to our late agent for the two previous years, as well as the standing orders of the Committee. Acting on the authority thus conferred on him, the Agent-General, after some correspondence and one or two personal interviews, appointed Messrs. Bell and Bradfute, of Edinburgh, as agents to conduct our business in the Home-country, and they will continue to act as such under his supervision. From the long-established position and high reputation of the firm, it may reasonably be hoped that the arrangements now concluded will prove satisfactory. They have entered on their duties with the utmost promptitude and energy. Already we have received two consignments, numbering 440 volumes, and a third consignment of 310 volumes will be here by the "Doric" in the course of a few days. They have thus, in the short space of five months, sent us out 750 volumes.