

costing less than 10s., were to be bound as usual. (4.) Certain works costing more than 10s., but likely to be little used, were not to be bound. These rules are only experimental, and the experience of a single session will probably suffice to test the success of the experiment. The saving is certainly considerable, and may be estimated at as much as £60 or £80 a year—a sum with which additional books or second copies might be purchased. One thing will have to be taken into account. It seems that the agents now purchase books in stitched but unbound volumes, and, getting these from the publishers presumably at a reduced rate, are able to offer us a large discount: whether they will continue to allow us the same discount if we order the volumes to be sent in cloth, remains to be seen.

The main business of the Sub-committee was the selection of books. It was not perfunctory. Three of the meetings consumed two full hours each; the fourth, an hour and a half; and the others, over an hour. The selection was governed by the two principles of comprehension and discrimination. In a parliamentary library the strongest department ought to be that which directly subserves the purposes of legislation; and almost every recent English and American work, with some older works, and a few in French, relating to the science of politics and the art of government, was submitted to the Committee. In other divisions the selection was discriminating. Through the adoption of a standing order which excluded works of fiction in more than one volume, unless the works so excluded are of exceptional interest or importance, we have been able to purchase five novels for the sum which a single one has hitherto cost, and so have strengthened, or at least enlarged, the Library in an indispensable department. The books most desiderated, though not the books most read, are those containing information. In works of this class the Library can hardly be too strong. There is scarcely any subject on which we are not, at one time or another, and from the most diverse quarters, called upon to furnish information. Well equipped and well managed, the Library might become a kind of intelligence-department, to which inquirers from all parts of the colony might resort or apply with a reasonable expectation of finding what they wanted.

The arrangements made by the Agent-General for the purchase and transmission of books continue to be satisfactory. He himself sends us by mail early copies of works of special interest, like the Greville Memoirs, and of works relating to the colony, like "Oceana" and "New Zealand Rulers and Statesmen," and directs that books certain to be wanted shall be sent without waiting for an order from the Library Committee. Messrs. Bell and Bradfute, the Home agents selected by him, execute the orders sent them with promptitude and despatch; and now that certain perversities of lettering, and imperfections arising from the omission of collation before binding, have been corrected, there is not a fault to be found with their fulfilment of the duties entrusted to them. The increasing importance of American literature, particularly that which reflects the political experience and social life of the States, induced the Committee to make the experiment of ordering American-published books from San Francisco through local booksellers, who also procure for us books of native Australian production and Australian reprints of English works.

This is the place to mention that besides the ordinary inter-colonial exchanges, we owe to the British Museum copies of two works of more than ordinary interest, and to the unstinted liberality of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington a large number of publications, some of them of great scientific and practical value. The Library being not yet regarded as a colonial library accessible to the public for two-thirds of the year, we have few private benefactions to record. A donor of last year, Mr. E. S. Dodgson, presented a Biblical Commentary in seven volumes by the eminent German theologian, Dr. Delitzsch, and also an Italian book printed at Glasgow in the middle of last century. For two works on the Constitution and Government of the United States, and a treatise on the English licensing laws, we are indebted to a former distinguished Premier of the colony, Sir W. Fox. And only the other day, Mr. R. A. Macfie, of Dregghorn Castle, Midlothian, Scotland, at one time M.P. for the Leith Burghs, courteously sent us three volumes on copyright and patents published some years ago under his editorship, certain ephemera of which he is the author, and an interesting volume by Professor Lorimer, of Edinburgh, on the constitutionalism of the future.

Altogether, 585 separate publications, or about 650 volumes, were added to the library between July, 1885, and April, 1886. With 200 volumes of official publications and 150 bound volumes of newspapers, the total accessions mount up to about 1,000 volumes for the last nine months.

The outlay for the year on books and periodicals of every description amounted to £741 4s. 9d.; insurances (on the books in the library), to £87 10s.; the supply of local newspapers, and advertisements in them, to £61 6s. 6d.; and the binding of the newspapers, to £51 11s. 6d.: making the total expenditure £941 12s. 9d. The income for the year was £710, including £110 received as fees for private Bills—a sum which was raised by a balance of £842 14s. 3d. remaining from the previous year to £1,552 14s. 3d. At the end of the financial year there was therefore a balance in our favour of £611 1s. 6d. Of this amount, over £200 is forestalled by accounts paid since the close of the financial year, or rendered, or likely to be soon rendered, practically reducing the existing balance to about £400, or, with repayments of imprest for stamps, which have been for simplicity omitted, to about £450.

The books, having been delivered and paid for, have to be catalogued, and in this connection it may be mentioned that a plan for the compilation of the catalogue on somewhat novel lines