

was approved of by the Committee, and the annual supplement is now being experimentally printed as thus proposed. Certain indexes to the more recent periodical literature on the subjects of colonies, land, free-trade, &c., together with bibliographies of the considerable Shakespearian literature in the Library, and of the literature relating to New Zealand, which it was intended to incorporate with the Supplemental Catalogue, have been regrettably excluded through the pressure of work at the Government Printing Office.

The distribution of the books was similar to that in previous recesses. Twenty-five members, 43 officials, and 5 students took out 330 magazines and 1,279 books. It is a satisfaction to state that, of the latter, only 623, or less than half, were works of fiction; travels made a bad second with the otherwise respectable figure of 184; biography was popular, with 141; history counted 63; 51 are classifiable as general literature; 42 show that books on government and political economy were in request; 28 belonged to the physical sciences; even such abstruse subjects as philosophy and sociology are represented by 27; 26 were poetry; 25 were connected with the practical and 10 with the fine arts; theology (20) was not neglected; the 17 in philology point to special studies; 10 were classical, and the rest various.

The term "students," it may be explained, is used to describe literary workers, or students of some particular subject, who, by a liberal construction of a resolution passed by the Assembly, were permitted to take out books on the subject of their studies, which, in the cases mentioned, were philology and ethnology, political and social economy, philosophy, and sociology. It will be a lasting distinction of Mr. Johnson's chairmanship that he threw open the Library to the select class most capable of profiting by the use of it, and thus enabled it to become the instructor of those who are themselves the instructors of the community.

Fifty-one persons, as against forty last year and only ten in 1879-80, were granted admission to the Library as visitors, of whom a few were habitués of the place, while most of the others availed themselves of the privilege but intermittently or occasionally. For their benefit, mainly, the Library was kept open on Saturday afternoons till four o'clock. On twenty-two afternoons of which a record was preserved, forty members and officials and forty-four readers attended, yielding an average of rather less than two members and officers to two visitors for each Saturday.

At the October stock-taking 390 books and publications were found to be missing. Of these, 90 were discovered or came in during the recess; a few are known to be still in the hands of members; some have probably never been received by the Library; others have certainly never been published; while, of the 280 that remain unaccounted for, a comparatively small proportion consists of works of any importance, and some of these have been missing for years.

A large amount of binding (chiefly of official publications), some repairing and re-lettering, no little printing, and all necessary stamping, have been done for us by the Government Printer; but the binding of the colonial and other newspapers has had to be executed by private contract, at a cost to the Library funds of about £70, and a good deal of miscellaneous binding and repairing has had to be given to local tradesmen.

Into the routine work of the Library it is unnecessary to enter. During little less than one-half of the recess Mr. Mantell acted as Deputy-Chairman; and from his long conversance with the Library he was able to render it essential services. It is no more than justice to add that the Assistants performed their duties throughout the recess with unflagging zeal and perfect efficiency.

Whether new buildings shall take the place of the present perishable structure is a matter to be determined by the Legislature. But the hope may be expressed that, whatever arrangement may be made, it will not be a makeshift. The proposal to separate the valuable or irreplaceable books and put them by themselves in a fire-proof shell is impracticable, and would not be advisable if it were practicable. A capacious hall, subdivided as may seem desirable, and susceptible of expansion, with rooms attached in which the work of the Library can be carried on, and accommodation for the readers from all parts of the colony who now make use of it, will alone fulfil the idea of an institution which shall be the depository of the archives of the future nation and a centre for the diffusion of culture throughout both Islands.

J. COLLIER, *Librarian*.

[Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,350 copies), £2 1s. 3d.]

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1886.