

1942.

NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY

(REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1942).

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

To the Chairman, Joint Library Committee.

SIR,

I have the honour to report on the operations of the General Assembly Library for the year 1941-42.

ACCESSIONS.

During the year 3,400 volumes were added to the stock, as compared with 3,363 in the previous year, 3,837 in the year before, and an average of 3,400 for the last twelve years. At 31st May, 1942, the number of books accessioned was 162,950. The accessions for the year were classified as follows: Bibliography, 120; newspapers, 114; philosophy, 26; religion, 105; sociology, 949; parliamentary, 416; philology, 20; natural science, 94; useful arts, 343; fine arts, 88; literature, 157; travel and biography, 755; New Zealand literature, 70; fiction, 143.

There were again some losses of books in transit from Great Britain due to war conditions, but these were reordered or replaced forthwith. The general effect of the war has been to slow up the delivery of books and to show a deceptive credit balance, most of which is already absorbed by commitments unfulfilled.

DONATIONS.

Gifts were received during the year from the Adelaide City Council (South Australia), the Canadian Trade Commissioner (Auckland), the Consul-General for Belgium, J. Dowgray (Granity), Arthur Jacobs (Wellington), Rev. M. G. Milmine (Dargaville), Alfred Perrin (Petone), F. B. Stephens (Wellington), W. T. Prentice (Napier), the Director of Publicity, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Dr. W. B. Sutch, W. A. Tanner, and the Wellington Tramways Department.

THE YEAR'S WORK.

The annual Accession List and List of Copyright Publications were this year smaller than usual, reflecting the effect of the war on publishing.

The change in the class of books demanded by readers, which was noted last year, has been accentuated with the intensification of war. Whereas up to 1939 there was a considerable demand for books on world affairs and various political ideologies, this material is now practically unwanted. In their place readers are asking for more factual literature, including up-to-date descriptive matter and history and good war narratives. Historical research has practically ceased, and the attention of the staff is demanded instead for the solution of problems in industrial and technical research, mostly in connection with new industries, the manufacture of munitions, and other war activities. There is a very lively demand for books and reference material dealing with every aspect of home defence and air-raid protection.

Inquiries from Government Departments continue to expand, as they have done for some years past, and the Library was again much used by members of the Public Service who have been selected for post-graduate study.

ARCHIVES.

In view of the extension of the war to this area it was thought advisable to remove a portion of the book and manuscript stock to a repository in a provincial centre. This now contains the bulk of the contents of the New Zealand room and of the manuscripts in the Archives, and a complete set of New Zealand official publications.

With the closing of the Centennial period, research into original sources has shrunk considerably, and the removal of Archive manuscripts to a provincial repository has not caused any serious inconvenience. On the other hand, advantage is being taken of this respite to push ahead with the arrangement and weeding of a mass of material transferred to the Archives in recent years both from other Departments and from offices which were being demolished.