

1901.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1900-1901.

Laid on the Table by Mr. Guinness, by leave, 13th August, 1901.

SIR,—

Wellington, 1st July, 1901.

I have the honour to submit to you the following report for the year 1900-1 :—

Removal of Books to New Library.—In accordance with the terms of my appointment I assumed charge of the Library on the 1st February, 1901, and at once commenced to make arrangements for the removal of the books to the new Library. The removal was effected in the month of March. The books were arranged in the various rooms in accordance with the scheme authorised by the Joint Library Committee, only such modifications being made as were found absolutely necessary. For instance, it was considered desirable to take out the quarto and folio volumes from the history and travel classes; these volumes are now temporarily housed in No. 2 stack-room, and will be removed shortly to No. 3 stack-room, where special shelving of suitable strength to carry such books is now being erected.

More Iron Shelving.—Finding that the available space provided in the various rooms already fitted with shelving was insufficient, I applied to the Public Works Department for additional iron shelving, to be ordered from America, for stack-room No. 2, and for that portion of stack No. 1 unoccupied by the bindery. This shelving has, I understand, been ordered. Meanwhile stack-room No. 3 is being fitted with temporary wooden shelving, which, when the iron shelving arrives, will be transferred to the basement, completing the stands already erected for the accommodation of bound newspapers and the earlier parliamentary papers of Great Britain and the Australasian Colonies. Speaking generally, the iron shelving has given satisfaction. In a few cases, however, the standards have warped a little, and I have requested the Public Works Department to insist upon stronger pins, running right through the shelves, being supplied in future. For folio and quarto volumes there should be a specially strong and shorter shelf. This requirement will, I understand, be provided for in ordering new shelving in the future.

Furnishings.—The furnishing of the new Library is now practically complete. The building has been connected with the Telephone Exchange, and the main reading-room, staff-room, bindery, and Librarian's office have been connected by "domestic telephones." Three photogram reproductions of classical subjects, issued by the British Museum, have been framed and hung in the reading-room. Group photographs of members of previous Parliaments have been newly framed, and will be hung at the head of the main stairs. With the permission of the Committee, I propose to have two stands of ferns and pot-plants, one at the foot and one at the head of the main staircase. The question of carpeting the main reading-room is left to the decision of your Committee.

Basement.—The basement in the new building is mainly devoted to the bound newspapers, but space had to be found therein for the housing of some thousands of volumes of parliamentary records of this and other colonies. It is an open question whether the *Gazettes* of the Australasian Colonies, South Africa, Canada, &c., should be preserved after a certain time has elapsed. If these *Gazettes* are to be permanently preserved, the problem of "want of space" must again come up in a very few years. My personal opinion is that the *Gazettes* of New Zealand should always be preserved, but that five years is a sufficiently long period to retain those of other colonies, it being reasonable to assume that by that time every record of permanent value appearing in the older *Gazettes* will be incorporated, either in the debates or in the Acts of the colonies in question. The bound newspapers in the basement are arranged, as far as possible, by provinces. The present system will be improved upon when there is more shelving at our disposal. Portable electric lights are being supplied, which will afford facility for reader reference. There is now, practically, no damp in the basement, but the strong-rooms will not be ready for use for some time, and some better method of drying these rooms is desirable. They are not, however, at present urgently needed for library purposes. The area prism-lights, complained of in last year's report, have been repaired. In this, as in all other matters pertaining to the furnishing and general equipment of the Library, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the officers of the Public Works Department, acting under the direction of the Hon. W. Hall-Jones, Minister for Public Works.

The Bindery.—A bindery is now established in the No. 1 stack-room, a portion of which was specially fitted up for that purpose. A large number of books have been rebacked or otherwise neatly repaired by the officer in charge of this department, who has also stamped the classification numbers upon several thousand volumes, renovated the binding of many leather-covered books, and performed much other useful work.

New Books.—The number of books added to the library (by purchase) from the 16th June, 1900, to the 31st May, 1901, was 628. Since the latter date to the date of this report 146 volumes have been added by purchase. The usual exchanges from the British Museum, Smithsonian Institution, and the British, Canadian, Australasian, and other Governments have been received and duly placed on the Library shelves. A few donations by private persons have also been made, and the same suitably acknowledged.

Books on Order.—The special vote of £500 passed last session has been utilised in the purchase of a large number of volumes in various classes of literature. Special attention was paid by the Selection Committee, which held six meetings during the recess, to the purchase of books on law, sociology, science, education, medicine, useful arts, and other branches in which there was

perceptible lacunæ. The first shipment of these books may be expected to arrive from London next month. A large order for the latest current literature—biography, voyages and travels, history, and general literature—was also sent to the Agent-General early in May. These books should be here some time in December. Altogether some five or six hundred more books may be expected to be placed on the Library shelves before the close of the present session.

Books purchased locally.—By resolution of the Recess Library Committee the Chairman was empowered to authorise the purchase locally by the Librarian of new books as they arrived by each mail-steamer, such purchases not to exceed £10 in value in each month. The arrangement has worked very well, and I respectfully request that it may be permanently continued.

Purchases by the Agent-General.—After carefully going into the question of the purchase of books in London by the Agent-General, I have decided to recommend to the Committee that the present arrangement be terminated, and that in future all new books be ordered from this end. I am in a position to state that the Hon. Mr. Reeves would prefer to be relieved of the duty of selecting books for the Library. I am satisfied that by ordering direct both time and money would be saved. I would respectfully suggest the appointment of a sub-committee to go into the details of this question, and I have no doubt I shall be able to prove the advisableness of the course I advocate being adopted.

Recess Privileges.—During the recess the usual boxes of books were sent to members non-resident in Wellington. In addition to those whose names appear in the sessional list and the heads of departments, several persons were admitted to the Library for the purpose of consulting books of reference. Some few others were accorded the right of taking books out of the Library for the purpose of study, the Chairman granting the necessary permission as per resolution passed by the Recess Library Committee. It will be remembered that during the period of reclassification last year the usual recess privileges were suspended. I would now propose that the old system of granting these privileges—viz., upon the recommendation of a member of the Parliament or of the Chairman of the Committee—be resumed next recess.

Stock-taking.—From what I have been able to ascertain from the Assistant Librarian, Mr. James, and from such records as I have examined, there has been no stock-taking in the Library for many years. With the approval of your Committee, I propose to close the Library for one month during the recess, and carry out a thoroughly complete stock-taking. With the experience gained during the late recess, added to that which will result from the stock-taking, I shall then be better able than at present to say whether the regulations at present in force, as to the taking-out and return of books, provide that full degree of security against loss which is desirable.

Library Staff.—In addition to the regular Library staff there have also been employed three extra assistants (during the removal of books there were four), and owing to the number and arrangement of the rooms in the new Library I fail to see how, during any session, fewer than three extra hands will be required. One at least of the extra assistants at present employed should, I consider, become a permanent addition to the staff. For this session I have divided the staff into two sections, taking alternately day- and night-duty. The system appears to be working well, and possesses the advantages of not over-fatiguing the assistants with late hours, and also enabling them to get an all-round knowledge of their work. The old system of specialisation of work often proved inconvenient in the temporary absence of any officer from unforeseen causes. I am pleased to bear testimony to the consistent industry displayed by the staff since I took charge. During the absence through illness of Mr. James, the Assistant Librarian, for the first two months after I assumed charge, I received specially valuable assistance from Messrs. Costall and Thomson. The latter officer was exceptionally painstaking and helpful.

Library Accounts.—In an appendix to this report will be found a balance-sheet for the last financial year. The Library accounts were, I may add, audited in January last (to the 31st December, 1900), the last previous audit having been made so far back as the 1st April, 1893. I would suggest that a yearly audit is desirable.

I have, &c.,
CHARLES WILSON, Librarian.

The Hon. the Chairman, Joint Library Committee.

APPENDIX.

BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDING THE 31ST MARCH, 1901.

<i>Receipts.</i>			<i>Expenditure.</i>		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
1900.					
April 2 Balance brought forward ..	111	3 0	Purchase of books in London ..	196	8 9
Oct. 4 Fes private Bills ..	75	0 0	Purchase of books locally ..	123	14 10
" 30 Annual appropriation ..	600	0 0	Purchase of periodicals in London, locally,		
" 30 Special vote ..	500	0 0	and in America ..	155	0 10½
Nov. 7 Refund stamp imprest ..	30	0 0	Freight and marine insurance ..	13	6 9
Dec. 17 Refund cheque (lost) ..	3	15 2	Petty cash ..	6	0 0
" 21 Refund balance petty cash ..	1	1 11	Fire insurance ..	40	0 0
			Cleaning ..	38	5 0
			Extra clerical assistance (April to June, 1900) ..	14	3 6
			Payment of English accounts due previous to 1st April, 1900 ..	37	2 9
			Typewriting ..	2	1 8
			Sundry small accounts ..	3	2 1
			Stamp imprests ..	30	0 0
			New Zealand newspapers (purchase of) ..	8	9 3
			Balance ..	653	4 7½
	£1,321	0 1		£1,321	0 1

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,375 copies), £1 6s. 6d.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1901.

Price 3d.]