

THE STAFF AND ITS WORK.

The principal work of the recess has been the stocktaking, which was carried out in the most systematic and exhaustive manner, and to which I refer in detail elsewhere. Next recess I hope to carry out a complete indexing of the valuable collection of pamphlets. Towards the close of the recess Mr. T. Roberts, the Library binder, fell seriously ill, and had to relinquish his work. I regret to say that the illness terminated fatally early in July. Mr. Roberts had been employed in the Library for some twelve years, and was a most efficient and industrious officer. Mr. A. J. Vaughan was appointed to the position temporarily, and his work has given me such satisfaction that I have recommended his permanent appointment. The new messenger, H. J. Millan, appointed last year, has discharged his duties with exceptional care and intelligence. The control of the Library post-office, and the reception, distribution, and expedition of mail-matter are now in the hands of the Postal Department. The mailman appointed last session has given every satisfaction.

THE SPACE QUESTION.

I must again emphasize the urgent necessity which exists for an addition to the shelving-space in the Library. During the recess considerable alterations have been effected in the shelving in the basement, with the result that the splendid collection of bound newspapers can now be more conveniently arranged, and that additional space is afforded for the storing of British and other parliamentary papers and official publications generally. But this is not enough. Certain sections of the Library are now so overcrowded that the transference of the older and less frequently consulted volumes is imperative, in order that room may be found for the heavy annual additions in these classes. The large attic room over the main reading-room of the Library would, if fitted up with suitable shelving, provide accommodation for some thousands of volumes. To the room in question could be transferred, for example, the contents of the No. 2 stack-room, at present fully occupied by the American official publications, which are but rarely consulted by members and others using the Library and might well be placed elsewhere, the space thus saved being devoted to "overflows" from other classes of works in more frequent demand. I have made formal application to the Public Works Department for the room above alluded to to be fitted up with shelving. At present the only access to this room is through the offices occupied by the Valuation Department. I have therefore proposed that a circular iron staircase should be erected in the small lobby at the head of the main staircase, thus affording a quick and convenient access to the room in question. The District Engineer has, I understand, given an estimate of the cost, and I would recommend that the Public Works Department should be asked to carry out the necessary alterations immediately after the close of the present session.

If this room be not fitted up and utilized in the manner suggested, the only course by which the overcrowding difficulty could be met would be to carry the book-stacks in the main reading-room to one-third more than, or even double, their present height. In this way shelving-space for some thousands of additional volumes would be provided. But the change would involve the use of step-ladders, and the general appearance of the reading-room would necessarily not be so handsome as it is at present.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Additions to the portraits hung in the lobby and newspaper-room include enlarged photographs of three ex-Governors of New Zealand—namely, the Marquis of Normanby, Sir Thomas Gore Browne, and Sir George Ferguson Bowen.

A safe and some enclosed book-shelves have been placed in the Chief Librarian's office.

In accordance with instructions from the Joint Committee, the Assistant Librarian's desk in the main reading-room has been shifted to a position nearer the door. The register for the entering of books taken out has also been placed near the door.

The new rules passed last session by the Joint Library Committee have been enforced, and appear to work out well in practice.

I have to tender my thanks to the Chairman of the Joint Committee, G. J. Anderson, Esq., M.P., and the Chairman of the Recess Committee, W. H. D. Bell, Esq., M.P., each of whom has devoted much attention to Library matters; to the Government Printer, and to the High Commissioner's staff.

The Library orders for books and periodicals purchased in London have received prompt attention from Messrs. Sotheran and Co. and Messrs. Street and Co.

LIBRARY ACCOUNTS.

In an appendix will be found the Library balance-sheet for the year ended on the 31st March, with the copy of the Auditor's certificate.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES WILSON,
Chief Librarian.