

1914.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: SUBSIDIES TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

(PAPERS RELATING TO DISTRIBUTION OF).

[In continuation of E.—10, 1913.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

I. EXTRACT FROM THE THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

As in the previous year, Parliament voted the sum of £4,000 in 1913 for payment of subsidies to public libraries.

In the *New Zealand Gazette* of the 20th November, 1913, a notice was inserted stating that £4,000 had been voted by Parliament for distribution to libraries. Forms of application were sent to all libraries known to the Department.

The method of distribution of the vote was the same as that adopted in previous years—viz., a nominal addition of £25 was made to the amount of the income of each library derived from subscriptions, donations, and rates, provided that the receipts for the year were not less than £2, and the vote was distributed according to the amount thus augmented; but no library received credit for a larger income than £75—that is, in no case did the income on which subsidy was based exceed £100. In accordance with the *Gazette* notice, the day appointed for the distribution of the subsidy was the 9th February, 1914, and the amount of the vote was divided among the 401 libraries from which applications, each accompanied by a statutory declaration on the proper form, had been received at that date. The vote, as thus dealt with, afforded a subsidy of 4s. 8·55d. in the pound on the nominal income, and the subsidies ranged from £6 7s. 2d. to £23 11s. 3d. The number of libraries participating in the vote shows a decrease of seven as compared with the number aided in February, 1913.

In order that the purpose intended to be served by the vote may be attained, it is made a condition for participation that the whole of the subsidy granted to each library in the previous year shall have been expended in the purchase of books.

The authorities in charge of each library receiving the benefit of a subsidy were also advised that it was essential that a due proportion of the books purchased should be books having a permanent value. It is to be regretted that this has not received full attention. An analysis of the books added during last year discloses the fact that 83·01 per cent. of the books purchased were novels. If the additions made by the large libraries were not taken into consideration, the proportion of novels would increase to 87·4 per cent. Ninety-five public libraries purchased no books other than fiction. Attention was drawn to this matter in the report for last year, and the *Gazette* notice relating to the distribution of subsidy also contained a reference to the subject. That library authorities are acting on the suggestion is shown by the fact that the analysis for the year as compared with that for the previous year shows a slight improvement in the type of books purchased. It is expected that the returns for this year will disclose further improvements in this direction.