

I regret that, owing to a severe attack of bronchitis, I was compelled to absent myself from duty for the first time since I took charge of the Library in 1901. The absence was of a little over a fortnight's duration. Mr. James, the Assistant Librarian, has also been temporarily absent through illness on two or three occasions. The new binder, Mr. Vaughan, who replaced the late Mr. Roberts last year, has continued to give every satisfaction, and the staff all round has worked well.

STOCK-TAKING.

In accordance with the system I outlined in last year's report and under which stock-taking will proceed each recess, different classes being dealt with each year, stock was taken of the contents of the sociology-room—*i.e.*, the No. 2 room on the ground floor. In this room are shelved the classes 300 and 700. The 300 class includes works on constitutional law; the statutes of all the British dominions and colonies; parliamentary law and procedure; common law; banking and finance generally; political economy; education; land and labour questions, &c. Class 700 includes works of art, sport, music, and the drama.

The work was carried out by Messrs. P. McColl and W. Baine, who devoted practically two months to the task, which was done with the utmost care and thoroughness. The stock-sheets in their various stages may be inspected by members, to whom Mr. McColl, as the assistant in charge of the work, will, if called upon, explain the system adopted. The results of the stock-taking may be tabulated as follows:—

MISSING SINCE 1913 STOCK-TAKING.						
Class 300	..	..	..	..	..	56
Class 700	..	..	..	..	..	11
Official	..	..	..	..	..	5
Total	..	..	..	..	..	72

Remarks on Stock-taking.—It by no means follows that the books put down as "missing" are to be considered as being definitely and irrevocably lost. Books are still coming in which were noted as "missing" at the time the stock-lists were closed. In not a few instances books have been placed on the tables of the staff-room, in others on the shelves of the sociology-room, and in others yet again deposited on the tables of the main reading-room without any information of such return being given to any member of the Library staff. In every such instance it is found that the books returned *have never been entered* in the day-books. Year after year I have remarked in my reports upon the impropriety of persons enjoying the Library privileges taking out books without having them duly entered in the day-books provided for that purpose. One day-book is placed in the main reading-room, another on the counter of the staff-room on the ground floor. Surely it is not asking too much that persons taking out books should spend a minute or two in properly recording the particulars of the book borrowed. Failure to comply with this very simple and very reasonable requirement involves great inconvenience and annoyance to members who may rightly desire to consult the books which are missing, to say nothing of the extra work which is necessitated when stock is being taken. The carelessness displayed by some of those who use the Library is quite unpardonable. As a case in point I may mention that of twelve books returned at the commencement of the session by a certain member seven were found to have never been entered. They included, I may add, two dictionaries of quotations, which are distinctly to be considered works of reference and should not have been removed from the Library. This nuisance of "non-entered" books has gone on increasing to such an extent that it has become a most formidable obstacle to the proper control of the Library.

I desire to draw special attention to the fact that the sociology-room is only used by *members of Parliament and full-privilege holders*. It may be called a "close-tyled" room, for during the recess, as during the session, *no persons save the above are allowed to enter it without a Library assistant accompanying them*. This fact carries with it the unpleasant but inevitable corollary that the majority of the missing volumes cannot have been taken out by ordinary-privilege holders. I use the expression "majority" because it must be remembered that new books in all classes are, during the first session after their being added to the Library, displayed on the tables in the main reading-room, in order that members may have an opportunity of seeing the new accessions as a whole. To this main room many persons other than those mentioned have access, under the "limited sessional privileges," and it is possible that in some cases the privilege has been abused. As a matter of fact, I have proof that certain volumes have been removed, without being entered, from the display tables in the room above referred to. Salmond's "Summary of the Law of Torts," for instance, disappeared off the table upstairs immediately it was displayed, and Borchard's "Law and Legal Literature of Germany" must have been taken in the same manner. The detailed figures show that there was a loss of seven books of the 300 and 700 sections of those displayed in the main reading-room tables during the session of 1913. There is clear proof that each session witnesses a certain degree of loss from the shelves of the sociology-room, and for this ordinary-privilege holders cannot be held accountable. This loss should be easily preventable if the Library rules as to entering books were faithfully observed. The stock-lists are, as I have said, at the disposition of members. If necessary, I can review verbally, and in detail, the list of missing books, and quote Mr. McColl's remarks upon special cases which may call for comment.

I would earnestly request members having any "non-entered" books in their possession either to return them at once, or, if the volumes have been left at their homes, to send for them without delay. As to the future it is an open question whether some penalty should not be imposed upon those who, through carelessness or indifference, disregard the rules laid down for the return and entering of books. It is extremely disagreeable to me to have to write as I have done, but I have felt it my duty to draw special attention to the matter.