

1919.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: SUBSIDIES TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

(PAPERS RELATING TO DISTRIBUTION OF).

[In continuation of E.-10, 1917.]

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

I. EXTRACT FROM THE FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

DURING the period of the war the grants voted by Parliament for distribution to public libraries have been on a more limited scale than in previous years. No grant was made in 1917, and in 1918 £3,000 was voted in lieu of £4,000 as in former years. The distribution of this grant, which took place in March, 1919, was confined to libraries situated in places having less than fifteen hundred inhabitants, for the reason that small libraries in country districts are more dependent upon financial assistance from the Government than are libraries supported by larger numbers of subscribers.

The conditions under which the vote is distributed require that a library participating in the benefits must be public in the sense of not being under the control of an association or society the membership of which is composed of only part of the community, and if a borough library a reading-room open to the public free of charge must be provided. In addition, the receipts from subscriptions and donations to the funds of the library during the year must not have been less than £2, this sum being regarded as a very low minimum to ensure that the library receives a certain amount of local support. An application to share in the grant is accompanied by statements of the annual receipts and payments of the body controlling the library, the membership, and the general arrangements for the carrying-on of the library.

The grant is distributed as a subsidy, the sum paid to each library being based upon the amount received during the year by the library by way of subscriptions, donations, and special rates. To this amount is made a nominal addition of £25, but no library receives credit for a larger income than £25—that is, in no case does the amount upon which subsidy is based exceed £50. In this manner the interests of smaller and less prosperous libraries are protected.

The number of libraries participating in the vote in 1919 was 275—thirty-nine more than was the case in 1917, when a smaller grant was divided among libraries in places of less than a thousand inhabitants, and about one hundred less than the number among which the grant was distributed prior to the war, when it was unnecessary to restrict the subsidies to libraries in country districts. The incomes of the libraries from subscriptions, &c., ranged from £2 to £132, and the vote yielded a subsidy of 6s. 2d. in the pound on the nominal income (ascertained in the manner described above), the subsidies paid ranging from £8 8s. 2d. to £15 11s. 6d.

In order that the purpose intended to be served by the vote may be attained, it is made a condition that the whole of the subsidy granted to each library must