

1922.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR 1921-22.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

The CHIEF LIBRARIAN to the CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year 1921-22 :—

RECESS LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

The Recess Library Committee, under the chairmanship of the Hon. Sir William Hall-Jones, K.C.M.G., M.L.C., held three meetings during the recess. Lists of books suggested for order by the Chief Librarian were brought before the Committee and duly considered.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY.

The Accessions Register shows that during the period 1st July, 1921, to 15th June, 1922, the number of catalogued accessions was 1,633. The total number of catalogued items, as shown by the Accessions Register, on the 1st August, 1922, was 1,993.

The number of accessions during the Library year now dealt with is the lowest for some time past. This is due in part to the fact that owing to the adjourned session early in the year all the American official publications have not yet been catalogued. Another reason for the falling-off during the last three years in the number of catalogued accessions is the necessity which has arisen for greatly curtailing the purchase of new books, owing to the enormously increased cost of all books and periodicals.

It is worthy of note that the annual grant for the purchase of books and periodicals (£600) is the same to-day as it was in 1873, when the vote was increased from £300 to £600.

It is manifest that, in view of the greatly increased cost of books and periodicals as compared with pre-war prices, the purchasing-powers of the Selection Committee have been very seriously diminished. On periodicals alone the increase is very substantial. Whereas in 1912 the Library's expenditure in London on periodicals was under £120, the amount this year was over £180, and this despite the Committee's action last year in discontinuing subscriptions to many newspapers and magazines previously filed in the Library. It is safe to say, also, that the increased cost of books of real importance stands at from 25 to 35 per cent.

The Great War brought in its train a number of entirely new political, financial, industrial, and social problems, on which there is an ever-increasing flow of useful and interesting literature. It is now quite impossible for the Selection Committee, with the limited means at its disposal, to keep the Library adequately supplied with the best literature on these problems.

The insufficiency of the annual grant to maintain the Library—which should, I think all will agree, be regarded as a most important and valuably useful adjunct to the parliamentary machine—at its old pre-war standard of efficiency is, for the above and many other reasons needless to detail here, much to be regretted, and will, I trust, be repaired when the general financial position of the country becomes a little easier.

THE LIBRARY STAFF.

There have been no changes in the Library staff since my last report. The vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Millen last year has not yet been filled, owing to the need for economy.

