

1928.
NEW ZEALAND.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1928.

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

To the Chairman of the Joint Library Committee.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report on the operations of the General Assembly Library for the year 1927-28.

During the year 2,270 books were added to the collection from all sources, as compared with 2,162 in the previous year and 1,501 in the year before that. The number of volumes on the register at the 31st March was 115,150, and there has been a considerable addition since then. In connection with the purchase of books, I would respectfully point out that it will not be possible to maintain the proper accessions for a library of this size and character within the limits of the annual vote for book-buying purposes and the revenue from private Bills. The vote was fixed at £600 some sixty years ago, when the Library was a very small one and the output of books inconsiderable. In recent years the annual publication of books on serious subjects has very much increased, and there has also been a considerable increase in the cost of such books. It is obvious, therefore, that if £600 was considered a reasonable sum for books sixty years ago it is not possible to do anything like justice to a much larger library at the present day on £700 a year. The purchases of the past two years have only been possible by reason of the existence of a credit balance of over £600 at the beginning of the period. Although we are now purchasing on very favourable terms, our expenditure on books last year (including a fixed sum of about £200 for newspapers and periodicals) amounted to £1,088, and the credit balance at the end of the year was only £279. At least four of the public libraries in New Zealand are spending more than the General Assembly Library on the purchase of books, a position which is hardly compatible with the character of this Library as a national institution.

INTERNAL ECONOMY.

Owing to the very short recess and the fact that the staff was short-handed practically all the time, we were not able to carry out the programme of stocktaking which I had proposed for the recess in the two important classes of Sociology and Fiction (with Literature). The latter division I am very anxious to have overhauled, as we are aware that very many books have been discarded through disrepair or for other reasons, and the catalogue does not, in the circumstances, form a very reliable guide to the contents of the Library. We have, however, overhauled the stock in the newspaper stack-room—a very valuable section of the Library—and have rearranged the volumes to make them more readily accessible and to provide space for the additions during the next ten years or so. That is the longest period for which the present space is likely to be sufficient; but estimates of that sort are liable to prove too sanguine.

THE STACK-ROOMS.

With regard to the book stack-rooms, we have not yet been able, owing to the lack of shelving, to make use of the new space recently vacated by the Health Department. When this is available it will make the finest and best-lighted stack-room in the Library, the only drawback being its remoteness from the administrative portion of the building. I hope that it will soon be possible to have this room furnished, as the measures which had to be taken to relieve overcrowding elsewhere are rather injurious to the bindings of good books. The Library has considerably outgrown the accommodation which was provided when it was erected thirty years ago, and it is only by making the best use of this new space and by increasing the shelving in some of the other rooms that we can carry on efficiently in the future without the books suffering undue deterioration.

The shelving on the first floor urgently requires extending to accommodate the History, Travel, Biography, and Literature, which are very much in demand. The best way to achieve this seems to

be by reverting to the original intention and erecting round the south-west corner of the main reading-room a gallery similar to that in the Sociology room. This would increase the shelving in the main reading-room by about one-fourth, and would utilize wall-space which at present is wasted. Another problem to consider is the suitable housing of the New Zealand collection, which at present is locked up in glass cases or behind unsightly wire-netting on the landing, away from observation by the staff and in a very indifferent light. These books ought to be more readily accessible and under better supervision when they are being used. With a staff no larger than we have this can scarcely be accomplished without bringing them into the main reading-room. That would be possible if the suggested gallery were erected or if rooms adjoining could be made available. If the latter course were adopted we could also find a room for a staff-room, which is very much needed.

BINDING.

As the result of a closer understanding with the Government Printing Office better advantage was taken this year of the vote for binding. Unfortunately, owing to a charge being carried over from the previous year, there was only about £300 available for expenditure, and consequently work which should have been done was left over for the current year. I hope this year to be able to make better use of the vote and to do some of the rebinding which ought to be persevered with every year if the book stock is to be kept in proper condition. We have made up some of the leeway in the League of Nations literature, and I hope this year to make appreciable progress with the repairing of many of our old newspaper files, which constitute a most valuable feature of the General Assembly Library and are constantly being referred to. Newspapers are now being bound in a strong serviceable canvas with handles and ties to reduce the wear-and-tear involved in constant use.

DONATIONS.

During the year donations of books, which have been much appreciated, have been received from the following: Mr. A. de B. Brandon, Mr. J. T. Wilkin (Canterbury), Mr. George Lambert, Rear-Admiral J. E. T. Harper, Mr. J. McCombs, M.P., Sir Thomas Henley (Australia), Mr. Will Craig, the Administration of Western Samoa, the Danish Consulate, the Consul for Belgium, the Consul-General for Japan, and the Institute of Pacific Relations.

RECESS PRIVILEGE.

Though the recess was exceptionally short, 822 persons enjoyed the privilege of using the Library as compared with 944 during the preceding recess and 817 for the recess before that. The number of books taken out was also well up to last year's average—a total of 9,818 in five-months. I am glad to say that the loss of books this year has been infinitesimal. It has been, with few exceptions, due to causes beyond the control of the borrowers.

The occupations of the recess privilege-holders were stated as follows: Accountants, 20; advertisement agents, 3; analyst, 1; architects, 2; artists, 8; auctioneer, 1; bankers, 7; biologists, 2; builders, 2; chemists, 2; Civil servants, 102; clergymen, 21; clerks, 83; commercial travellers, 5; company-directors, 3; conchologist, 1; custodian, 1; dairy worker, 1; dentists, 4; domestic duties, 84; drapers, 8; draughtsmen, 16; engineers (electrical), 4; engineers (civil), 6; engineers (mechanical), 6; farmers, 2; friendly-society secretaries, 2; gardener, 1; horticulturist, 1; inspectors of schools, 5; insurance agents, 6; interpreter, 1; journalists, 21; labourers, 5; land-agents, 5; law clerks, 19; library assistants, 5; manufacturers, 7; medical practitioners, 11; merchants, 15; messengers, 9; meteorologists, 1; municipal employees, 11; musician, 1; naval officers, 2; no occupation (retired), 79; nurses, 13; optician, 1; photographers, 2; police officer, 1; printers, 8; salesmen, 15; saddler, 1; seaman, 1; secretaries (company), 4; settler, 1; sharebrokers, 2; shipping-managers, 4; shop-assistants, 7; solicitors, 32; steward, 1; students, 31; surveyors, 3; teachers, 73; timber-merchant, 1; trade-union secretaries, 4; typists, 15.

THE LIBRARY COMMITTEES.

The following meetings of the various Library Committees were held: Legislative Council, 1; House of Representatives, 2; Recess, 1; Joint Library, 3; Joint Selection, 1.

THE STAFF.

It is again my sad duty to report the death of one of the oldest members of the staff—Mr. W. F. Johnson. After many years' faithful and efficient service Mr. Johnson had just gone on leave with a view to retiring, when his death occurred. His wide knowledge and reliable and conscientious work made him a very valued member of the staff. The vacancy has been filled by the appointment of Mr. G. Crossley.

The many changes that have had to be made during the last year or two have only been possible by the sympathetic co-operation and advice of the Library Committee and the very loyal and cheerful services rendered by the staff. Although we have unfortunately been short-handed during the last two recesses, the willing exertions of all members of the staff have enabled us to carry out much of the heavy work of shifting books and at the same time to keep the stack-rooms and reading-rooms tidy and clean. The regularity with which members of Parliament have registered any books taken out of the Library has contributed materially to the smooth running of the issue and reference departments.

The balance-sheet for the year, with the Auditor-General's certificate, is appended.

I have, &c.,

G. H. SCHOLEFIELD,
Chief Librarian.

LIBRARY FUND ACCOUNT
STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 1932

Receipts		Payments	
To Balance 1st April 1931	£ 322 0 0	By Purchase of books and periodicals in—	
Private donations	1 8 0	United Kingdom	£ 741 18 9
Annual grant	30 0 0	New Zealand	£ 200 7 10
Grants-in-aid	700 0 0	Australia	£ 19 5 3
		United States	£ 57 10 1
		France	£ 0 13 4
		Germany	£ 2 3 4
		Italy	£ 1 10 2
		Other countries	
		Balance	£ 320 9 0
		Bank of New Zealand	£ 280 9 0
		Losses repaid	£ 1 0 0
			£ 279 9 0
		Porty cash in hand	£ 0 8 1
			£ 279 15 1
			£ 41 378 3 10

Examined and found correct—G. F. C. Controller General and Auditor General
G. H. Bodonmerry
Librarian

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st March 1932