

NEW ZEALAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION: LIAISON OFFICER.

Miss E. J. Carnell, F.L.A., formerly of the Lancashire County Library, took up her duties in January, 1940, as Liaison Officer between this Service and the New Zealand Library Association. Her duties will cover visits to libraries, giving instruction in methods and processes, the arrangement of plans for professional training of library workers, preparation of library publicity, and furtherance of the aims of the Association. The appointment, which will be for a period of five years, was made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to the Association. It is confidently hoped that much good will result from it.

WAR LIBRARY SERVICE.

By lending its own stocks of books, particularly non-fiction books, to military-camp libraries where proper library facilities are available, and by co-ordinating the national collection and distribution of gifts of books and periodicals for camps and troopships throughout the country, the Service has given help in the war effort.

Method of Organization.

All war library-work has been supervised by a sub-committee of the National Patriotic Council, with the Hon. F. Waite, M.L.C., as Chairman. The New Zealand Library Association, through its members—individual and institutional—has given all the help in its power, and in addition numerous small libraries participating in this Service have assisted by collecting books and periodicals. Although these collections have taken place throughout the entire country, most of the work of sorting and distribution has been done in the four main centres. It has been the task of this Service to administer the distribution work to camps and troopships in the Wellington area, and to arrange for this work as required in other centres through the capable offices of the city librarians, who have acted as liaison officers for their provincial districts.

LIBRARIES IN MAIN CAMPS AND AIR FORCE STATIONS.

At three main mobilization camps—Papakura, Trentham, and Burnham—libraries have now been established by the Army authorities. Each library has a full-time librarian with the rank of sergeant and a stock of from two to three thousand books. Daily newspapers from many centres are received regularly and kept on file. Books in these libraries are of two kinds. Firstly, the gift stocks of books collected throughout the country are assembled at the main distributing centres in the cities, and the best of these are prepared for circulation by voluntary help under the supervision of the city librarians, supplies being forwarded to the camps periodically. These books remain at the camps. Secondly, loans from this Service are made in the ordinary way from the book-vans, the books being changed regularly. Each camp is gradually being equipped with a basic set of given reference books, such as a dictionary, a modern encyclopædia, an atlas, &c., from funds allotted by the National Patriotic Fund Board. Inquiries from borrowers in the libraries for books not in stock at the camps are satisfied by means of the inter-library loan scheme of the New Zealand Library Association. Libraries at Air Force Stations are receiving almost the same service, Hobsonville, Blenheim, and Wigram having begun very useful library work under the care of the Education Officer at each station. Libraries at Ohakea and Bell Block are being helped by the librarians at Palmerston North and New Plymouth respectively.

COASTAL DEFENCE UNITS.

The forwarding of supplies of books and periodicals to these units has been systematically undertaken. To 31st March, 1940, 3,697 books and 5,825 periodicals were despatched from Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch to many widely scattered stations. The need for this type of service is obvious, and has increased with the oncoming of the winter months. Every effort is being made to ensure that no unit is without books.

TROOPSHIPS AND ESCORTS.

The value of having a central organization responsible for the provision of books for soldiers, nurses, sailors, and airmen has been clearly shown by the ease with which sudden demands for reading-matter for departing ships have been met, in some cases after extremely short notice. Each departing troopship has been liberally provided with books and periodicals, the bulk of the sorting and packing work being done at Wellington and at Christchurch. To 31st March, 1940, 17,162 books and 17,737 periodicals and magazines were provided for troopships and their escorts. It is expected that forwardings after that date will greatly exceed these figures. The provision of books for base camps and hospitals at the port of disembarkation was not overlooked, specially marked cases of books being sent with troopships for these purposes.

Collection of Books.

The provision of the above services would not have been possible without the generosity of the people of New Zealand, who, in response to appeals made in the press and by radio, have given books and periodicals liberally. The New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association and the New Zealand Boy Scouts' Association have each collected large quantities of reading-matter. In a book drive organized in the four main cities in December, 1939, the Boy Scouts collected 30,000 books and 50,000 periodicals. The total quantity of material collected from all sources was, at 31st March, 1940, 50,250 books and 65,500 periodicals. To ensure that all camps, troopships, and defence units continue to receive the services now begun, it is essential that giving of books be continued, with an emphasis on quality rather than quantity giving.