

Advice to Libraries.

The services of the field officers are available at all times to librarians of small libraries. Where time does not allow the field officer to do necessary work, the services of a trained librarian from headquarters are made available free of charge to the library. The Liaison Officer between this Service and the New Zealand Library Association has visited many libraries. Her activities are detailed in her report below.

Supply of Books to Dominion Museum, Wellington.

During March, 1941, arrangements were completed for the supply of up to 150 volumes to be included in the travelling exhibits of the Dominion Museum. These exhibits go to schools from Hawke's Bay and Wanganui to Marlborough and Nelson, each exhibit going to a fresh school every fortnight. It is thought that the books, which will supplement the exhibits, will be of great value to the museum service.

BOOK STOCK.

In spite of the war, and thanks to the efforts of the Navy and merchant service and to the work of those responsible for the despatch of publications from Great Britain, no serious shortage of books has been felt. It is inevitable that some losses should have occurred, but these have been slight. During the year the Service received and added to stock 14,563 volumes. The total stock now stands at 45,062 volumes, of which 23,572 are non-fiction and 22,037 fiction. The percentages of various types of books in stock at 31st March are as follows: General works, 0·72; philosophy and psychology, 1·90; religion, 1·24; social sciences, 7·23; philology and language, 0·23; natural or pure sciences, 2·66; applied science and useful arts, 5·01; fine arts and recreations, 5·89; literature, excluding fiction, 3·98; history, travel, and biography, 22·97; fiction, 48·17. During the year binding of the books requiring treatment in the South Island was arranged for at Christchurch with a commercial firm, the North Island binding being done at Wellington.

WAR LIBRARY SERVICE.

By lending its own stocks of books, particularly non-fiction books, to military camp, Air Force Station, and warship libraries where adequate library facilities have been provided, by recommending and planning these facilities in many cases in active co-operation with the New Zealand Library Association, and by organizing the national collection and distribution of gifts of books and periodicals to the fighting forces, the Service has continued to give useful help in the war effort. The method of organization described in the last annual report has been developed fully.

It is of interest to note the good results which have followed the application of the machinery of the National Patriotic Fund Board to the work of the War Library Service, which is a part of the Board's activities. Without that central machinery it is very doubtful if results would have been as good, and much duplication of effort and many serious omissions would have occurred.

The advantages of using a national library service for co-ordinating the efforts of libraries have also been very real, while the work of numerous librarians throughout the country has been an indispensable part of the scheme. As an example of this, the first New Zealand hospital ship was able to be equipped at short notice with a serviceable library of 1,000 volumes of fiction, 250 non-fiction, and 1,000 periodicals, together with a modern issue system and full instructions for the administration of the library.

Books and Periodicals supplied.

Up to 31st March, 1941, 97,403 books and 99,670 periodicals had been distributed to various points. A considerable quantity of this material was sent overseas on transports and will not be recoverable, although it has been impressed on Gifts Officers that, if possible, material should be taken off transports to base camps.

Libraries in Camps and Air Force Stations.

During the year the buildings which were specially planned for Papakura and Waiouru Camps were finished and put into use. These buildings have proved their usefulness and are comparable with any library buildings used by military forces elsewhere. At Trentham and Burnham the buildings provided have not been of the same standard, although the latter camp is to have a new library as soon as labour and material can be allocated. Trentham, where excellent work has been done by the Warrant Officer Librarian (a former Deputy Chief Librarian of the Wellington Public Libraries), is to have the library premises remodelled to allow a number of small rooms to be thrown into one. All these main-camp libraries have full-time librarians in charge (at Waiouru a Y.M.C.A. officer supervises the library, which is attached to the Y.M.C.A. building), ample stocks of books in first-class condition, and regular loans of books from the Country Library Service, as well as the use of the request service for technical material. Good use has been made of the latter, as well as of the technical and reference material supplied as permanent stock and purchased with funds of the National Patriotic Fund Board.

At Air Force Stations some good work has been done, notably at Harewood, Wigram, Whenuapai, and Blenheim, but at the end of the year there were several stations without good facilities. It is expected that all these will be served shortly, if the co-operation of the Air Department is obtained. The Country Library Service has on permanent loan to five Air Force Station libraries 700 books from its regular stock, these books being changed regularly from the vans of the Service. Altogether some 30,000 books in first-class condition have been prepared for circulation and allocated to camp and Air Force Station libraries by the librarians and their staffs in New Zealand since the war began.