

1943  
NEW ZEALAND

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# COUNTRY LIBRARY SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNTRY LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1943

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*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave*

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The Hon. the MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Wellington, 6th July, 1943.

SIR,—

The year for which this report is submitted marks the end of five years' operation of this Service. Four of these, 1939-40, 1940-41, 1941-42, 1942-43, have been war years, so that nearly all the growth of the Service has taken place in the abnormality of war conditions. Although a great deal needs to be done before New Zealand has an adequate library system it is a hopeful sign that it has been possible to do so much in the circumstances. Two significant developments of the year under review were the first full year's operation of the School Library Service, involving some 28,000 children in 500 schools, with an issue of nearly 30,000 books, and the establishment of a library service division of the Army Education and Welfare Service, replacing the War Library Service begun in September, 1939. The Country Library Service is acting as the chief source of supply for the new service.

A full description of the methods by which books, periodicals, and information are made available to country people has been given in previous annual reports. Summarized, these methods consist of (a) free loans of books on a liberal scale to libraries controlled by local authorities, which in turn agree to make their libraries free and maintain reasonable standards of library service; (b) loans of books to independent subscription public libraries at a small annual charge per one hundred books lent; (c) loans of books through travelling hamper collections to isolated groups of readers at a small annual charge; and (d) loans through the post of books free of charge to isolated readers. All libraries served under (a) and (b) received regular visits from one of the specially-equipped book-vans of this Service, at least two visits being paid to each library during a full year. Further, all persons, whether served by the free public library or through the isolated group, may obtain loans of reference books by post from the headquarters of the Service. Service to children is given through schools on a circulating basis.

## FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES: "A" SERVICE

Curtailment of supplies of books from overseas and shortage of staff are reflected in the smallest growth for any one year in the number of local authorities which took the step of co-operating with this Service in making their libraries free. The total number of county, borough, or town district libraries co-operating with this Service at 31st March, 1943, was 43. These libraries serve a local residential population of 111,176, as well as a considerable population in their vicinity, and 14,072 books were on loan to them at 31st March, 1943. Although the number of local authorities that have made this desirable change in their library policy remains nearly the same, some of these libraries have made very good progress under the new plan. This is seen by the table below, which gives a list of all "A" libraries co-operating with this Service, with some relevant statistics. It is, of course, a common-place that the number of borrowers will be greater under a free system than under a subscription one, but the use made of the library in many places has been trebled, or even quadrupled, while the local authority has become much more closely identified with the library service and concerned in its progress.

## FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Name.	Population (1936 Census).	Number of Borrowers for Year ending 31st March, 1943 : Local Area.	Number of Borrowers for Year ending 31st March, 1943 : Outside Borough or Local Area.	Number of Borrowers before Change to Country Library Service, Free Library System.	Issues for year ending 31st March, 1943.	Income from Rates and Grants by Local Authority for Year ending 31st March, 1943.	Total Expenditure* on Salaries, Books, and Up-keep for Year ending 31st March, 1943.
						£	£
Alexandra .. .. .	871	150	20	100†	7,600	97	104
Baldutha .. .. .	1,546	421	59	65†	†	205	213
Bluff .. .. .	2,038	390	..	60	12,600	35	127
Bulls .. .. .	527	100	40	52	†	18	104
Cromwell .. .. .	737	111	21	12	2,381	238	147
Featherston .. .. .	1,050	239	40	79	8,809	81	141
Feilding .. .. .	4,550	763	62	200	40,189	275	471
Greymouth .. .. .	8,115	2,741	78	450	68,059	678	853
Hawera .. .. .	4,663	1,780	218	710	97,436	650	1,090
Helensville .. .. .	961	..	..	..	..	..	..
Huntly .. .. .	1,942	926	49	145	60,000	200	220
Hokitika .. .. .	2,689	..	..	..	..	..	..
Inglewood .. .. .	1,271	366	108	200	29,129	102	289
Kaipoi .. .. .	1,598	650	20	60	17,385	125	173
Kaikohē .. .. .	662	248	27	120	†	†	†
Kaitiāia .. .. .	780	157	94	88	8,437	50	180
Kaponga .. .. .	406	144	40	23	†	†	†
Kawakawa .. .. .	520	115	46	45	5,886	38	73
Levin .. .. .	2,658	1,616	170	452	75,087	490	786
Mackenzie County .. .. .	3,158	682	None	70	28,263	350	349
Mātura .. .. .	1,500	436	26	135	24,509	26	277
Morrinsville .. .. .	1,796	907	189	165	49,325	150	479
Motueka .. .. .	2,169	335	125	†	50,778	205	505
Otaki .. .. .	1,744	..	..	..	..	..	..
Otorohanga .. .. .	712	260	†	80	†	†	†
Paeoa .. .. .	2,149	890	38	†	†	141	252
Pahiatua .. .. .	1,668	520	†	90	†	†	†
Putaruru .. .. .	789	248	36	65	†	50	143
Queenstown .. .. .	931	220	†	32	†	†	†
Rangiora .. .. .	2,239	1,263	55	1,000†	45,514	352	446
Rotorua .. .. .	6,351	2,891	574	358	109,473	750	1,078
Roxburgh .. .. .	479	171	†	None	†	†	92
Runanga .. .. .	1,647	240	..	..	..	..	..
Taihape .. .. .	2,183	1,285	140	200	39,677	200	424
Taradale .. .. .	1,206	456	7	60	11,672	50	44
Tauranga .. .. .	3,387	919	252	376	64,489	450	558
Te Aroha .. .. .	2,366	736	83	None	20,703	145	243
Te Awamutu .. .. .	2,224	709	207	230	38,898	200	269
Te Karaka .. .. .	355	82	4	36	4,732	20	23
Te Puke .. .. .	961	338	121	83	15,555	71	181
Thames .. .. .	4,268	962	20	165	†	246	258
Waimate .. .. .	2,315	643	102	250	40,936	209	432
Woodville .. .. .	1,031	107	35	78	8,618	90	123

\* Expenditure in many cases includes the cost of books for rental or pay collection, part or all of which is recoverable. The cost of the local service, especially for providing lighter fiction, is not fully borne by the ratepayers. † This library was free before the Country Library Service began operating. ‡ Figures unavailable or not supplied.

## SMALL INDEPENDENT SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES : " B " SERVICE

Three hundred and sixty-eight of these libraries were linked with the Service during the year, compared with the previous year's figure of 348 ; 179 of the libraries are in the North Island, 189 in the South Island ; 26,410 books were on loan to these " B " libraries, an average of just over 71 books per library. The need for conserving oil fuel and tires again made it necessary to reduce the number of exchanges effected by means of the book-vans to two per year. In certain cases the libraries were encouraged to exchange both their own stock and books borrowed from this Service with corresponding stock of nearby libraries. In some cases where local libraries were enthusiastic and enterprising such exchanges were carried out, and were mutually beneficial. The shortage of books in New Zealand book stores and the tendency for a greater amount of purchasing-power to be available caused the smaller libraries to make more demands on this Service than could be fulfilled. Many libraries which two years ago were receiving loans of fifty books have increased these loans, or have wished to do so.

## OTHER WAYS IN WHICH SERVICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

*Hamper or " C " Service.*—In places where no library exists and where it is not possible for one to be formed, the service to properly established groups by means of travelling hampers has been continued. During the year 70 groups received this service, compared with 54 for the previous year. Many additional collections were made up during the year and despatched for the first time to groups, while those which had been sufficiently long in circulation were withdrawn. A change was also made

in the method of transferring collections from one group to another, the distribution being recast to permit as far as possible a chain system to operate, whereby a group always receives from and sends to the same destination.

*Postal, or "D" Service.*—During the year 250 persons used this service as compared with 168 in 1941–42. The regulations governing the use of this service were altered to allow an additional book for general reading to be included in the selection sent. Up to three books may thus be borrowed at a time, of which not more than one may be the lighter sort—*i.e.*, fiction, popular biography, current affairs, travel, &c. Although the number of persons using this service is growing it must be noted that there still remains a large number of people living in fairly remote localities untouched by any form of library service. It is, however, doubtful if a postal service from Wellington is the best means of dealing with this need. Obviously some measure of decentralization or more direct service will be needed in the future if the library needs of such people are to be met.

*Request Service.*—Each of the 400-odd libraries participating in the Service displays Country Library Service posters inviting its borrowers to request books of non-fiction, even though such books are not in the stock of the library concerned or are not at the time on loan from the Service. The high value of such a service must be stressed, for it brings the resources of printed material of all the libraries of the country, especially the technical and informational resources, within the reach of a very large number of people hitherto cut off from such resources. The use made of this facility depends largely on the energy and initiative of the local librarian, and, while many libraries make good use of the Service, many have still to realize its value. During the year 3,735 requests were received at the headquarters of this Service, the range of subjects covered being very wide—3,547, or 95 per cent., of these requests were filled, while 188, or 5 per cent. of them were not filled either because the requested book was unobtainable or because the request was not within the scope of the service—*i.e.*, it was fiction or non-fiction of an ephemeral kind. The establishment of the Library Section of the Army Education and Welfare Service has caused a tremendous increase in the number of requests received. Borrowings from other libraries throughout New Zealand under the inter-loan service of the New Zealand Library Association were of great assistance; 545 volumes were borrowed, compared with 522 for the previous year, the bulk of these books, 408, being lent by the General Assembly Library, to which grateful acknowledgment is made for the help given.

*Periodical Service.*—To enable users of free public libraries to have access to a considerably wider range of periodicals than such libraries can afford to buy regularly, some 120 periodicals have been sent to 30 free public libraries participating in this Service. Each library received up to 30 periodicals chosen from the list, in lots of some six to eight, sending its initial lot to another library by post after one month, and receiving another in the same way. The effect of this service is that many country people now have access to a range of periodical literature hitherto available only in city libraries.

*Special Groups.*—1,625 books were also on loan to 15 groups and libraries in various types of institutions.

#### BOOK STOCK

During the year the adult section of this Service added to stock 17,812 volumes, 6,641 fiction and 11,171 non-fiction. Withdrawals were 2,291 fiction and 2,243 non-fiction, a total of 4,534 volumes. Thus the net additions to stock were 13,278, the total adult stock of this Service now standing at fiction, 32,049; non-fiction, 43,295; total, 75,344. Stock of the children's section on 31st March, 1943, was 42,857, making a grand total of all stock of 118,204. The fourth year of the war has been by far the most difficult from the point of view of importation of books from abroad, while binding of books in New Zealand is becoming increasingly difficult because of shortage of materials and skilled labour.

Sincere acknowledgment is made of the very great help given by the High Commissioner's Office in London in the purchasing and despatch of an increasing number of books.

#### EXPENDITURE, STAFF, PREMISES

Expenditure for the year was £15,847, under Subdivision XIV, "Country Library Service," vote "Department of Education," made up of salaries, £5,498; purchases and binding of books, £8,414; other expenses, £1,935. In addition, £6,161 was expended on the purchase of books for the School Library Service (Subdivision II of the same vote).

The staff now numbers twenty-five, including officers acting as wartime replacements for eight officers—five permanent, three temporary—who are on military leave or, in the case of one permanent officer, seconded to the civil branch of one of the Armed Services.

Additional storage space and accommodation for the housing of rapidly increasing book stock and for the provision of proper working-conditions for the staff are needed at Wellington.

#### WAR LIBRARY SERVICE

The increased scale of mobilization during the year made it urgently necessary, as was emphasized in the previous annual report, for an alteration of the system of operation of the service to the Armed Forces of the country to be made.

For nearly three years and a half all three branches of the Armed Forces received their supplies of books through the same organization—the War Library Service, which was administered by a group of New Zealand librarians, headed by the Director of this Service. Finance for purchases of books and other necessary material was found by the National Patriotic Fund Board. Libraries were built in the main mobilization camps and the co-operation of the Army and Air Force authorities obtained in many instances for the purpose of giving library service. The system worked reasonably well, except that as the scale of mobilization increased, control and distribution were made very difficult, if not impossible. From the beginning of the service in September, 1939, to 31st March, 1943, 206,233 books

and 223,016 periodicals were allocated, after preliminary collection and sorting, &c., to libraries and to units of the Armed Forces. In the year just ended 60,143 books and 66,014 periodicals were so distributed.

*Army Education and Welfare Library Service.*—This Service, part of the wider scheme for providing educational facilities for Armed Forces of New Zealand, is directed by Army Education and Welfare Service headquarters. A Staff Officer, Libraries, is responsible to the Director of the Army Education and Welfare Service, for the general organization.

By providing proper domestic facilities for the establishment and maintenance of circulating library systems to all units, both in New Zealand and in the Pacific, Army Education and Welfare Library Service meets a very great need. The Service aims to provide books of entertainment, general reading of some educational or cultural value, information on current affairs, information on military training, and information on vocational training. The Country Library Service is thus no longer directly concerned with administration of library service to the Armed Forces at the point of *distribution*, but it has been necessary, to ensure adequate supplies of books to the Army Education and Welfare Library Service, and also to ensure the availability of service to Naval and Air Force units as well as Army units, for this Service to be responsible for the *supply* of books, and also for the provision of premises in districts at or near the points of distribution.

*Supply.*—Previously supply to the War Library Service had been almost entirely through the National Patriotic Fund Board, although the Country Library Service had lent fairly freely to established libraries from its own stocks. Large numbers (over half a million) of books and periodicals had been collected through book drives, sorted and distributed, and purchases were made from National Patriotic Fund Board funds. Obviously this source of supply must still be preserved, if Army Education and Welfare Library Service is to function, because the flow of purchased material will not be sufficient for some time to come to give coverage. As it is necessary for a civilian organization to act for the National Patriotic Fund Board, the Country Library Service therefore retains its original position as expending agent to the Board, and is charged with the responsibility of seeing that National Patriotic Fund Board material, both collected and purchased, is available to all three branches of the Armed Forces.

When consideration was given by the Government to allocating funds for the Library Section of the Army Education and Welfare Service, it was decided:—

- (a) That the advice and recommendations of the New Zealand Library Association and the Country Library Service should be fully considered in the determination of Army library policy :
- (b) That the machinery of the Country Library Service, suitably extended to meet wartime needs, should be the chief means for carrying out library service for the Armed Forces :
- (c) That the Library Staff Officer, when appointed, should carry out the duties of liaison officer between the Army Education Service on the one hand and the Country Library Service and the New Zealand Library Association on the other :
- (d) That the Library Staff Officer should also be designated Library Liaison Officer and be recognized as such both by the Country Library Service and the New Zealand Library Association.

It was also decided, when the need for extending the Army Education and Welfare Library Service to Navy and Air Force was raised that a single civilian source of supply acceptable to all branches of the Armed Forces was desirable. All books and materials purchased are to remain the property of the Country Library Service, but after the war this Service will take over the books, &c., at valuation for normal civilian use, the War Expenses Account being reimbursed accordingly.

The machinery of the Country Library Service for purchasing book stock and library supplies is also desirable for the following reasons:—

- (1) The Country Library Service is already responsible to the National Patriotic Fund Board for the allocation of material given by the public ; it is convenient, therefore, if the same body is responsible for obtaining purchased material.
- (2) The use of the Country Library Service is a convenient carry-over from the War Library Service, and continuity between that Service and the combined Service to be administered by the Army Education and Welfare Service is made to ensure the interest and practical help of New Zealand libraries.
- (3) The Country Library Service has a skilled staff, the knowledge of book markets, and the bibliographical tools necessary to make it the most effective means of purchasing books.

The provision of premises for use by the Army Education and Welfare Service as library depots has been arranged in the following places : Whangarei, Auckland, Palmerston North, Blenheim, and Christchurch. In addition, the Wellington Public Library has made available space for housing the Library Service for the Central Military District, while the Dunedin Public Library is giving facilities for Army Education and Welfare Library Service purposes there.

Full treatment of results of the new Service belongs to next year's report, but preliminary results indicate that satisfactory work is being done.

#### CENTRAL BUREAU FOR LIBRARY BOOK IMPORTS

From 1st April, 1942, to 31st March, 1943, 206 recommendations for special license to the value of £10,497 10s. (New Zealand currency) were made for 23 libraries. A small proportion of this amount represents orders for which fifth-period licenses had been recommended, but the books had not been received until the sixth licensing period, when new licenses were required. The recommendations have covered non-fiction books and periodicals and junior fiction of recognized quality. (Approval

has recently been given by the Customs Department to a recommendation from the New Zealand Library Association that the powers of the Bureau be extended to include recommending special licenses for fiction; libraries will now be able to obtain all their import requirements, fiction and non-fiction, by means of special licenses.)

*Union Catalogue.*—The Union Catalogue, which started in 1941 with a copy of the Country Library Service Author Catalogue as a basis, has been receiving notification of accessions from all the University and major public libraries since 1st January, 1942. Since the last annual report 10,000 new entries have been filed into the catalogue, making an approximate total of 40,000 entries. In addition to checking, copying, and filing entries received from other libraries, the Union Catalogue staff has also checked lists circulated by the Book Resources Committee. The function of the Union Catalogue as a clearing-house for inter-library loans is one which is hampered by lack of records of holdings of libraries, other than Country Library Service, prior to 1941; in spite of this, however, some service has been able to be given when the requests have been for material published since 1933.

*New Zealand Book Resources Committee.*—A full account of the work of this committee was given in the last annual report. The main work of the committee, which met once only during the year, was carried out by the libraries which have co-operated well in checking their stock against the lists circulated. This checking has been undertaken to discover gaps in the stock of New Zealand libraries, gaps which it is proposed to fill by purchase by this Service of titles held to be essential. The *Standard Catalog for Public Libraries*, sections 500 and 600; the Library Association, County Library Section, *Readers' Guides*; *Aslib*, 1937-41; Mudge, *Guide to Reference Books*; *Technical Book Review Digest*; A.L.A. *Book List* (technical subjects) have been checked on an eliminative basis. One thousand nine hundred and twenty-one volumes to a value of £1,103 sterling have been ordered from the titles which have not been located in any of the main libraries. Eight hundred and seventy-one titles have been rejected because they have been out of print, not now of value, or covered by more recent publications. Of the number ordered, only 31 had come to hand, and 8 more have been reported out of print.

#### NEW ZEALAND SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE

Details of the scheme were given in the last annual report, but it can be noted briefly that the aim of the scheme is to provide a circulating library service for children in towns with a population below 10,000. Books are bought and processed by this Service, and distribution is carried out as far as possible on a district basis. Entrance to the scheme is graded to some extent by the levying of an annual charge on schools, equivalent to 1s. per child served, but it is hoped that when the size of book stock permits and coverage of schools is complete the charge will be removed.

At 31st March, 1943, service was being given as shown in the table below:—

Education Board.	Schools served.	Children served.	Books issued.
Auckland .. .. .	143	11,853	12,497
Canterbury .. .. .	136	4,329	4,839
Hawke's Bay .. .. .	43	3,014	3,130
Nelson .. .. .	24	1,298	1,362
Southland .. .. .	15	973	1,004
Wanganui .. .. .	115	5,195	5,689
Wellington .. .. .	26	1,339	1,385
Total .. .. .	502	28,001	29,906

At that date 102 schools had applied for and were awaiting service as books became available. The book stock at 31st March, 1943, was fiction 31,817, non-fiction 11,040, a total of 42,857. Of orders placed overseas, 536 titles, representing 9,510 copies of books on order, had been reported out of print or unobtainable.

In March, 1942, the Travelling Library for Rural Schools for Canterbury and Westland was incorporated in the School Library Service and the best of its stock of books was taken over for use in the new scheme, the first despatch of books under this scheme being made in the Canterbury district in March, 1942. The first despatch of books to other districts was made in April, 1942. The Otago and Taranaki Education Boards, which maintain their own schemes, received grants of 938 and 1,000 books respectively to assist in the extension of service to Standards I, II, and III.

Although the scheme was begun at a most unfavourable time from the point of view of overseas supplies, book orders have come to hand in reasonably large quantities, as can be seen from the number of children served, shown in the table above. A minimum of 20 books has been sent to all schools irrespective of their roll number from Standards I-VI respectively, even where this was less than 20 pupils. This ensures that there is some reasonable selection available for children in very small schools.

A duplication system has been worked out for each centre so that when exchanges are made schools will not receive titles they have already had. It is hoped that four years will pass before the same titles are again received in any school. Books are sent in cartons or hampers to the nearest railway-station, the school taking delivery from there. Schools receiving a loan of 30 books or less get a complete exchange three times a year; schools receiving loans up to 100 books, two part exchanges and one complete exchange per year, while those receiving loans of over 100 books get one part exchange and one complete exchange per year.

Before the first exchanges were made duplication records were completed and the work of exchanging was decentralized on a district basis, exchange centres being set up in towns which had a free junior

service, sufficient room to house books, and a librarian and local authority willing to carry out the work of exchanges. The system has worked very well in Timaru, Wanganui, Auckland, Palmerston North, Kaikohe, Tokomaru Bay Native School, and Greymouth. The work at Morrinsville centre became too heavy for the librarian in charge, when housing of the books became a problem and the number of schools increased. At Rotorua centre the work was not carried out satisfactorily and it became necessary for the Country Library Service to undertake exchanges itself from its office in Auckland. With the setting-up of the Auckland office it was possible to relieve the Auckland Public Library, which had carried out the work of exchanges very efficiently, from further responsibility. The Tokomaru Bay Native School had carried out exchanges very satisfactorily, but with the transfer of the headmaster the exchange centre was transferred to the Native District High School at Te Araroa. The centre established at Rangiora had to be transferred to the Christchurch office of the Country Library Service because of the inability of the Rangiora Borough Council to obtain the services of a trained librarian. The work of exchanges for three South Island centres is now being carried out direct from the Christchurch office of this Service. Extra books to help in the process of making exchanges have been allotted to libraries which have helped in the work; in some cases it is found that the number is insufficient to allow the library to have any use of the children's books, and accordingly extra loans of books have been made. No cash payment for any of the valuable services rendered has been made. Numerous expressions of appreciation for this revolutionary innovation in New Zealand school library practice have been received, and it is hoped that supplies of books sufficient to allow the Service to be maintained and increased will continue to be obtained.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE

It is hoped that the full development of the Service, which has had to wait during the war years, will not be delayed when peace comes and reconstruction is undertaken. Plans to provide for the extension of library service to all country people, profiting both from the lessons learned here in the past five years, and from similar work abroad, will be prepared and submitted to you at the earliest favourable time.

I have, &c.,  
G. T. ALLEY, Director.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (551 copies), £11.

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*Price 3d.*