

1944  
NEW ZEALAND

# COUNTRY LIBRARY SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNTRY LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE YEAR  
ENDED 31st MARCH, 1944

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

The Hon. the MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Wellington, 18th July, 1944.

SIR,—

This Service has continued to grow in scope and, it is hoped, in usefulness during the year. In addition to many hundreds of isolated individuals, 510 towns and small centres have participated in the Service. The School Library Service has shown a solid increase, and up to 31st March, 650 schools, with 38,782 children, were served, the books on issue to the schools being 40,698 (the respective figures for the previous year were 502 schools, 28,001 children, and 29,906 books).

The Service has continued to act as the main source of supply to the Army Education and Welfare Service library under terms of War Cabinet's decision, by which the machinery of the Country Library Service, suitably extended to meet wartime needs, is to be the chief means of carrying out library service for the Armed Forces.

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 population basis 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) receive 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 requested 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

Shortage of supplies of books from overseas, and shortage of staff, are again reflected in the very small growth in the number of local authorities which have taken the step of co-operating with this Service. The total number of county, borough, and town district libraries co-operating with this Service at 31st March, 1944, was 45. These libraries served a local population of 114,469, as well as a considerable population in their vicinity, and 15,100 books were on loan to them.

## SMALL INDEPENDENT SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES: "B" SERVICE

Three hundred and ninety-one of these libraries were linked with the Service during the year, compared with the previous year's figure of 368; 203 of the libraries are in the North Island, 188 in the South Island; 28,110 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 keep the number of exchanges effected by means of the book-vans to two per year. In certain cases the libraries were encouraged to exchange 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.