

WORK WITH CHILDREN

With book orders coming to hand more regularly, the book stock in this section shows a decided increase over the previous year; the total now stands at 92,994, compared with 68,197 a year ago (non-fiction, 29,038; fiction, 63,956).

Many titles reported out of print at the commencement of the Service have now been reprinted and supplied. Up to date no school has received a book which it had previously, and, as originally planned, four years will have elapsed before titles are sent again to the same school.

At present there are 21 geographical districts receiving exchanges from 7 distributing centres. The Auckland office of the Country Library Service makes exchanges to 8 of these geographical centres, the Christchurch office to 3, the Palmerston North office to 4, and Headquarters in Wellington to 3. The Wanganui, Timaru, and Greymouth Public Libraries continue to act as exchange centres in their respective districts. In the case of the Greymouth Public Library a member of the Country Library Service staff, seconded to the Greymouth Public Library, carries out the exchange work. Up to the end of 1944 the Taranaki Education Board maintained its own library scheme for schools in that area. With the beginning of the school year in February, 1945, owing to the high cost of books and the difficulty in obtaining new stock, the Board discontinued its service and arrangements were made for this Service to supply books to the children in Taranaki. Applications are now being received from the schools, and a pool stock is being assembled. It is hoped to begin distribution later this year. The Otago Education Board has not received any further supplies of books (an initial grant of 1,000 books was made during 1942-43), but maintains its own scheme; but some help is being given by this Service to the Dunedin Public Library, which carries out distribution for the Board, by the seconding of an assistant in the Junior Department of the Library.

FREE SERVICE

During 1944, 263 schools qualified for free service, and with the number which qualified last year (221), this means that 484 schools "have paid the required levy for two complete and consecutive years and have carried out satisfactorily all other conditions of the School Library Service which apply to it."

It is anticipated that by the end of 1945 well over 1,000 schools will be receiving books from this Service.

At the end of March, 1945, service was being given as shown below:—

Education Boards.	Schools served.	Children served.	Books on Issue.
Auckland	259	20,120	20,356
Canterbury	163	6,695	7,413
Hawke's Bay	65	4,444	4,632
Nelson	37	2,043	2,142
Southland	33	1,592	1,640
Wanganui	138	6,020	6,645
Wellington	69	4,041	4,303
	766	44,955	47,131

The apparently large difference between the total book stock and the number of books in the schools is accounted for by—

- (1) The fairly substantial pools which have to be maintained at distributing centres.
- (2) There are actually a large number of books in the course of transit and at schools; new quotas are always delivered before any books are returned.
- (3) Owing to labour shortage, binding has accumulated, which would not be the case in normal times.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE

In the report of this Service to the Minister of Education for the year ended 31st March, 1944, it was stated, "At the earliest favourable time it is proposed to develop the Service on a regional basis. Instead of separate services for city and country it is proposed, with the co-operation of the city library authorities, to combine the services of town and country in one regional service. A strong National Library Service is essential to co-ordinate the work of such regions."

During 1944 proposals for regional development of the Service and for a National Library Service were considered by committees of the New Zealand Library Association and, after amendment, were approved by the conference of the Association at Wanganui in February, 1945. In addition, following representations from the Library Association, a recommendation to the Government concerning the establishment of a Library School in Wellington was approved. Below are given the texts of the proposals concerning regional development and National Library Service, together with the statement of the Minister of Education concerning the Library School. The diagram showing the plan of organization of the National Library Service is included in order that the functions of the main components of the proposed service may be clearly seen.

1. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PROPOSALS FOR DECENTRALIZATION ON A DISTRICT AND POSSIBLY ON A REGIONAL BASIS OF THE COUNTRY LIBRARY SERVICE

City and Country Library Service

The war has held up the development of the Country Library Service which was originally planned, but this postponement may turn out to be not without advantage. The original plan whereby the Country Library Service would remain entirely separate from the City Library Service may be replaced, if an acceptable plan can be worked out, by voluntary co-ordination of the two Services, city and country, and the operation of library service on a regional basis. Under such a scheme New Zealand could be divided into a number of regions, each of an economical size for library administration. Such regions would also need to be geographically workable.