

duplication and jealousies, and the full utilization of the library resources of the district. Furthermore, the district bureau would be untrammelled in its efforts to give equal service over the whole area. It is to be hoped that every effort will be made to bring all existing libraries into the district schemes, so as to facilitate the establishment of a uniform service over the area.

Miss Cooke strongly recommends that the cost of a district library service should be met by a general rate over the whole district to be served, so that the richer areas would assist the poorer to receive a standard service. Differential rating, as applied in England, is scarcely likely to be favoured in New Zealand. To allow some ridings of a county to vote a library rate and others to refrain would be making two bites at a cherry, and might seriously reduce the revenue of the district. It would be unwise to proceed with the organization of a district library until the local authorities interested are unanimous in accepting the responsibility of striking the necessary rate.

Rate-supported libraries in towns within the geographical limits of a library district would probably elect to come under the rating of the library district and participate fully in the district system, keeping their own stock of books and adding thereto from local funds, gifts, &c., and using the district stock for current purposes. By participating in a district system, small libraries which are to-day stagnant would become active and co-operative. Even if they wish to remain completely independent they should be permitted to borrow collections of books from the district stock at a reasonable rental. In California that rental is fixed on a basis remunerative to the lending district. If the charge is too low the outstanding libraries might be encouraged at the expense of the district to remain outside.

Whatever action the managers of existing libraries feel disposed to take about entering a district system, it is to be hoped that if they possess an unusual stock—as, for example, that of the Warkworth Library—they will agree to its incorporation in the Union Catalogue so as to make its treasures known and available to the studious reader. Whether the books are available for loan or merely for reference is immaterial.

I have, &c.,
G. H. SCHOLEFIELD.

POSTSCRIPT TO RURAL LIBRARIES REPORT.

30th April, 1936.

IN making my report on a rural-library service for New Zealand I believed that the Government, not having previously participated in library service beyond a yearly grant of £3,000 for small libraries, would not be prepared to undertake any considerable financial responsibility; and that the major share of the money and a good deal of the initiative would still have to be found by local residents. I proceeded on the assumption that the strong impulse for local control which is characteristic of New-Zealanders would have to be capitalized again in this matter, and that the Government would contribute mainly in the form of assistance and, if necessary, supervision.

During my absence from New Zealand a committee of librarians has put forward a plan which proposes quite a different sharing of the responsibility and control. This is based on the assumption that in the present state of opinion on local government the public would be disinclined to accept further taxing-powers, and that the only means of making any advance would be by the Government taking the initiative and in the first instance providing the money, part of which would be recouped by contributions from the local authorities as the scheme was accepted.

Approaching the question from this new angle, one adverts naturally to the practice in Scandinavia, where the Governments actually inaugurate library services and provide a large part of the cost. New Zealand resembles Scandinavia very much in the character of her people and their disposition for reading and education; and there is no reason to suppose that we could not operate equally well a country-library service in which the Government is the senior partner.

Regarding it as a matter of policy, I felt precluded from suggesting that the Government should take such a course. If it does decide to accept the financial burden, then I have no hesitation in agreeing that the administrative machinery should follow the example of Scandinavia rather than that of Great Britain, where the Government takes no part at all beyond subsidizing the National Central Library. Libraries are a social service or public utility which a Government can legitimately provide for districts which at present have none. If it decides to do so, then it seems appropriate that the control and supervision of such a service should be centred in what is in effect the State library—namely, the General Assembly Library. A bureau of libraries established in connection with the General Assembly Library, to control and supervise the rural service, would eliminate the need for associating the rural system with the existing libraries in the different districts, which are mainly municipal.

G. H. SCHOLEFIELD.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (630 copies), £11.

By Authority: G. H. LONEY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1936.

Price 6d.]