

The New Zealand Book Resources Committee was set up by the Council of the New Zealand Library Association last July, following some correspondence with the Minister of Education, and consists of G. T. Alley (Convener), J. Barr, A. G. W. Dunningham, C. W. Collins, J. Harris, J. Norrie, G. H. Scholefield, and C. R. H. Taylor. The purpose of the Committee is to strengthen, co-ordinate, and exploit the book resources of the Dominion.

*Union Catalogue.*—A Union Catalogue of library holdings is an obvious essential to any serious attempt either to make the best use of what we have or to improve our resources. Carrying on the work begun by the Union Catalogue Committee, the Committee has decided that the best technique for assembling the initial records necessary will be to make a micro-film copy of the main entries in library catalogues. The libraries in the four main cities will be dealt with first, then the secondary cities will be tackled, and finally the smaller towns will be combed for holdings of any importance. This final stage is likely to be some years, perhaps a good many years, ahead.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York has most generously agreed to provide the special camera and other photographic equipment necessary for the micro-filming, also the typewriters and cards which will be required when editing and transfer of the filmed entries to cards begins. This equipment had been ordered and some of it delivered in America when stringent priority regulations were imposed which prevented the makers of the camera from fulfilling the order, while increasing difficulty in getting shipping space made remote the likelihood of transporting the typewriters and cards to New Zealand. Reluctantly the Secretary of the Carnegie Corporation decided that the project must be abandoned for the duration of the war, and such equipment as had been assembled was disposed of. We are assured, however, that when delivery of the camera and transportation of the equipment becomes possible, the financial help of the Carnegie Corporation will be made available again. It is necessary, of course, that the staffing of the project should be provided within New Zealand. The Minister of Education has shown keen interest in the Union Catalogue idea and has agreed that the Country Library Service should make available the staff necessary for the photographic crew and the compilation and maintenance of the catalogue itself.

The great advantage of the micro-film method is that it will enable a film record of the holdings of the main libraries to be assembled very quickly in Wellington. The rolls of film representing the catalogues of the main libraries will themselves be a useful temporary means of locating material, but, of course, they do not comprise a Union Catalogue. The entries need editing, and they need to be transferred to cards so that they can be arranged in a single sequence.

*Library of Congress Catalogue.*—The Committee has been considering the possibility of obtaining for New Zealand a depository set of Library of Congress cards and using this depository set as the basis of the Union Catalogue—that is, marking library holdings on the appropriate Library of Congress card and typing cards only for those books not represented in the Library of Congress catalogue. It is generally recognized that if a set of Library of Congress cards can be obtained New Zealand will acquire an invaluable bibliographical tool, the work of editing the Union Catalogue will be greatly facilitated, and much laborious typing will be saved. The cost of a Library of Congress depository set is very considerable, mainly because of the labour involved in sorting and maintaining the set in order. While inquiries were still in progress as to the cost of withdrawing and transporting a set of cards, there came the news that, provided enough subscriptions are forthcoming, the Author Catalogue of the Library of Congress is to be reproduced in book form by the photo offset process. If this materializes, we shall be able to acquire this magnificent tool at a relatively trivial cost, for the price of the set in book form will be less than half the cost of withdrawing a set of cards, and the really big initial items of labour and storage practically disappear. It would be necessary, of course, to rely upon cards for additions after the photo offset reprinting was carried out.

*Book "Coverage."*—Union catalogues, inter-loan, and centralized cataloguing are widely accepted, though by no means universally practised, features of modern librarianship. By starting on them a little later than the more progressive spirits abroad, we have the benefit of their experience. But we ourselves are pioneers in the book-coverage part of the Committee's work. Here is something which is important not only because—if it materializes—our book resources will be immensely strengthened, but also because nothing quite like it has happened in library history before. The following motion, which was passed at its meeting on 22nd November, outlines what the Committee proposes should be done:—

"The New Zealand Book Resources Committee recommends—

"(1) That funds be made available to ensure that at least one copy of every book of value published in the English language from 1940 onwards should reach New Zealand, and, further, to obtain all publications prior to 1940 which still have value. It is realized that a period of years will be necessary to cover the whole field of knowledge as regards both current and back publications, and it recommends that pure science and applied science and industry should be the subjects covered first, and this should be done during the financial year 1942-43:

"(2) That the Country Library Service should be the medium for obtaining needed books of which there is no copy already in New Zealand:

"(3) That the distribution of the books should be so far as possible decentralized and the books should be made available as follows:—

"(a) Loans in bulk and for lengthy periods to the libraries of teaching institutions and to public libraries which make these books and the whole informational section of their own stocks available for issue to residents free;

"(b) Loans for short periods—e.g., one month—of books needed by any library eligible for membership of the New Zealand Library Association to satisfy a specific request:

"(4) That, having regard to the value of the holdings of the libraries of Government Departments and their important part in the specialized book resources of the Dominion, the Committee recommends that the heads of Government Departments should be requested—

"(a) To report to the Central Bureau all accessions, to contribute information on their serial publications to the Union List of Serials, and to make arrangements for a record of their stock to be incorporated in the Union Catalogue;

"(b) To make available on inter-loan so far as practicable books in the stock of the departmental libraries;

"(c) To make available the services of their officers for consultation regarding the bibliography of their respective subjects."

Librarians will not need to ponder long on this to realize how far-reaching are its implications. It would be premature at this stage to attempt to work out in detail how many and what sort of books any particular library could expect to get from the bulk loans, but the stipulation regarding "available