

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