

SMALL INDEPENDENT SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES: "B" SERVICE

During the year 504 of these libraries were linked to this Service, compared with the previous year's figure of 423. Of these libraries, 271 are in the North Island, 233 in the South Island. Altogether, 37,750 books were on loan to these "B" libraries, an average of approximately 75 books. Figures showing the growth of this section of the Country Library work are now given:—

Date of Annual Report (H.—32A).	Number of "B" Libraries participating.
31st March, 1939	179
31st March, 1940	265
31st March, 1941	302
31st March, 1942	348
31st March, 1943	368
31st March, 1944	391
31st March, 1945	423
31st March, 1946	504

Nearly all these smaller libraries are in counties. A considerable task lies ahead in organizing a service to them which will compare favourably with that given in the best free borough libraries. There are, however, signs of increasing interest among County Councils in library development.

"C" OR HAMPER SERVICE

In places where no library exists and where it is not possible for one to be formed and visited by book-van, the service to properly established groups by means of travelling hampers has been continued. During the year 69 groups received this service. An interesting development has been carried out from the Christchurch Office of the Service, by which 30 groups receive regular exchanges direct from that office instead of exchanging with each other on a rota system.

POSTAL OR "D" SERVICE

This service to people living in really isolated places, out of reach of an established library, has increased greatly. There are now 674 active members, as compared with 496 at the same period last year. These numbers include field cadets attached to Lincoln Agricultural College, but working in country districts, who are supplied with general reading on farming and agriculture.

The service to lighthouse keepers and assistant keepers and their families has increased. Nineteen lighthouses, with a total of 81 borrowers, are supplied, as compared with 15 lighthouses and 66 borrowers last year. The books are sent in special canvas containers, which are supplied by the Marine Department.

REQUEST SERVICE

All libraries, groups, lighthouses, and individuals who receive library service from Country Library Service can ask for special short-term loans of books of an informational type from the headquarters stock of this Service. During the year 14,719 requests were received, of which 14,402 were filled, the majority from our own stock; 317 (2.15 per cent.) were not filled either because the requested book was unobtainable or because the request was not within the scope of the Service—i.e., light fiction or non-fiction of an ephemeral kind.

Borrowings from other libraries throughout New Zealand were of great help in meeting requests; 1,925 volumes were borrowed for libraries participating in this Service, of which 510 volumes were lent by the General Assembly Library. To this and other libraries grateful acknowledgment is made for this help, without which the proportion of unfilled requests would have been higher.