

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES: "A" SERVICE

At 31st March, 1947, there were 67 borough and town district libraries and 1 County Council library co-operating with this Service, a total of 68, as against 63 on 31st March, 1946. The following are the libraries in centres of under 15,000 population which give free service: Bulls, Cambridge, Dannevirke, Dargaville, Eketahuna, Eltham, Featherston, Feilding, Hawera, Helensville, Huntly, Inglewood, Kaikohe, Kaitiaki, Kaponga, Kawakawa, Levin, Martinborough, Matamata, Morrinsville, Ohakune, Otaki, Otorohanga, Paeroa, Pahiatua, Papatoetoe, Patea, Putaruru, Rautahi, Rotorua, Taihape, Taradale, Tauranga, Te Aroha, Te Awamutu, Te Karaka, Te Kuiti, Te Puke, Thames, Waihi, Waipawa, Waipukurau, Waiuku, and Woodville in the North Island; and Alexandra, Ashburton, Balclutha, Blenheim, Bluff, Cromwell, Greymouth, Hokitika, Kaiapoi, Lawrence, Lyttelton, Maitua, Motueka, Otautau, Palmerston, Picton, Port Chalmers, Queenstown, Rangiora, Richmond, Roxburgh, Runanga, Waimate, and the Mackenzie County in the South Island. Two other libraries, Whangarei and Waitara, had decided to make the change to free service and were waiting to do so at 31st March, 1947. The libraries listed above serve a local population of 150,035, as well as a considerable population in their vicinity, and 24,522 books are on regular loan to them, in addition to many specially requested books and subject loan collections.

One trained assistant was seconded to the Lower Hutt Municipal Library prior to the change to free service there on 1st April, 1947.

It may be useful to set out the free services that are available to libraries serving populations of under 15,000 by co-operation with this Service:—

- (1) Loans of books from the book-van, the number of which is in proportion to the population served. These are changed two or three times a year.
- (2) The request service, which sends through the post special books that are asked for by readers.
- (3) Collections of 20 to 80 books on almost any subject. These books stay at the libraries for two months, and may be renewed for a longer period if desired. In addition to supplementing the library's own stock for general purposes, these collections are found to be particularly useful in giving service to local societies.
- (4) Periodicals may be obtained on a rota system. Each library receives a certain number each month, and posts them on after a month has elapsed.

This help is given subject to the following conditions:—

- (1) The Borough Council or Town Board agrees to assume responsibility for the library. This need not prevent the co-option to the Library Committee of people who are not Councillors or members of the Town Board.
- (2) The local authority agrees to abolish subscriptions for the use of the library by residents of the local area, and to issue free non-fiction and fiction of a good literary standard or some subject value, as well as the books lent by this Service. The supply of light fiction—pay collection material—should not be a charge on the local authority, but the cost should be recoverable.
- (3) The local authority agrees to maintain the library at a reasonable standard of efficiency. This implies an annual allocation to the library of money which will cover the costs of administration and the purchase of new books for the free collection.