

The Consultative Committee on Adult Education in its report ("Further Education for Adults," Wellington, Council of Adult Education, 1947, p. 44) made this statement: "A library service includes more than the distribution of books. Already libraries act as clearing houses for information on all manner of topics. The librarian is not just a card stamper, he is a person who knows and studies the community. He must be able to estimate the needs of the people, to provide material in advance of need, and to find the means within the service of meeting all reasonable demands."

Public librarianship demands a high level of educational attainment and administrative ability. It is a fact, however, that few public libraries in the smaller towns have attracted qualified people. Many local authorities are, of course, too small, and their resources are too restricted to be able to make the necessary allocation for the salary of a qualified person. The irregularity in size and the differences lying between the resources of different local authorities were condemned in the report of the Local Government Commission in 1946. Recommendations made in this report, if put into effect, would make the provision of library service an easier matter in many places.

In this connection, the experiment made by this Service in conjunction with the Dargaville Borough Council is worth noting. Special approval was given for the secondment of a Library School graduate to the Dargaville Public Library from this staff, on condition that the Council spent the money which would normally be allocated to the librarian's salary on books for the free collection.

Improvements have also been noted in those libraries which sent their librarians to one of the short courses held by the Library School.

Of the 641,374 people living under County Council authority, less than 6,500 have free access to library service at present. Local authorities have so far appeared reluctant to group together for library service, and yet amalgamation of boroughs and counties with assistance from this Service is the only way in which a successful service can be achieved. In the past, examples of co-operation among local authorities have usually shown that co-operation is at its best when the need for it is regarded as both temporary and urgent. However, the report of the Local Government Commission maintains that the success achieved in fields such as the E.P.S. and National Patriotic Fund Board activities indicate the ability of the local authorities to undertake further functions. The report of the Commission specifically states that counties, as well as boroughs, should "be encouraged to provide for their citizens more of the facilities for modern life."

SMALL INDEPENDENT SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES: "B" SERVICE

During the year, 649 of these libraries were linked to this Service, compared with the previous year's figures of 555. Of these libraries, 345 are in the North Island and 304 in the South Island. Altogether, 51,300 books were on loan to these "B" libraries, an average of approximately 79 books. Figures showing the growth of this section of the Country Library Service 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
31st March, 1947	555
31st March, 1948	649