

A Librarian in Charge was appointed who, with the assistance of staff that could be made available, began the sorting and cataloguing of the 30,000 books which had been returned to this Service by the Army Education Welfare Service. The staff has been augmented, and it has been planned to advance the work sufficiently to permit the office to open on 1st June, 1949. Book-stock for North Island libraries will be distributed from the Palmerston North office, which will also give the request service, provide loan collections, and maintain the hamper service.

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES: "A" SERVICE

During the year the local authorities of the following towns adopted the principle of free library service and qualified for assistance under the "A" scheme: Glen Eden, Shannon, Taumarunui, and Petone in the North Island; Temuka and Westport in the South Island. In addition to these, the Committee of the Titirangi Public Library obtained recognition and a financial allocation from the Waitemata County Council in order to give free service to residents of the district, and changed to a free library service.

At 31st March, 1949, there were 85 borough and town district libraries and 2 County Council libraries participating in this Service, and 3 more had decided to make the change and were waiting to do so. The existing 87 free libraries affiliated with this Service serve a local population of 230,942 as well as a considerable number in their vicinity. In addition to the many specially requested books and periodicals, 31,647 books are on regular loan to them.

Secondment of one qualified assistant, made available to the Lower Hutt Municipal Library to assist in the initial planning of its free service, was continued to 1st November, 1948.

The Invercargill Public Library, which changed to free library service on 1st October, 1948, has had the services of one seconded assistant from 24th August, 1948.

Recognizing that the camps of the Works Department, State Forest Service, and State hydro-electric development schemes are the responsibility of the Government, and that the County Councils of their areas cannot be expected to make provision for them, Ministerial approval was given on 15th June, 1948, for them to receive free assistance from this Service from 1st April, 1949. Loans of books, which are changed three times a year from the book-van, are to be based on the following scale:—

(Minimum loan, 30 books)

Up to 300 employees	..	..	.. 1 book per employee.
350 to 400 employees	..	..	.. 375 books.
400 to 500 employees	..	..	.. 400 books.
500 to 600 employees	..	..	.. 450 books.
600 to 750 employees	..	..	.. 500 books.
750 employees and upwards	..	..	.. 550 books.

In return for this assistance, the responsibility for free service to employees of the camp and other residents, and for the proper management of the camp or station library, is to be accepted by the Department concerned.

The policy of having a member of this staff visit the public libraries affiliated with this Service in order to give assistance and advice has continued. As an experiment, longer visits of from three to five weeks' length were made to three public libraries where new librarians had been appointed. At these places it was possible to reorganize the local library's book collection; to substitute labour-saving and efficient routines for more cumbersome ones in operation; to demonstrate a service to societies and groups and a readers' advisory service, and to discuss the future development of the library service with the librarian and local authority concerned.