

A law passed last year by the Government of Norway provides for subsidies up to 90 per cent. of the expenditure made by the municipalities.

This Norwegian Act also makes it compulsory for municipalities to provide a free library service and establishes a fund for royalties for Norwegian authors to be maintained on account of the books borrowed through the library systems of the country.

SMALL INDEPENDENT SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES: "B" SERVICE

During the year, 679 of these libraries were linked to this Service, compared with the previous year's figures of 649. Of these libraries, 360 are in the North Island and 319 in the South Island. Altogether, 54,550 books were on loan to these "B" libraries, an average of approximately 80 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
31st March, 1949	..	..	..	..	679

"C" OR HAMPER SERVICE

In places where no library exists and when it is not possible for one to be formed and visited by the book-van, the service to properly established groups by means of travelling hampers has been continued.

During the year, 41 groups received service and 4 were converted to "B" service and are now receiving visits from the book-van.

REQUEST SERVICE

All libraries, groups, and individuals receiving library service from the Country Library Service, and all Government Departments, may ask for special short-term loans of books of an informational type from the headquarters stock of this Service, and, in addition, the headquarters stock is used extensively to satisfy inter-library loan requests (see also the report of the Librarian, National Library Centre).

During the year, 28,022 books were issued on request, the majority from our own stock. Figures show that the demand on this service is still increasing :—

BOOKS REQUESTED AND SUPPLIED, YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1949

To Country Library Service libraries	..	..	..	20,148
To Government Department libraries	..	..	..	3,224
To interloan libraries	..	..	..	4,650
Total issues	..	..	..	28,022