

As the previous year's total was 23,234, this represents an increase of 20·6 per cent., a rate of growth which seems likely to continue for several years yet. Of the year's requests, 19,525, of which 1,547 were sent on from the Christchurch office, were fulfilled from or through the Wellington headquarters, where insufficient staff to handle the extra work expeditiously, and lack of accommodation for both books and staff, caused a reduction in the standard of service. At times it was a month before new requests could be dealt with, which is particularly serious when books or information that are asked for are wanted as soon as possible after the request has been made. The opening of the office at Palmerston North will, it is hoped, relieve some of the burden imposed by request traffic on headquarters, but indications are that increased traffic, particularly in the request and information service to Government Departments, combined with the difficulty of finding room for new books, will quickly render the existing accommodation quite inadequate.

Books borrowed from other libraries throughout New Zealand were of great help in meeting requests; 3,436 were borrowed for libraries participating in this service. Without the willing co-operation of these libraries, whereby, for instance, a reader in Kaitia may borrow a book from Invercargill, the number of satisfied requests would have been lower; and to them grateful acknowledgment is made.

### POSTAL OR "D" SERVICE

The service to people in really isolated places, whereby books are chosen by the staff of this Service and posted to members, is increasingly popular with those entitled to it. Members include field cadets attached to Lincoln College but working in country districts, and lighthouse-keepers and assistant keepers and their families, and they may ask for books which, if not in this Service's stock, will be borrowed from other libraries.

### POSTAL SERVICE MEMBERS

|                 |    |    |    | Year Ended 31st March, |        |
|-----------------|----|----|----|------------------------|--------|
|                 |    |    |    | 1948.                  | 1949.  |
| Active members— |    |    |    |                        |        |
| North Island    | .. | .. | .. | 607                    | 637    |
| South Island    | .. | .. | .. | 293                    | 288    |
| In lighthouses  | .. | .. | .. | 108                    | 110    |
| Total           | .. | .. | .. | 1,008                  | 1,035  |
| Books issued—   |    |    |    |                        |        |
| North Island    | .. | .. | .. | 13,170                 | 13,888 |
| South Island    | .. | .. | .. | 8,899                  | 9,936  |
| To lighthouses  | .. | .. | .. | 1,414                  | 1,598  |
| Total           | .. | .. | .. | 23,483                 | 25,422 |

### LOAN COLLECTIONS

The issue of special collections of books on specific subjects had to be curtailed at times during the year owing to shortage of staff, but despite this the number of collections issued was slightly greater than in the previous year, and the number of books issued increased by 52·8 per cent. Popular subjects were, as before, gardening, occupations and hobbies, sports, music, &c., but some libraries asked for collections on such less