

An independent hospital book collection has been developed, with acquisitions totalling 1,463 (of which 742 were non-fiction, 721 fiction). This collection has been used to supply the exchange collections, made up of fiction and non-fiction in equal proportions.

There are 28 "A" libraries with public hospitals situated in their locality. The reason for the lack of development of hospital service in the majority of these centres is poverty of resources, especially shortage of staff, and also of book stock. While these libraries are cramped in undertaking essential work, expansion in new directions such as hospitals is not possible.

Acquisitions have been made since September for a book collection for tuberculosis patients, to enable exchange collections to be sent to the 800 tuberculosis patients in sanatoria, and eventually also to tuberculosis patients in general hospitals. Four hundred and twenty-one books (231 non-fiction, 190 fiction) were added to the tuberculosis collection during the period.

Service was initiated at 3 further institutions of the Mental Hygiene Division of the Health Department. The total number of mental hospitals receiving exchange collections was 6, and 2,000 books were continuously on loan to these institutions.

With the inclusion of 6 more prisons, service was given to a total of 13 prisons, which received 2,525 books, exchanged every four months.

BOOK STOCK

During the year additions to stock were 52,390 volumes—21,594 fiction and 30,796 non-fiction. Withdrawals were 4,397—3,322 fiction and 1,075 non-fiction—making net additions 47,993. The adult stock of the Service now stands at 291,983, made up of 104,038 fiction and 187,945 non-fiction. In addition, 14,968 books were purchased by this Service for other Government Departments. Such books are on permanent loan to the Departments concerned, but their cost is charged to this Service according to a Treasury decision. At 31st March, 1949, stock of the children's section was 289,644, making a grand total of all stock of 581,627 volumes. Difficulty in obtaining books from overseas is decreasing.

The very great assistance given by overseas agencies of the New Zealand Government in securing publications for the Service is again acknowledged.