

1949
NEW ZEALAND

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT
INFORMATION SECTION

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1949

Presented to Both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave

FUNCTIONS

1. The functions of the Information Section are—

- (a) The preparation of publicity material requested by Government Departments, including advertisements, films, film strips, photographs, exhibition material, and the provision of a common editorial service for books, pamphlets, and other publications, except where Departments can more conveniently and economically produce the material internally.
 - (b) To provide information and publicity services and materials to New Zealand Government overseas posts and the general dissemination overseas of information about New Zealand.
 - (c) To undertake information and publicity services as required on matters which are of inter-departmental scope or not assigned to particular Departments.
2. In particular these functions include—
- (i) The maintenance of certain news services as described in paragraph 7.
 - (ii) The production, commissioning, and supply of official films.
 - (iii) The distribution (theatrical and non-theatrical) of such material at home and abroad.
 - (iv) Supplying or producing general publicity photographs for use in New Zealand and overseas and maintaining a central library of such photographs.
 - (v) The provision of laboratory services to execute photographic and film developing and printing required by Government Departments.
 - (vi) The preparation of designs for and the producing of Government exhibitions and displays, and the production of display material and posters for Departments as requested.
 - (vii) Maintaining a central reference service which will prepare, obtain, and supply reference material for information and publicity services in New Zealand and overseas when requested.
 - (viii) Assistance to visiting overseas press correspondents, cinema-photographers, and lecturers by the provision of material, and otherwise facilitating their knowledge of New Zealand affairs.

ORGANIZATION

3. For the performance of its duties the Information Section of the Prime Minister's Department is organized into the following parts : Reference Section, Journalist Section, National Film Unit, National Publicity Studios, Administration.

4. The concentration of the functions outlined in paragraphs 1 and 2 and the amalgamation of the various departmental units in the Information Section is the outcome of a policy of reducing the number of publicity units among Government Departments and of making the most economical use of the available resources. The process by which the combined organization has become established is described in the following paragraphs (5 to 15).

5. Originally the Information Section comprised the Reference Officer and his assistants. It was established at the beginning of 1935 for the purpose of serving the Prime Minister with information of economic, statistical, or political significance concerning New Zealand and other countries. It has continued to exercise this function, but it is also available to meet requests from other Ministers, from Departments, and individuals. The Section also has the duty of dealing with the numerous inquiries from persons and organizations overseas who seek information of all kinds about New Zealand.

6. After the end of the war and the retirement of the Director of Publicity the continuing functions of his office became the responsibility of the Information Section.

7. The Director of Publicity had been responsible for the maintenance of certain news services. The principal of these was the despatch of news and pictures to the 2 *NZEF Times*.

The successor to this journal was the weekly *Jayforce Times*, which was produced at first by the Information Section and latterly by the Army Department. *BCON*, the daily Services newspaper, was provided with a comprehensive service of New Zealand news and pictures by the Information Section, but since the departure of the New Zealand personnel from Japan only a very much reduced service has been maintained.

Of other news services maintained by the Director of Publicity, several survive. These include the daily transmissions of New Zealand news to Pacific islands and ships at sea, the preparation for the National Broadcasting Service of the 9 p.m. daily broadcast of New Zealand news, and the weekly news in Maori, the latter being prepared in conjunction with the Maori Affairs Department.

In addition to the above news services, the Information Section prepares on behalf of the External Affairs Department, regular despatches of New Zealand news for Government posts overseas. The overseas posts disseminate these news items widely through the various channels that are open to them. In the United Kingdom, effective use is made of the material through the provincial press.

8. During the war the work of the National Film Unit came under the direction of the Director of Publicity, and the "New Zealand Weekly Review" was instituted as a medium of wartime publicity for the purpose of informing the people of New Zealand about the progress of the war effort. The National Film Unit remained administratively linked to the Tourist and Publicity Department until, with the retirement of the Director of Publicity, the whole organization became part of the Information Section.

9. There was, in fact, at Miramar a single unit for the production of films, still photographs, art display work. The Director of Publicity exercised control over all these activities. When the Miramar Studios came under the control of the Information Section the Miramar organization was divided into two separate parts—the National Film Unit and the National Publicity Studios.

10. The organization for national publicity was inaugurated in 1924 with the establishment of a Publicity Office as part of the Internal Affairs Department. The organization dealt with most phases of information, and it placed emphasis on films, photographs, and booklets. *New Zealand News and Views* was a periodical published by the Publicity Office. In 1926 its work was co-ordinated with that of other Departments having publicity interests by the establishment of a Publicity Board, comprising representatives of the Department of Industries and Commerce, Tourist, Railways, and

Internal Affairs. In 1931 the Publicity Office was merged with the combined Industries and Commerce and Tourist Department. The Miramar organization became part of the establishment with the purchase of the assets of Filmcraft Ltd. in 1936.

11. During the war an organization set up to serve the publicity needs of several Departments was the Economic Information Service, which began its work in 1943 as an ancillary of the Economic Stabilization Commission. It was responsible also for publicity relating to the Price Tribunal, rationing, internal marketing, rent control, and other related economic matters. It provided services also for the Treasury, the Reserve Bank, Electricity Controller, Mining Controller, Ministry of Supply; other Departments also sought its assistance. The principle which underlay its establishment was to avoid setting up a number of publicity units more or less self-sufficient in the various Departments.

12. The most noteworthy difference between the Economic Information Service and the Information Section was that the Economic Information Service was largely concerned with newspaper display advertising, whereas the Information Section had at its disposal films, still photographs, and art services. In addition its field has been extended to overseas as well as to internal publicity. In 1948 it was therefore considered that more efficient use could be made of the Government's publicity resources by bringing the two organizations under a single control. The dispersion of most of the staff of the Economic Information Service during the year has now left the Information Section with the function of providing publicity production services to all Departments requiring them. The administrative aspects of display advertising contracts remain the responsibility of an Economic Information Service officer who is attached to Treasury.

13. In 1945 consideration was given to the existence of a number of Government photographic laboratories, and it was decided that when it could be arranged the National Publicity Studios should occupy central premises, enabling it to serve conveniently the several Departments requiring photographic and laboratory services. The modification of premises on Lambton Quay for the purpose is almost complete, and accordingly the National Publicity Studios have recently taken over the considerable photographic establishment of the Works Department Aerodromes Branch.

14. Since 1942 there has existed a Works Department Film Unit comprising 16mm. camera and sound-recording personnel and equipment. Its purpose was to record on film technical aspects of engineering operations for study and instruction by the Department's staff. It also made films for the purposes of the Soil Conservation Council. During the year this Film Unit was taken over and the National Film Unit has undertaken the responsibility of producing such films as are needed by the Works Department and the Soil Conservation Council.

OVERSEAS PUBLICITY

15. The relationship between the Prime Minister's Department and the Department of External Affairs has made it convenient for the Information Section to handle the preparation and distribution of information and publicity material for overseas.

16. It is necessary to ensure that the libraries at New Zealand Government overseas posts are kept up to date with books, magazines, newspapers, clippings, and statistics so that questions may be accurately answered on the spot. Inquiries calling for substantial answers are sometimes referred to Wellington, and the Information Section may gather the facts and prepare the replies. Requests from magazines for articles or pictures about various aspects of New Zealand are usually referred to the Information Section for attention. Films, film strips, photographs, displays, maps, posters, background articles, and pamphlets are sent overseas in considerable quantity for the use of the overseas posts or for dissemination by them. These supplies are fully used in meeting the considerable demand for general information about New Zealand.

17. Active promotion of general publicity overseas involving expenditure is kept on a modest scale, but, within the limits set, such efforts are based on the assumption

that New Zealand stands to gain if information about the way of life of her people and the achievements of her democracy are known and appreciated overseas, particularly in the United Kingdom and North America.

18. Particular subjects requiring promotion, such as the attraction of tourists or immigrants and the marketing of New Zealand produce, are the responsibility of the Departments or organizations concerned, although in these matters the Information Section has been asked to provide certain assistance. Such objectives are, in any case, assisted by the general background publicity about New Zealand with which the Information Section concerns itself.

19. An effective method of promoting the spread of information about New Zealand is to provide facilities to visiting journalists and to assist them to gather information they are seeking. Similar assistance is given to film-producers and lecturers who wish to make New Zealand their subject.

20. Publicity organization within New Zealand on matters of national importance has been entrusted to the Information Section. "Aid for Britain" publicity is now on a reduced scale, but the Information Section still furthers this objective as opportunities occur. The Information Section was responsible for arrangements for pressmen, photographers, and newsreel companies during the projected Royal Tour of New Zealand; accreditations, travel, accommodation, and communication facilities for local and overseas personnel entailed considerable organization, but the plans then made should be of value when Royal Tour arrangements are resumed. The Information Section also had in hand the preparation of souvenir material for the Royal Tour.

JOURNALISTIC WORK

21. The journalistic staff is divided between those in the newsroom (the activities of which were described in paragraph 7), and those whose duty it is to meet the needs of Departments, to prepare the material for overseas use, and to be available for general matters such as those outlined in paragraphs 19 and 20. This subdivision of the staff was not separately established until January, 1949.

22. Assistance has been given to Departments in the preparation of press statements. This year, in addition, fifty feature articles and articles providing factual background on various phases of New Zealand activity have been written. Many of them have been prepared at the specific request of overseas journals.

In other cases they have been supplied to New Zealand offices overseas, who have succeeded in placing them to advantage in publications. They have dealt with a wide variety of subjects—social, economic, agricultural, industrial, cultural, sporting, and tourist. In addition, over forty photographic feature articles have been prepared for illustrated journals overseas, often to meet specific requests. Material furnished in this way has been published in leading magazines in the United Kingdom, United States of America, and Australia.

23. The Information Section has given varying degrees of assistance to Departments in the production of booklets and pamphlets and periodicals.

A new booklet was produced for the Immigration Department for the information of intending British settlers, and a further publication for the same Department is being prepared. For the Tourist Department a pamphlet on Wairakei was prepared, as well as a quarterly named *Guests*.

For the Internal Affairs Department the editing and production was undertaken of a booklet on "Safety in the Mountains." Other Departments assisted with publications were Rehabilitation, Island Territories, Forestry, and Public Service Commission. For overseas use a revision is now being made of "New Zealand Facts and Figures," and a quarterly, *New Zealand Information*, is to be published. Fact sheets containing basic information about New Zealand are prepared to answer the numerous inquiries such as those from school-children overseas.

24. The journalistic staff are in a position to advise and assist the Departments in regard to the use of other publicity media, and are involved in the drafting of instructions in some film work, the scripts for film strips, the titles for photographic displays, and the arranging of radio publicity.

NATIONAL PUBLICITY STUDIOS

25. One of the principal objects in the establishment of the National Publicity Studios was to provide a centralized agency which could be used by those Departments requiring the production of all classes of art, photographic, and allied material. Pending the completion of accommodation in the city, it has not been possible to fulfil this function completely owing to cramped working-conditions and the inconvenience of the Miramar location. In spite of this, however, considerable progress has been made in the three years since the establishment of National Publicity Studios as a separate organization—already over twenty Departments are using the facilities offered by the Studios.

26. The following schedule gives some idea of the extent of these services :—

(a) Art section—

- Exhibition design and construction.
- Displays.
- Dioramas.
- Model-making.
- Animation.
- Poster design and production.
- Booklet design.
- Fine arts.

(b) Photographic and film strip—

- National Photo Library.
- Camera work, including colour film-strip design.

(c) Laboratory—

- Printing and enlarging.
- Photo murals.
- Film-strip production.
- Micro-file.
- Colour processing.

Details of principal production during the year are set out hereunder :

27. *Art Section.*—The designing and producing of Government courts for the New Zealand Industries Fair at Christchurch and the Centennial Show¹ at Dunedin in 1948, were considerable undertakings. The courts in each case featured “Aid for Britain” and were very favourably commented on in both cities. Portable display units were also prepared for the “Aid for Britain” campaign.

Industrial exhibitions are prepared by the Information Section on the instructions of the Department of Industries and Commerce, which convenes an inter-departmental committee on exhibitions.

28. Regular despatches are made of window-display material to London, and units have been prepared featuring the following subjects :—

- New Zealanders for the Olympic Games.
- New Zealand Cricketers.
- Wool.
- Dairying.
- Scenic.
- Education.
- Social Security.
- Prospects for Immigrants.
- Nursing in New Zealand.

A display dealing entirely with Maori art was prepared in co-operation with the Dominion Museum for use by Australian universities.

A considerable amount of display material has been prepared for Tourist and Health Resorts Department, including an attractive unit dealing with winter sport, and the mural decoration for the Wairakei Hotel.

A number of dioramas featuring a variety of New Zealand subjects have been produced in the model-making section.

Fourteen posters have been designed and from these approximately 9,000 have been produced in the silk-screen section. Most of this work is done for the Tourist, Transport, and Forestry Departments.

29. *Photo Section: General.*—The work of all branches of this section has continued to increase throughout the past year. Staff changes, shifting of premises, and the necessity to share equipment with the Film Unit have, in some instances, retarded production, but all work sent in has been successfully handled and in the main delivered in time. The experience gained over the last year's working has been valuable, and provision is being made to incorporate systems and methods of work not possible in the present premises but desirable when the new accommodation is occupied.

Reports on the work of the various subsections of the photo section are given below.

30. *Camera Programme.*—In addition to meeting the requirements of Departments, the programme of the camera work includes a systematic covering of the life and work of the community and the New Zealand scene in town and country. Suitable subjects are photographed in colour. Assignments during the year included the Governor-General's island tour and the New Zealand-United States Fiordland Expedition. Photography is being increasingly used in support of information and general publicity material.

31. *National Photo Library.*—During the past year the photo library has been catalogued and indexed under a modified Dewey classification system.

Accessions for the year 1948-49 total over 6,000 negatives. The library is used increasingly by journalists, students, and Government Departments, and when the shift to the city takes place it will undoubtedly be one of the busiest departments in the Studios.

32. *Film-strip Department.*—During the year the film-strip department produced 33 new titles and supplied approximately 11,000 positive copies, principally for the Education Department. Good progress has been made technically on the production of film-strip negative and positive, but the section continued to share equipment with the Film Unit, and this to some extent has cut down effective production. In addition to film strip, this department also produces an increasing amount of 35 mm. slides and 35 mm. micro-file work. Successful experiments have also been carried out in colour film strip, and it can be said that this is now on a sound technical basis.

33. *Laboratory.*—As photography is being used more and more for information, educational, and advertising purposes, increasing demands have been made for photographs of all sizes. During the year 120,000 prints were made.

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

34. The functions of the National Film Unit include the production of (a) the "New Zealand Weekly Review," (b) films to meet the needs of Government Departments, and (c) short films on matters of national interest.

The "New Zealand Weekly Review" is maintained because of the very popular service it gives as a medium of news, education, and publicity. Usually it contains several short items—local events; farming and industrial items; Navy, Army, or Air Force activities; the work of Government Departments; New Zealand concert

artists; and a variety of topical subjects. Every fourth or fifth number of the "Review" is concerned with a single subject, and over the past twelve months the following one-reel subjects were produced:—

- "The Change-over."
- "Rhythm and Movement."
- "New Zealanders for Olympic Games."
- "The Railway Worker."
- "R.N.Z.A.F. in Fiji."
- "Crippled Children Society."
- "The Coaster."
- "This is the Weather Office."

35. Films in 35 mm. width were undertaken during the year for the following Departments:—

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| Health Department | | "Clean Teeth" (1 reel) and "Hygienic Food Handling" (2 reels). |
| Agriculture Department | | "Efficient Machine Milking" (2½ reels). |
| Education Department | | "First Two Years At School" (2½ reels). |
| Transport Department | | "Keep Left" (1 reel). |
| Immigration Department | | "Journey for Three" (5 reels). |
| Tourist Department | | "Trout Waters" (1 reel, colour). |

36. Special mention should be made of "Journey for Three," which is the first feature length film, fully acted, produced by the National Film Unit. Its purpose is to create interest in immigration to New Zealand among theatre audiences in the United Kingdom. Entertainment is provided by a story woven around the experiences of three young settlers in New Zealand.

37. Other major films of national interest undertaken during the year were:—

- "Samoa" (2 reels).
- "Dunedin, Centennial City" (2 reels, colour).
- "Thermal Regions" (2 reels, colour).
- "Otago" (3 reels).

"Samoa," which gives a general view of the life of the people in the Trust Territory, was favourably received when exhibited to the United Nations Trusteeship Council. "Dunedin, Centennial City," is the first film taken by the National Film Unit to be processed by Technicolour, London. It depicts the achievements of Dunedin over the century and the colourful events of the Centennial celebrations.

"Thermal Regions": This film was also printed by Technicolour and will shortly be released in New Zealand.

"Otago": This film portrays the history, scenery, and industry of Otago Province.

38. The past year's work also included 16 mm. Kodachrome colour films on the following subjects:—

- "Trout Fishing in the Tongariro."
- General scenic film of New Zealand.
- "Southern Lakes."
- "Waipoua Forest and Waitomo Caves."
- "Wellington."
- "Christchurch."
- "High Country Farming."
- "Horse-breeding."

"Trout Fishing in the Tongariro" was completed and the others are in various stages of completion. Processing work for Kodachrome colour film is done in Australia and in the United Kingdom.

39. In the coming year the work of the National Film Unit will include the continuation of the "New Zealand Weekly Review," a considerable programme for Government Departments, several important films of national interest, and further 16 mm. Kodachrome photography.

A considerable commitment which has been entered into is the production for the British Empire Games Organization of a 6,000 ft. film of the Games. This film will be widely distributed in New Zealand and overseas.

It is intended to produce a colour film suitable to the occasion of Canterbury's Centennial in 1950, as well as a colour film giving a general conspectus of the life and scene in New Zealand.

Other projects contemplated will depend on an improvement in the staffing position.

40. The commercial arrangements for the distribution of New Zealand film in 35 mm. include the disposal of the "Weekly Review" and short subjects through New Zealand theatres, and certain arrangements for overseas distribution which were made during the year. In the United Kingdom both the Rank and Metro Goldwyn Mayer organizations will distribute on a satisfactory basis. On the Continent, arrangements have been made for re-recording and distribution in France, Belgium, and Switzerland. The same recording will also be available for French-speaking Canada. In the United States of America, television is taking every "Weekly Review" as well as short subjects, and a considerable dollar revenue is being earned. Australia, with its system of double-feature programmes, presents special difficulties to the inclusion of New Zealand short subjects, but discussions towards this end are proceeding.

41. The opportunities for 16 mm. distribution are only limited by the capacity of the printing and processing plant. A commercial arrangement has been made for the theatrical and non-theatrical distribution in New Zealand of 16 mm. films, as well as for the outright sale of prints. The non-commercial distribution in New Zealand is in the hands of the National Film Library.

Overseas, 16 mm. prints are exhibited by the New Zealand Government offices, the United Nations Organization, through the Government distribution channels in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, by large national organizations, and accredited lecturers. Prints are also made available to ships trading to New Zealand.

A total of 1,035 reels were printed during the year.

42. A small unit for the production of animated cartoons was set up during the year, principally to produce films for health education.

43. Music for films is mainly taken by licence from records, but where a film warrants it, New Zealand composers are commissioned to prepare a suitable score, and arrangements are made for the music to be played by a section of the National Orchestra.

44. In cases where films for Departments are required to be produced by private contractors, the National Film Unit has the duty of preparing the detailed specifications and letting the contracts. Two such films were "Projects for Power" for the State Hydro-electric Department, and "There Are No Accidents" for the Transport Department.

ADMINISTRATION

45. The Administration Section comprises the Information Officer and the Assistant Information Officer, clerical assistants, typists, and messengers. This Section is responsible for the general administration, programme, and control of the other subdivisions of the Information Section, and for proper co-ordination and co-operation between these units. It is also responsible for arrangements for distributing films, accounting, staff problems, purchase of stores and equipment, and despatch.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (858 copies), £14 10s.

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Price 6d.]