

Arising naturally out of the first two functions of the central lending library is the third, that of acting as the principal bibliographical bureau for the Dominion.

As clearing-house for unusual requests, the central lending library would naturally be called upon for bibliographical information, and if located in Wellington it would have the fullest resources available in this respect, especially as regards New Zealand literature. According to Mr. J. H. P. Pafford, the author of "Library Co-operation in Europe," the centre should be in the largest library available, and should keep all sorts of bibliographical works, book-sellers' catalogues, &c. It should not be an information bureau, except on such subjects as library science, &c.

A fourth function of the central lending library is that of the bureau for student readers. Whether this should be entrusted entirely to the central lending library or left partly with the district requires careful consideration. The former course seems to be preferable, at any rate in the early days of the system, until the districts gain strength and experience and can afford to maintain a specialized staff.

FINANCING THE LIBRARIES.

The main problem in extending our library service will be to decide how the requisite funds are to be provided. A great variety of methods came under my notice in the countries visited, accounted for generally by varying historical conditions. In Australia the various States themselves differ. Perhaps the best service in the Commonwealth is that provided by the New South Wales Public Library, through its box system and its attention to individual readers. The New South Wales Public Library is a State library, and the whole of the cost is borne by the State of New South Wales. In South Africa, again, such extension service as had been done was paid for by the Government. The conference held in 1929, at the time the visiting commission was in South Africa, recommended a considerable extension of State aid as the only means of providing the service required for the country districts. The State now finds £2,000 a year to subsidize extension work through the State Library, the City of Pretoria finding an equal sum, and a Carnegie endowment £1,300.

In European countries public-library service is to a great extent based on State finance, with varying degrees of local contribution. In Switzerland the State finances the National Library in its entirety. Local contributions are demanded for the establishment of centres of the *Bibliothèques pour Tous*, and the income of this service is provided mainly by the cantons and the Federal Government. Local centres pay for the loan of books. In Denmark the State takes a fuller control, though providing still only a portion of the funds. Control and supervision are exercised through a State Department, and the State, besides giving liberal service through its various fine national libraries, provides about 50 per cent. of the funds. The localities find the rest.

In Germany State initiative long ago enabled the more important libraries, which are for the most part State-supported, to develop an interlending service which is the admiration of librarians in other countries. There is also in the Ministry of Education a division charged with the control of popular libraries. These are now provided for all small towns and villages, the localities paying a portion of the cost. Norway has liberal laws for the provision of popular libraries. These are controlled to a considerable extent by a State Department, which provides a considerable part of the cost. In Sweden all libraries receive State support, and the libraries which act in the capacity of the proposed district libraries in New Zealand, receive extra grants for supplying to local libraries in the district books which they do not possess.

In the United States many of the great public libraries are State institutions. Others, like those of Boston and New York, are mainly financed from old endowments of great value. In the modern industrial cities the libraries are for the most part supported by municipal rating. It is stated by the President of the American Library Association (Mr. C. H. Compton) that 40,000,000 of the people of the United States have good libraries; 40,000,000 have an indifferent service; and the remaining 40,000,000, principally in rural districts, have no library service at all. The leaders of the library movement cannot see any prospect of providing for the latter out of their own resources, and for the last few years there has been an insistent demand for federal aid to do this work. The point on which supporters of federal aid differ is the fear that it would mean federal control. The general sentiment of librarians both in the United States and in Great Britain is emphatically averse to anything that might extinguish the feeling of local responsibility, with its logical corollary, local control.

In Great Britain the municipal free libraries are mainly financed out of the rates. The fine rural service which has grown up in recent years rests solely upon special rates raised by the County Councils for this purpose. The control is entirely through the Education Committees of the County Council. That the counties are able to finance these services is due to their close population and high rateable values. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that the capital outlay necessary to inaugurate the British county libraries was largely met by the generosity of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, who also gave liberal subsidies towards the operating-costs in the early years of the system.