

In English experience the cost of the Union Catalogue and necessary furniture has usually been about £2,500, and the cost of maintenance thereafter about £250 to £300 a year. If the districts in New Zealand were of the dimensions suggested, say, 200,000 people each, the Union Catalogues would probably not cost nearly as much as in England (where in one case sixty-one considerable libraries are included) and the maintenance would probably not take the full time of one assistant.

In Great Britain the Carnegie Trustees made grants towards the establishment of the county libraries varying from £2,300 upwards for the creation of the Union Catalogues, and grants for the purchase of book-stock at the rate of £5 per 1,000 of population.

The Carnegie Corporation has financed two experimental demonstrations in the Dominion of Canada. For the Fraser Valley demonstration in British Columbia it granted about £20,000 over a period of years. The result was so successful that the district assumed responsibility after a poll and the service is now provided out of rates. In Eastern Canada a sum of £16,400 was provided for a demonstration in Prince Edward Island which is still in progress, and which in all probability will be taken over by the provincial government.

This capital outlay having been provided for, the district would have to find each year from rates or some other source—

- (a) Salary of librarian (or contribution towards salary of municipal librarian in charge). The Carnegie standard minimum is £300 a year, but 10 per cent. of the English county librarians receive more than £500; 80 per cent. receive less than £450. In California the smallest counties pay £300 and the largest £800:
- (b) Salary of assistants:
- (c) Book-buying fund:
- (d) Packing and transport on books between district bureau and local centres:
- (e) Rent.

In some of the British counties a library van is used to distribute the books amongst centres and to change the collections. In view of the more scattered population in New Zealand and the fine facilities existing for distribution by rail and motor, it is probable that a van would not be the most economical method to employ. Its main advantage would be as a means of publicity.

Messrs. Munn and Barr estimate the capital cost of establishing a library service for a district with population of 50,000, including liberal allowance for rent, purchase of a van, and wages of chauffeur, at £3,100 for the first year, falling to £2,530 in the fifth. This latter figure would be at the rate of 1s. per head of the population served. In the United States a dollar per head is a recognized standard. Denmark claims to be able to give a service for the whole country at about 3s. a head. According to the County Libraries Statistical Report (1935), the highest cost per head of population served by English county libraries is 8d. (in the East Riding of Yorkshire). The splendid service given by the Kent County Library to its 600,000 people costs only 5·2d. per head, and that of Derby only 6d. per head. It is scarcely necessary to remark that most of the New Zealand districts would have a much smaller and more scattered population to cater for and could not be expected to give so cheap a service as the English counties enjoy.

THE CENTRAL LENDING LIBRARY.

What I have called the "central lending library" (corresponding with the national central library in the British system) requires now to be considered. This institution is to act as the clearing-house for out-of-the-way requirements in the various districts; to put the serious reader in touch with the book he requires or, if it is not available, to acquire a copy if it should appear to be advisable to do so.

In his book "Library Co-operation in Europe" Mr. Pafford shows that in most countries with a highly developed library service this duty is performed by the State or National Library, which is the recognized centre of bibliographical information and has usually the best book collection in the country. The National Library does duty as a central library in all European countries except Hungary, Denmark, and Great Britain. In Denmark, however, the State provides a special national centre or clearing-house, the Bibliotekstilsyn. Great Britain is the only country in Europe at present which does not finance its national central library. The reason for this is historic. The British Museum, in its fine book collection, is purely a library of preservation and reference. It does not lend books, and therefore cannot fill the gaps which are not satisfied from district stocks. Britain had consequently to go to the expense of creating a new institution, the national central library, as the coping-stone of the national library system.

In North America also the State libraries generally do the work of the national central library or (as I have called it) the "central lending library." In California, New York, and many other States the unusual requirements of readers are satisfied out of the national collections. It is fortunate that the State libraries are able to undertake this duty, since the Library of Congress at Washington, which is in many respects the finest national library in the world, is restrained from doing so by its obligations of preservation and reference. These forbid it to lend books in a general way; it can lend only to libraries, and to them only on behalf of advanced research workers.

A TASK FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY.

In New Zealand there is no reason why the General Assembly Library should not undertake the duty of the central lending library in the district scheme. It stands apart from the leading public libraries, which it is to be hoped will all play a part in the district