

organization, and its stock includes many volumes which are not in other libraries of the country, and which could quite safely be lent to serious readers. As the library of deposit under the New Zealand Copyright Act and the centre of the International Exchange Service, it is specially strong in publications and bibliographical information not available to all other libraries.

With a proper understanding as to its own first duty to Parliament and its obligations for preservation and reference, the General Assembly Library could quite well play the part in the library service of New Zealand that the National Central Library does in that of England; and it could do so with less expenditure than would be involved in creating a separate institution with a complete new stock, as was done in the case of the National Central Library.

It would, however, be necessary to have a proper delimitation of the duties and responsibilities of the Library. On the one hand there must be no diminution, but rather a progressive improvement, in the services rendered by the Library to Parliament, the prime reason of its existence. Secondly, there should be an even clearer understanding than in the past of the duties of the General Assembly Library as custodian of the national collection of printed books. The treasures of the Parliamentary Library and the Turnbull Library, and the record copies of New Zealand publications under the Copyright Act should be carefully safeguarded and added to under conditions of trustworthy custodianship and reasonable accessibility which would encourage Parliament to vote the necessary funds and private citizens to deposit further valuable gifts. The same conditions should apply to the archives, the development of which is now a matter of urgency. With this understanding the General Assembly Library could and should play its part as the central lending library in the Dominion scheme of popular libraries.

Additional outlay would of course be involved. The central bureau would require rooms and furniture to accommodate the Union Catalogue, embracing the non-fiction stock of the whole of the district systems. It would require a central librarian and a limited staff to manage the catalogue and the interlending service, the purchase and preparation of books which are not available elsewhere, and the service of bibliographical information.

A good deal of the book-stock of the General Assembly Library could legitimately be made available for the purposes of student readers without injury to the interests of the library as the parliamentary reference library and the national book collection; but a special vote would be required to cover the outlay on books, preparation and shelving. A foundation stock would not be called for, but an adequate vote should be available for the purchase of books as they were found necessary. These services could not be undertaken by the General Assembly Library within its present income.

The National Central Library in London, created *de novo* in every department—quarters, book-stock, personnel, and catalogue—owes its existence to liberal grants (totalling £220,000) from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, and it cost nearly £10,000 to maintain in the year 1934-35. No such outlay is necessary for New Zealand. If assistance in the same spirit were forthcoming—*i.e.*, for the compilation and housing of the Union Catalogue and the purchase of books for the first few years—the charges thereafter might reasonably fall upon the Consolidated Fund as a development of the activities of the State Library, and a contribution to the library service of the Dominion.

Estimates are not easy, but, if the General Assembly Library assumed at the outset the duties of a central lending library for such regions as first organized district services, the extent of the liability would soon be ascertained.

The Carnegie Corporation extended substantial help to the Union of South Africa in regard to its national library. A grant of \$125,000, funded in South Africa, yields, say, £1,300 a year interest. This is payable each year to the National Library at Pretoria on the understanding that the Government of South Africa pays £2,000 a year and the City of Pretoria a like amount. In consideration of receiving this income the National Library is to become entirely free, and is to supply people throughout the country with specialist and other expensive types of books. It is also to promote library extension in the Union by appointing a permanent organiser, by convening an annual library conference, and by the encouragement of co-operation amongst government, institutional, public, special, and private libraries. Incidentally, the sum of £3,000 which was annually voted by the New Zealand Parliament for assisting small libraries in country districts could be advantageously devoted towards improving the service in New Zealand through either of the two channels proposed—*i.e.*, the district libraries or the student service.

MAORI TRAVELLING LIBRARIES.

There is another task which in New Zealand might require to be entrusted to the central lending library. The supply of literature for Maori reading urgently requires attention. When the average young person of Maori race returns from his Native school, to his home, whether in a pa or in the country, he is apt to fall back upon his mother tongue. Maori remains the vernacular; yet few books in Maori are to be found which have any association with modern life or which are purely entertaining. Consequently the average Maori, on completing his primary education, ceases to read at all, unless he happens to find employment and to live entirely amongst the pakeha.

As miscegenation of the races appears to be less active than formerly, and the Maori language shows no sign of dying, it is to be hoped that something will be done to make modern reading in Maori available to the Natives. Owing to the wide dispersion of the Maori people, it would be more satisfactory to entrust the service of Maori travelling libraries either to the central lending library or to one of the district bureaux in the North Island than to leave this duty to be performed piecemeal by all of the districts.