

for issue—i.e., for home reading—free” indicates that the degree of enlightenment of local library policy will be a determining factor.

Work began in December on checking library holdings in science and technology with *Aslib* Book Lists and other bibliographical tools. All entries for scientific and technical books in the Cumulative Book Index for 1941 onwards will be checked with the Union Catalogue of library accessions since January, 1941, which is in the possession of the Central Bureau. What we want is complete coverage of recent and new publications and coverage of all back publications which have not become out of date or been superseded. It should be noted that the phrase “every book of value” in the first paragraph of the motion does not mean what somebody conceives to be the best books on this and that subject, it means every non-fiction book published in the English language other than school text-books, poems by unknown writers published at their own expense, books of purely local interest, and a few other species which have no value for New Zealand libraries.

To date (30th June) 442 works have been ordered by the Country Library Service in connection with this book-coverage project. This is all pre-1941 material, as checking with the 1941 Cumulative Book Index has not yet begun.

NEW ZEALAND SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE.

This new development was not launched until April, 1942, but much of the preparatory work was carried out during the year under review.

Demand for better library service for children has grown during the last three or four years. The reasonably good provision made in a few places has emphasized the poverty of the book-supply available for children in most parts of the Dominion. Circulating-library services for country children have been established for several years in Canterbury, Otago, and Taranaki, but it has become more and more apparent that a Dominion basis is necessary if an effective and economical service is to be made available everywhere. A plan was presented to the Hon. the Minister of Education for the establishment of a School Library Service, financed by the Education Department and administered by the Country Library Service, which would provide, on a circulating basis, books for general reading to schools in towns with populations below 10,000. No doubt eventually this population limit will be raised, but it is felt that the most urgent need is in these country districts and small towns where the children's section at the public library is either non-existent or starved. The Hon. the Minister approved the plan, which provided for the absorption of the Travelling Library for Rural Schools of Canterbury, and the exclusion of the areas served by the Otago and Taranaki schemes, but it is hoped to be able to give these two schemes a grant of books. The details of the new New Zealand School Library Service were outlined briefly in the following Ministerial statement published in the *Education Gazette*, 1st November, 1941 :—

“The number of schools which can be admitted to the new service each year is limited by the number of books which it is possible to obtain at the present time. For this and other reasons it will be necessary to levy an annual charge upon schools which participate equivalent to the sum of 1s. per child served. It is hoped that it will not be necessary to make this charge upon the schools for more than the first two or three years that each school belongs to the service, but no definite promise regarding this can be made yet.

“The books supplied to each school will be equal in number to that of the children in the school from Standard I upwards. All the books will be exchanged once a year, and part exchanges may be made once or, in the case of the smallest schools, twice during the year. Thus a school with 200 pupils on the roll from Standard I to Form II inclusive would receive 200 books at a time and would pay £10 per annum. The secondary departments of district high schools are eligible to join the scheme. Payment must be made from School Committee, parents' association, or other funds. No part of the charge must be levied upon individual children. The payment made by the school is a small fraction of the actual cost of the books which schools will receive. The main cost of the scheme is being provided from education funds. The charge for transport one way will be borne by the school.”

Where practicable the work of exchanging books will be decentralized, suitable public libraries acting as district centres for the purpose. This tie-up with public libraries is significant. The clear recognition by the Education Department of its responsibility in providing books for children, together with the willingness of the Department not only to use an established Government library service for the administration of the scheme, but also to co-operate with any suitable public library able and willing to be of assistance, is an important feature of the scheme. The most important thing about the School Library Service, however, is not any detail of its organization and administration, but the type of book which it will circulate. Thousands of New Zealand children will be given access, for the first time, to the rich store of modern children's literature.

The sum of £10,000 on the estimates of the Education Department having been approved by Parliament in 1941, orders were despatched in September for some 41,000 children's books. As was anticipated would be the case, a proportion of the titles have been reported out of print, stocks having been destroyed in the big London fires of December, 1940. Naturally there has been delay in the delivery of the books which were obtainable, many of them are still on the way, but enough arrived early in the year to enable us to begin distribution to Canterbury schools in March, and elsewhere in April. Unfortunately the bulk of the invoices had not been received by the end of the financial year and so this year's grant will be absorbed by payments for last year's commitments.

Miss K. E. Harvey, one of the two women in New Zealand who has pursued a year's course of study in children's librarianship at a library school in the United States of America, was appointed Children's Librarian and started work in February, 1942.

The report on the actual operation of the School Library Service belongs to next year's report, but it may be of interest to state here that by the end of April, 1942, 12,713 books had been sent out to schools, and that preliminary reports on the reception given to the books both by children and teachers are very encouraging indeed.

I have, &c.,

G. T. ALLEY, Director.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (533 copies), £6.

By Authority: E. V. PAUL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1942.