

SECTION II.—LIBRARY SCHOOL

Report by the Director: Miss M. P. PARSONS

On 2nd May, 1945, the Minister of Education announced that the Government had, in line with the recommendation of the New Zealand Library Association, decided to establish a Library School in Wellington, attached to the Country Library Service, to give basic training for professional library service in all types of libraries—University libraries, school libraries, Government departmental libraries, and other specialized libraries, and public libraries in city and country, including children's libraries.

The opening date for the first professional course was fixed for 18th February, 1946, with the intervening time for organization of the School. It was necessary to recruit a faculty, to make careful plans for the curriculum, and for the availability of book collections upon which the curriculum would be based and to provide accommodation.

The organization of the School proceeded under serious difficulties.

The acute shortage of professional librarians, which had made it necessary to establish the School, made it also very difficult to find librarians of the ability and wide experience required in Library School lecturers, who could possibly be made available to the School.

Unusual post-war shipping conditions delayed the arrival of books, which had been ordered in good time.

Because of acute shortage of buildings, materials, and labour, it proved impossible to provide really adequate accommodation for the School anywhere in Wellington.

While it is necessary to record these major difficulties, some of which still persist, it is pleasant to emphasize the generous co-operation which helped the School in meeting them.

The New Zealand Library Association at its 1946 National Conference passed a resolution giving first priority to the needs of the Library School in 1946.

University, public, and governmental libraries have been generous in making books, staff, and accommodation available. Librarians and other community leaders and subject specialists have been generous in helping as visiting lecturers.

The Library School opened without formality on 18th February, 1946, in rented space at the central building of the Wellington Public Libraries, and moved after three weeks to rooms which were being adapted for its use in a house adjoining the National Library Service.

The professional course, covering the principles and practice of librarianship, is now being given on university graduate level to students who have the B.A. in science or arts, or equivalent education, or some higher degree.

In book courses students are learning how to evaluate and select books, periodicals, and pamphlets for different types of libraries, how to use these materials as reliable tools in answering reference questions asked by the public, how to plan and document research work, and prepare annotated book lists and bibliographies.

In courses on technical subjects like classification and cataloguing students are learning how to organize these professional techniques as a means toward making books useful to the public.

In studying organization and administration of libraries students are considering the active role of libraries in the education of children, young people, and adults, and in all community life, social, economic, and recreational.

Twenty-nine students approved by the Minister of Education are enrolled in this 1946 professional course, which began on 18th February and will close in December. They will receive living-allowances according to the scale applicable to students of Teachers' Training Colleges and promise to give full time to the work of the School and to remain in professional library work, if their services are required, for at least three years after their course is completed. They are working together with keen interest, enthusiasm, and a spirit of friendly co-operation which promises well for their future contribution to librarianship.