

Hospital Boards are encouraged to assist by allocating a certain sum of money each year for the provision of new books and periodicals. While it will be some years before the minimum standards laid down overseas—of a book collection based on eight books per bed—will be achieved, it is desirable that the hospital library should be stocked with new, clean, and attractive books in good condition. The tendency to rely on gifts and discards for the bulk of the stock is undesirable, resulting in an inferior service.

Under skilled administration, with a carefully chosen book collection, a hospital service can assume three broad functions:—

- (a) *Therapeutic*.—A patients' library can provide encouragement towards recovery, divert attention from illness, promote relief from worry, and help to maintain interest in the outside world.
- (b) *Rehabilitative*.—It can assist the patient to equip himself socially and economically to resume his normal place in society—for example, by helping in self-expression those who wish to do creative work while in hospital: writing, sketching, handwork, &c.
- (c) *Educational*.—The library can do a great deal by supplying vocational and professional reading, and by giving guidance in planned courses of reading.

Tangible results are more easily seen in institutions where the patients' stay in hospital is longer—for instance, in mental hospitals and tuberculosis sanatoria. During the year, service to sanatoria has developed, and assistance has been provided to 5 institutions, accommodating approximately 600 patients. The book collection for tuberculosis patients is kept separate from the rest of the stock, and loans are made on the basis of one book per patient, and are exchanged three times a year. The response given to these books and the use made of them by this type of patient, who mostly fall into a young age group, shows that a great need exists for this service. As soon as the service covers all the sanatoria, it will be extended to the tuberculosis wards of general hospitals.

Of the 11 mental hospitals of the Dominion, 9 receive books from this Service for their patients' libraries. A total of 2,800 books are on loan and are exchanged regularly. Service in mental hospitals is hampered sometimes by lack of suitable accommodation for the books, and by lack of staff to circulate them. Where these difficulties are overcome, however, good use has been made of the books, chosen to meet the particular needs of this type of patient, and considerable benefit has been derived from them.

Service to 13 prisons has continued, and 2,525 books are on issue to them. Exchanges are now made from the book-van instead of by hamper as formerly.

## BOOK STOCK

During the year additions to stock were 55,740 volumes—16,907 fiction and 38,833 non-fiction. Withdrawals were 6,533—5,973 fiction and 560 non-fiction—making net additions 49,207. The stock of the Service for use by adult readers now stands at 341,190 volumes, made up of 114,972 fiction and 226,218 non-fiction. In addition, 16,063 books were purchased by the Service for other Government Departments. Such books are on permanent loan to the Departments concerned, but their cost is charged to this Service by a Treasury decision. At 31st March, 1950, the stock of the children's section was 368,238, making a grand total of all stock of 709,428 volumes.

Once again the valuable assistance given by overseas agencies of the New Zealand Government in securing publications for the Service is acknowledged.

## SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE

Report of the Librarian, Mr. H. MACASKILL

During the year, Ministerial approval has been given to requests from Auckland and Wellington Public Libraries and from the Christchurch and Suburban Public Schools Library Association for loans of books to extend and improve the service to schools in these cities. The children in these groups of schools have now available to them the full range of stock through the request service.