

THE
LIBRARY
SERVICE
OF
WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

1957

THE LIBRARY BOARD
OF
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5th Annual Report of the Board, 1956-57

PERTH,
1957

THE LIBRARY BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Miss M. E. Wood, M.A., A.L.A.	(12 ; 10)

(a) Resigned 2nd May, 1957.

(b) Deputy for Dr. Robertson.

(c) On leave for part of the year.

The figures in brackets indicate possible and actual attendances at meetings of the Board.

State Librarian :

F. A. Sharr, B.A., F.L.A.

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CONTENTS.

	Page
General Introduction	5
Public Libraries	6
Departmental Activities	8
Headquarters—	
Book Selection	8
Accessions Section	9
Catalogue Section	10
Circulation Section	12
State Library—	
J. S. Battye Library	12
Library of Business, Science and Technology	14
Library of Social Science, Philosophy and Religion	17
Library of Literature and the Arts	17
Information Centre	18
Bibliographical Centre	19
Training of Librarians	20
Acknowledgments	20
Conclusion	20



KWINANA
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

THE outstanding event during this year was the reopening of the State Library by His Excellency the Governor (Lieutenant General Sir Charles Gairdner, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., C.B., C.B.E., K.St.J.) on 14th December.

In his speech His Excellency said that he hoped the time would soon come when Australians would take as much interest and pride in their achievements in the realm of the mind as in those on the field of sport.

In the six months since the reopening of the library, use by readers in the building has almost trebled, while about 500 telephone enquiries are now being received per week. A steady effort has been maintained through the press and by addresses to appropriate bodies to inform and convince the public of the facilities available. A great deal, however, still remains to be done in persuading the public that whenever they want information on any subject the State Library is the first place they should try.

The progress made in the State Library during this period, when every effort was also made to maintain existing activities made heavy demands on the staff. At the April meeting the Board resolved: "That, members of the Board having received many favourable comments from the public on the improved service of the State Library, the State Librarian be requested to convey to the staff the Board's appreciation of their efforts during the period of reorganisation and of their service since the reopening of the Library."

The lending libraries in the suburbs and country have not been neglected and their use by the public has grown steadily. It is particularly significant that although only four new libraries had been established, and those towards the end of the year, the number of requests for special books through the Request and Information Service increased by 87 per cent., from 2,211 to 4,134. This suggests that the initial enthusiasm at the older libraries was not a flash in the pan but the kindling of a flame which is growing steadily in size and intensity.

A less satisfactory aspect of the situation, and one which seriously concerns the Board, is the growth of unsatisfied demand. There is now a waiting list of thirty-four local authorities, representing over a quarter of a million people, which have resolved to become participating bodies and are willing to take active steps to establish libraries for their residents. These local authorities are not simply holding out their hands for a free dole of State service: they know that they will have to bear the cost of their libraries themselves. If they are to receive the service they want—and for which they are prepared to pay their share—within, say, five to seven years a very substantial increase in funds for new books will be needed.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Due to the concentration on the State Library it was possible to open only four new libraries during the year, at :—

Narembeen
Kojonup
Three Springs
Dongara,

but in addition the greater part of the books needed for the new Boys and Girls' Library at Fremantle was processed. This brings the total to 23 libraries serving 27 local authorities (including the library provided for the nursing staff at Royal Perth Hospital at the cost of the Hospital).

All libraries have been visited to learn of any deficiencies in the Headquarters service as seen from the local library's point of view and to enable the Headquarters staff to be kept intimately aware of the particular interests, needs and opportunities of each country district. At the same time these visits offer an opportunity to clear up any doubts, queries or misunderstandings which may have arisen over the working of the system.

The Board has done nothing for the last two years to persuade local authorities to start new libraries. The most telling evidence of real public satisfaction with the existing libraries is therefore the continued—and embarrassing—growth of the waiting list. People do not clamour to rate themselves for a service of which they have not heard good reports.

Seven issues of the News Letter have been published during the year. The purpose of the News Letter is to let all members of the Board's staff and all local librarians know what is going on throughout the whole service. It contains staff and service news, explanations of new practices and some book notes.

In a system comprising a State instrumentality and 27 local authorities, all interconnected and co-operating in a joint service, it would not be difficult for irritations to arise. On the whole they do not. The Board has received full and cordial co-operation from local authorities, and it believes that they and their librarians genuinely feel themselves to be partners in a co-operative undertaking giving good service for the benefit of all. Without such a feeling efficiency would be impossible.

The demand for particular books of non-fiction through the Request and Information Service has continued to grow. 4,134 requests were received as against 2,211 last year. It is noticeable that a substantial number of advanced text books are now being asked for by university and other students in country districts. This is a very worthwhile development because it means that one more of the disadvantages of residence away from Perth is being eliminated.

In the last two annual reports the complete list of requests received in the last week of the financial year was printed to give an indication of the type of book asked for. This year 103 requests were received in the week (63 last year) so only those for one day, Monday, are listed. The list is shorter and the books perhaps a little more solidly informative than for the average day, but it does show how serious and useful is the demand on country libraries now that there is a means of satisfying it.

It may be of interest that of the 103 titles asked for 88 were supplied from stock, four were already on order but not received, and 11 were ordered to meet the requests.

REQUESTS RECEIVED ON MONDAY, 24TH JUNE, 1957.

Bailey	..	..	<i>The pruning manual.</i>
Brookes & Dick	..	..	<i>Introduction to statistical method.</i>
Dewey	..	..	<i>Democracy and education.</i>
Downey	..	..	<i>Pig raising in Australia.</i> <i>Holden workshop manual.</i>
Greenslade	..	..	<i>Modern pig breeding.</i>
*Krominga	..	..	<i>Millenium, its nature function etc.</i>
Pounds	..	..	<i>An historical and political geography of Europe.</i>
Shackleton	..	..	<i>Journey to the Pole.</i>
Williams	..	..	<i>27 wagons full of cotton.</i>

All of these with the exception of that marked * were in stock.

A useful by-product of the integration of the State Library into the Library Service of Western Australia is the opportunity it affords for co-operation between local libraries and the J. S. Battye Library in the preservation of local records. Valuable collections have in this way been secured from Toodyay, Tammin and Claremont.

The question is sometimes raised of the effect of public libraries on booksellers and circulating libraries. There is no doubt that the existence of libraries stimulates the sale of books and many instances could be quoted of orders being placed with local booksellers as the result of a reader's seeing a book in a library, or seeing it listed in "Books for Farmers" which the Board supplies to each issue of the *Journal of Agriculture*.

The functions of a public library and of a commercial circulating library are different. Provided that both are efficient there is no reason why a public library should adversely affect a circulating library. The basic justification of a rate and tax supported library is to provide those books which it is impracticable to supply commercially because they do not turn over quickly enough to recover their cost in a short period. A public library does, of course, stock best sellers, but not in anything like the quantity needed to meet the surge of demand. Those who want nothing but light recreational books may be better

served by a circulating library than by a public library. If the public library attempted to buy enough books of their type to meet their insatiable demand it could not afford to buy the books which it alone can supply, and which are more valuable educationally and socially. The functions of the two types of library are complementary and different.

At the end of June the Perth City Council concluded an agreement with the Perth Literary Institute by which on the 1st July the building, books and the staff of the Institute were transferred to the City to form the basis of a central public library. The City and the Board have been in consultation throughout the negotiations and the Board warmly welcomes this important step forward. Due however to its other prior commitments the Board is unlikely to be able to make any service available to Perth for at least two or three years and then only if it receives the agreement of the Government to provide the substantial funds which would be required to develop a service to the City without unreasonable prejudice to the development of country and suburban services.

The Board has given consideration to the service for persons "in extreme isolation" in the north and east of the State. Extreme isolation is taken to mean living more than about 100 miles from a town which could if it so wished establish a library. Although the Board has always been prepared to send books directly from Perth to such persons, the demand has been very slight. It is therefore now intended to bring the service more energetically to the notice of those who might use it.

Of the total number of books in all libraries 38 per cent. were on loan to readers at the end of the year. This percentage would be regarded as satisfactory in a good town library system in England or America. That it is reached in the conditions of scattered settlement which obtain in much of W.A. is noteworthy and shows that the Board's aim of giving to country areas a service comparable to that given in good town libraries anywhere in the world is not an idle boast.

DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES. HEADQUARTERS.

In October, Accessions and Catalogue Sections moved down from Havelock Street to new accommodation in the State Library. In February, Administration Section followed and occupied the former Principal Librarian's Residence in Francis Street.

BOOK SELECTION.

James Hammond, F.L.A., Chief Assistant Librarian.

No library can be built up today solely from current publications. It is always necessary to select and obtain in the second hand market those standard works which are out of print but essential to a good basic stock. As the size and range of the Board's service is enlarged an increasing amount of time has to be devoted to the selection of

non-current publications both to meet the increasing demands of readers at the lending libraries and to make good the many gaps in the State Library stock. The Board has been in operation for only three years ; its libraries would give a very unbalanced service if they contained only books published in that period.

Most of the Chief Assistant Librarian's time in the first half of the year was spent in the selection of books for the Library of Business, Science and Technology and in "weeding" and supervising the rearrangement of the books in the State Library.

It is hoped, if funds permit, to carry out a similar overhaul of the stocks of the Library of Social Science and the Library of the Arts over the next few years.

The standard of Australian book production has greatly improved in the last three or four years. Until then books with poor paper, bad press work and weak unattractive bindings were common. Since 1952 however the Australian Book Publishers' Association has held a "Books of the Year" competition which has probably been a major factor in improving production standards. The best Australian books can now stand comparison with any published elsewhere—an improvement which the Board greets with pleasure. The Board was pleased to co-operate in the "Festival within the Festival" of Perth by mounting a display of some 227 volumes representative of Australian literature and fine printing, in the Art Gallery.

ACCESSIONS SECTION.

Florence McKeand, A.L.A., Librarian.

This year Accession Section has had two aims : procuring the books needed for the restocking of the State Library, principally the Library of Business, Science and Technology and the Information Centre ; and providing books for the lending service.

Titles are selected by the Chief Assistant Librarian ; this Section is responsible for ordering, shipment, receipt and processing of the books. Before a chosen title can be ordered full and accurate details of author, title, date and place of publication and price must be found. This is much more difficult for specialized technical material, overseas directories and the like than for general circulation stock. Before the Library of Business, Science and Technology and the Information Centre were established, a wide range of booklists, bibliographies and catalogues were examined and most local professional associations, trade unions and many of the larger firms invited to supply lists of suggested titles to ensure that the new services would meet as exactly as possible the needs of the Western Australian community. All the resulting titles had to be collated and checked before ordering and this task occupied some months of work. Individual letters had to be sent to many sources of specialized material not available through normal trade channels.

Meanwhile, of course, the normal work of buying and processing books for the lending service had to be continued as far as possible.

The location of out of print books in the world second hand market is a game of skill—and to some extent of chance—which

requires a wide knowledge of the international book trade. Books have been purchased from 14 countries, for each of which it is necessary to know and apply the appropriate currency, customs and licensing procedures. (Periodicals are obtained from many more countries). This is an aspect of librarianship which the general public may perhaps tend to overlook.

Increasing use is being made of several duplicates exchange services, particularly the Commonwealth National Library Clearing Centre and the British National Book Centre. Through these services much valuable material is exchanged between libraries all over the world. One book recently received for the cost of postage, for example, is quoted on the market at £28.

A start has been made in the acquisition of older Australian books, particularly novels, which are not in stock. These are, of course, very elusive, but some 500 volumes have been secured including a substantial portion of relevant titles from the library of Rex Ingamells.

Accessions Section is also responsible for incoming and outgoing material under the international exchange of government publications. This involves not only the internal handling of material for the State Library but despatch to a large number of other governmental and similar bodies in Western Australia. Some 50 cases full were received or despatched.

All the depository material received from United Nations and UNESCO is sorted and recorded in the Section. This forms part of the work of the Periodicals and Copyright Officer who is also responsible for recording the arrival and ensuring the completeness of files of the 1,565 periodicals, regularly received.

Under the provisions of the Copyright Act, 1895, one copy of all Western Australian publications must be sent to the State Library for preservation. As not all printers and publishers seem to be aware of their responsibility, the copyright officer has often to write to publishers to obtain material.

This Section assembles and despatches books to outside binders and on their return receives and checks them. 3,246 such books were despatched.

CATALOGUE SECTION.

C. L. Drake, M.A., A.L.A., *Acting Chief Cataloguer.*

The task facing the Catalogue Section in this year was to take up the additional work of cataloguing for the State Library while at the same time maintaining in quantity and quality the output of books in general. The figures show that quantitatively this was done, although the intake of books for the lending service had to be sharply reduced to make way for those needed in the restocking of the State Library.

11,191 titles (28,584 volumes) were catalogued as against 10,147 titles and 27,760 volumes last year.

It was pointed out in last year's report that the addition of the State Library to the Board's service involved the cataloguing not only of more books but of books of a greater degree of difficulty requiring more thought and more time for their treatment. A further point is that books for the reference library being for the most part more specialized are bought in single copies instead of in quantity. This means that the time per volume required to catalogue them is much longer.

That the output for the year was nevertheless increased may be attributed to a number of factors—the new quarters in the remodelled State Library buildings are more convenient and efficient, one junior assistant was appointed in June, 1956, and following the move a number of changes of method were adopted with the object of increasing output without loss of quality.

Quality is less easy to measure than quantity, and its final test lies in the help which the catalogues give to the readers who use the libraries and to the librarians who serve them. To keep the cataloguers in touch with the users' point of view all proposed entries for the State Library catalogues are scrutinized by the librarians of the subject libraries. Any views which the librarians may express about the usefulness of the subject headings assigned or the classification numbers chosen are then taken into account before the cards are put into final form and printed.

Good cataloguing requires scrupulous attention to detail and thoughtful exercise of judgment, and any attempt to raise substantially the present output of the existing staff would introduce into the work a sense of haste and rush which could seriously endanger the quality of the catalogue.

The periodicals, annuals and other serials which were being received by the old Public Library are being gradually recatalogued. This work must be taken slowly to avoid interference with the throughput of new material. It has similarly been necessary to postpone the cataloguing of the very large number of pamphlets and monographs received on intergovernmental exchange. This is unfortunate because they contain a great deal of most valuable information which cannot at present be organized fully for use.

Lists of books added have continued to be supplied to the *Australian Library Journal* and to the *Journal of Agriculture*. The Board has evidence to show that the latter are used and valued by the farming community.

Continuous revision of the printed catalogue of non-fiction books has been maintained, sections of the catalogue being re-issued as often as the increase of stock justifies it.

The Chief Cataloguer, Miss Joyce Jackson, resigned in January following her marriage. She had been with the Board from its early days and had been responsible for establishing the cataloguing procedures, for welding the cataloguing staff into a smoothly-working team, and for building up the several catalogues from scratch to a total of some 400,000 entries. Mr. C. L. Drake, Deputy Librarian, State

Library, was appointed to the position of Acting Chief Cataloguer and despite the very different nature of the work involved in this post has continued the development of the Section in an exemplary manner.

CIRCULATION SECTION.

W. F. Chape, F.L.A., Librarian.

Circulation Section is responsible for the distribution of books to libraries and for arranging interloans between libraries within the Library Service of Western Australia.

With the removal of the other Headquarters sections to Francis Street and Museum Street, Circulation Section has taken over the whole of the Havelock Street premises and some additional shelving has been purchased to provide storage for a larger pool stock and for more efficient working. These changes became necessary in order to handle the growing volume of books circulating between Headquarters and libraries, as the number of libraries increases, and to make provision for collecting initial stock for some of the larger local authorities which will soon be ready to be served.

All country libraries which were in action during the whole of the year received five exchanges, with the exception of five which had delayed returning exchange collections.

STATE LIBRARY.

The State Library is now divided into six operational units : The J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History ; the libraries of Business, Science and Technology ; Social Sciences, Philosophy and Religion ; and Literature and the Arts ; and the Bibliographical and Information centres. The staff is thus enabled to specialize within a subject field. Public response and use of the library has so increased as to absorb virtually the whole of the staff in reader service ; with, however, the unfortunate result that further behind the scenes re-organisation has been almost stopped. In the short run this is not serious. It will become serious if it is extended into the long run, because good reader service depends upon a well organised book stock.

A total of 2,745 pages of photocopies or microfilm were provided for readers (1,183 pages last year).

THE J. S. BATTYE LIBRARY AND STATE ARCHIVES.

Mollie Lukis, B.A., Librarian and Archivist.

This library contains all the material, printed or manuscript, from the old Public Library and the old Archives Branch, relating to the history and literature of Western Australia.

The provision of proper and ample stack space for the State Archives has assisted the work of the staff and has enabled a large quantity of government records to be taken over ; for example :—

Premier's Department, 240 files ; Police Department, 141 volumes ; Court Records, 75 volumes ; Harbour and Lights Department, Albany, 67 volumes ; Registrar General's Department, 688 volumes.

In addition some useful local government and business records have also been accepted.

110 reels of microfilm of Western Australian documents held in the Public Record Office and other British repositories have been received. The microfilming of local newspapers was held up for nearly six months as it was impossible to use the camera while the library was being rebuilt, but is now in full swing again. A number of valuable private records have been lent by their owners for micro-filming, particularly the minute books of the Tammin Progress Association and Farmers and Settlers' Association, 1903-1942, and an illustrated historical record of all buildings used for public worship in the Anglican Diocese of Perth, 1829-1953, compiled by Mr. E. W. Doncaster.

The most valuable accession during the year was the four issues of "The Record or Pastorals for Guildford," 1842,—the first periodical published in the Colony. The "Record" was a Church of England monthly magazine for the settlers in the Guildford district. These are the only known copies in the world.

Other donations of interest were : the Diaries of G. de Courcy Lefroy, of Walebing, 1844-1852 ; a group of letters of Bishop Hale ; and a group of letters written by Robert Button a pioneer pastoralist of the Kimberleys, 1884-1905.

From 1st January, 1957, items of historical interest in a selected list of country newspapers have been indexed. The more important metropolitan newspapers have been indexed for some years.

A collection of 620 maps of Western Australia, some received from the Lands Department and some collected from various parts of the old Public Library, has been cleaned, mended, accessioned and catalogued. Apart from their great value to research, they have aroused considerable general public interest.

The Board is pleased to note a marked increase in the number of students carrying out research in local history. Many of these are or will become teachers and it is to be expected that they will stimulate an interest and intelligent pride in the history of their State and district among the children they teach. The Education Department has agreed to meet the reasonable cost of providing schools on request with photo copies of local history source material relating to their district the originals of which are in the J. S. Battye Library.

A Western Australian literature collection has been started which at present numbers 174 volumes. A bibliography of Western Australian literature is being compiled and efforts are being made to fill gaps in the collection as they are discovered.

At the beginning of May, Miss Lukis left for a six months' study leave in U.S.A. and U.K. where she will visit archives and local history libraries. Miss Lukis was awarded a Carnegie Corporation Travel Grant for this purpose.

LIBRARY OF BUSINESS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

Norman Horrocks, F.L.A., Librarian.

This library gives a service entirely new in Western Australia. Its primary aim is to assist business and industry in this State by providing information on science, technology and management at all levels from elementary to research, for all levels from the managing director to the apprentice. After six months operation there is no doubt that the new service is a success. It is being used increasingly each month.

In some subjects the typical enquirer is a student who knows the literature of his subject. In the technical field on the other hand he has often little knowledge of books and how to use them to obtain information. He presents his problem, and the staff are required to search on his behalf. Specialists are sometimes exempt from this observation, but even so it is noticeable how many experts are ill-informed of the literature of their subject. Here the library's function is to introduce them to the resources available.

The stock of this library comprises some 20,000 volumes, 500 periodicals and a large but uncounted number of pamphlets, research studies, trade catalogues and other unbound material. There is a good range of periodical indexes and abstracts from *Chemical Abstracts* and *Engineering Index* to *Z.D.A. Abstracts* (on the industrial use of zinc) or *Management Abstracts*. These are used not only to trace specific information in the periodicals held in the library but also, in conjunction with periodical catalogues, to locate information in other libraries all over the world.

The library does not rely only upon its own resources. There are thousands of research associations, industrial firms and the like in Australia and overseas from which unpublished information may be obtained. In the last six months enquiries have been addressed to and answered by such agencies in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, France, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland and Italy.

As this service is still comparatively new it may be of interest to trace the history of one enquiry. A works manager came to the library to find information on the design of a piece of equipment he was seeking to improve. He was first shown the books on the shelves. They gave an outline of the subject, but he wanted more detailed information. The indexes and abstracts were searched and the references found were listed. The periodicals referred to had then to be located and brought together. Some were in the library, others were traced, through the Union Catalogue of Periodicals, in libraries of the metropolitan area and were soon borrowed. The remainder were not taken in this State. Letters were sent to libraries holding these journals and they supplied photo copies of the relevant pages. The library traced firms in the United Kingdom and the United States of America making this particular equipment. These firms were written

to and they supplied additional information not available generally in print. As a result the works manager obtained a full picture of all aspects of the subject and was able to report to his directors on how the problem could be solved, what plant should be installed and the Australian agents and prices of the necessary machines. This service is, of course, entirely confidential.

A few questions recently answered may give some indication of the range of information available.

An author wanted to know how the death ray (fish) lived.

A cafe owner wanted recipes for several different soups.

A small business man came to find out about a new French kiln process.

A manufacturer hit a production snag with a large defence contract. He was given an article on exactly the same problem and how to overcome it.

A merchant sought information on warehouse planning, layout, and handling equipment.

A Government Department sought information on the use of a new photographic process under Australian climatic conditions.

A large firm needed a technical translation into Spanish of operating instructions to accompany a valuable export order.

All these enquiries were fully satisfied.

A library is not a storehouse of information, but a powerhouse. Industrial progress depends on the utilization of new techniques. Therefore the library takes steps to put out to interested users, new information received in periodicals. Enquirers are encouraged to state the subjects in which they are regularly interested. All journals as they are received are checked and the person interested in, say, silicones in paints, can be notified of articles which deal with his subject as they are published. The small manufacturer cannot take more than a few technical magazines. He often finds it difficult to make time to check through them. By declaring his interest to the library he can be kept in touch with new developments all over the world.

These services are not confined to those who live in Perth and the suburbs. The State Library serves the whole State. Any person wherever he lives can write for information and his enquiry will be dealt with as fully as possible by post. The position is of course easier and better for those who live in an area where a public library associated with the Board exists. Their enquiries can be made through the local library and books or photo copies lent for their use through that library. By this means the specialist resources, of necessity centred in one place, are made available throughout the State.

It is difficult to assess the value or even the amount of work done in a library, statistically. An apprentice studying wiring circuits may gain information leading to a better job which will benefit him all his life. A business man may learn of a new technique through which

he is able to expand his business. A research worker may develop an idea which will be of benefit to society as a whole. This State has long needed a library service for this purpose. What has been achieved since December last suggests that the want is now being filled.

LIBRARY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION.

F. J. Balnaves, B.A., A.L.A.

In this library, as in the Library of Literature and the Arts, the book stock has not yet been overhauled. While it includes some works of major importance such as the publications of the Hakluyt Society, or Migne's *Patrologia* together, of course, with a mass of lesser but useful material, the deficiencies in the stock are equally significant. Funds have not permitted a thorough revision to be attempted but some effort is being made to plug the more obvious gaps which are revealed by actual demand.

The stock of this library covers the subjects which its title implies and includes a very large collection of Australian, British and United States government publications. Unfortunately as these are, in the main, not catalogued, nor properly organized, much of their value—which could be very great—is lost at present.

A start has been made on the sorting, arrangement and listing of some 4,000 maps in the library. All Australian maps have so far been listed.

Although this library has been only partially reorganized, in June it alone issued more books to readers than the whole library issued in the previous June. In addition some 1,500 enquiries were satisfied in the six months after reopening. Their nature may be shown by the following samples:—

History and description of Malmesbury, Wenlock and Buildwas Abbeys.

Details of a Latvian legend about the Devil.

Statistics of installed electric motors in Western Australia with breakdown by h.p. groups.

The abolition of the Legislative Council in Queensland.

State and Federal wage awards for a bookbinder.

Conditions of employment in the Broome pearling industry in the 1920's.

Names of the transports carrying troops from Sydney in the Sudan War.

The amount of car allowance for commercial travellers in Victoria and the date of the latest adjustment.

LIBRARY OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS.

R. P. Wright, B.A.

Michael Yelland, B.A., A.L.A.

A convenient way of describing the work of this library may perhaps be to mention some of the particular fields which it covers and which the title might not immediately suggest.

The architecture section receives most of the leading periodicals in the subject and the book stock is being gradually built up to meet the steady flow of enquiries from home builders seeking ideas and from official bodies planning new features or improvements. School science laboratories, government offices, community halls, small theatres, libraries and churches are some of the projects which have been helped.

The collection of English and foreign language dictionaries has been greatly strengthened, as have the encyclopaedias by the addition of the new *Encyclopédie Française* and *Der grosse Brockhaus*.

The sports section is one of the most well used—to answer questions such as : advanced yacht racing tactics, the dimensions of an Olympic swimming pool, or the rules of deck tennis.

Enquiries relating to the theatre are always to the fore, and have ranged from the simple 30 second query like “ What is the name of the character who sings ‘On with the Motley’ in ‘I Pagliacci’ ” to those requiring considerable enquiry such as the design for a witch’s cauldron of the classical period.

Work in the literature section is hampered by lack of many of the standard texts of established authors, but some progress has been made in revision of the stock. The collection of plays in sets which contains over 300 titles has been transferred from Circulation stock to this library, but still remains available for loan through public libraries.

INFORMATION CENTRE.

Rex Price.

The Information Centre, directly opposite the main entrance, has two principal functions : to give snap answers to snap questions particularly in the commercial field ; and to supply a wide coverage of newspapers.

From the hundreds of questions asked and answered the following is but a selection :—the new Indian calendar ; the nearest airport to a town in Germany ; how many nocturnes did Chopin write ; the name and address of a cigarette manufacturer in Hamburg ; aboriginal names for homes, clubs, etc.

To answer these questions virtually world-wide telephone and trade directories, Australian official statistics, telegraphic codes, dictionaries, and reference books on such subjects as etiquette and ceremonial are stocked.

The holdings of newspapers have been considerably expanded. All West Australian papers and representative titles from all other Australian capital cities, the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, India, Indonesia, Burma and Korea are available. All these newspapers can now be read in comfort sitting down, instead of standing up at slopes as heretofore.

Many of the enquiries received at the Centre come by telephone but some users come in person—for example, the representative of

a local firm which wished to enter the export trade to one of the Asian countries, and who came to list all the appropriate merchants and agents from trade and telephone directories.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CENTRE.

I. D. Tweedie, B.A.

The Bibliographical Centre is the first of its kind in Australia. It houses the State Library's own catalogues and a good selection of bibliographies. It is also designed to assist and stimulate library co-operation within Western Australia and between Western Australia and the other States and the rest of the world, by facilitating the location and co-ordination of material in all libraries in this State and tracing items only available elsewhere.

A new catalogue, on standard cards, for all books added to the State Library since December, 1955, has been started and a little progress made in the editing and transference of entries from the old handwritten Public Library catalogue.

The Outlier Union Catalogue is a new venture which contains author entries for all books added recently to many of the other libraries of the State. These cards are provided by the libraries concerned and the Board is very appreciative of their co-operation.

The State Union Catalogue of Periodicals, which has already proved invaluable, will shortly list all periodicals taken in some 90 libraries in Western Australia with their locations.

So far as is known, these two catalogues are unique in Australia, and in time they will, together with the State Library Catalogue, make it possible for anyone to make a very full survey of the major book and periodical resources of the whole State at one point: the Bibliographical Centre.

The Centre supplies bibliographical information to readers, booksellers and other libraries and is able and willing to assist other libraries on request by arranging interloan of books or periodicals within the State, or interstate, or from overseas. Likewise requests received from beyond the State are checked in all appropriate Western Australian libraries automatically.

In October, the Centre took over the bibliographical aspects of the Request and Information Service and became responsible for checking all requests in the catalogues and where necessary in bibliographies, together with the arrangement of all interstate loans, and inter-library loans other than those between public libraries, which remain the responsibility of Circulation Section. The number of requests has steadily increased from 216 in November to 442 in June and there has been a marked increase in the number of more specialized or out of the way books and periodicals for which interstate loans have been arranged, for example:—

- | | | | |
|---------|----|----|--|
| Colwell | .. | .. | <i>Illustrated history of Methodism in Australia</i>
1812-1855. 1904. |
| Lloyd | .. | .. | <i>Vincenzo Bellini</i> 1908. |

- Lubbock *The Western Ocean packets* 1925.
 Schouten *Reys-tochten naer en door Oost-Indien*
 1708.
 Wheeler and Eagle *Development of the leaching operations of*
the Union Minier du Haut Katanga,
 1933.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING.

As foreshadowed in the last Report the Education Department at the suggestion of the Board has established organized classes in preparation for the professional examinations, at Perth Technical College. There were 27 students in the Preliminary course and 19 in the Registration course; these figures may be compared with the number of candidates in 1953, the year before the Board's influence began to make itself felt, namely one for the Preliminary Examination and four for the Registration.

This improvement is very welcome. Without qualified librarians there cannot be any real development in libraries.

While the State Library was closed for rebuilding an intensive training course in reference library technique and bibliographical method was held for all State Library staff. Since then in-service training has been provided on two afternoons per week for new entrants to the service, with the objects not only of enabling them to deal more efficiently with readers' needs but also of giving them self-confidence in doing so.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

With the expansion of the service the number of persons and bodies to whom the Board would wish to express its appreciation for help, co-operation or donations has grown beyond the reasonable limits of this report.

To all of them individual thanks have been tendered at appropriate times but some should be particularly recorded: the Lord Mayor and the City of Perth for continued hospitality in placing a committee room at the Board's disposal; the government's London Office for unflinching help and courtesy in handling overseas business; the Principal Architect and his staff for their co-operation in the rebuilding of the State Library; and the principal librarians of other libraries who have assisted the service by the loan of books and in other ways.

CONCLUSION.

This has been a year of real progress in which the Board—and the Government, which provides the funds—may take a sober pride.

But there can be no relaxation of effort or of expenditure. The quarter of a million citizens waiting, some quite impatiently, for the service must not be forgotten. The successes of this year have been gained at the expense of the development of the lending service. That was right and inevitable for one year, but it should not continue.

The Board was set up to establish a State-wide system of public libraries in co-operation with local authorities. For eighteen months it did that—and so successfully that the Government and Parliament decided to make it also responsible for the State Library. The Board has revived that institution equally successfully. But it was clearly never the intention of the Government or Parliament to deflect the Board from its first and greatest responsibility: the lending service which will ultimately serve all the people of this State. Otherwise it would have been better for the Public Library to stay as it was. The Board therefore intends for the future to press on as fast as funds permit with the expansion of the lending service.

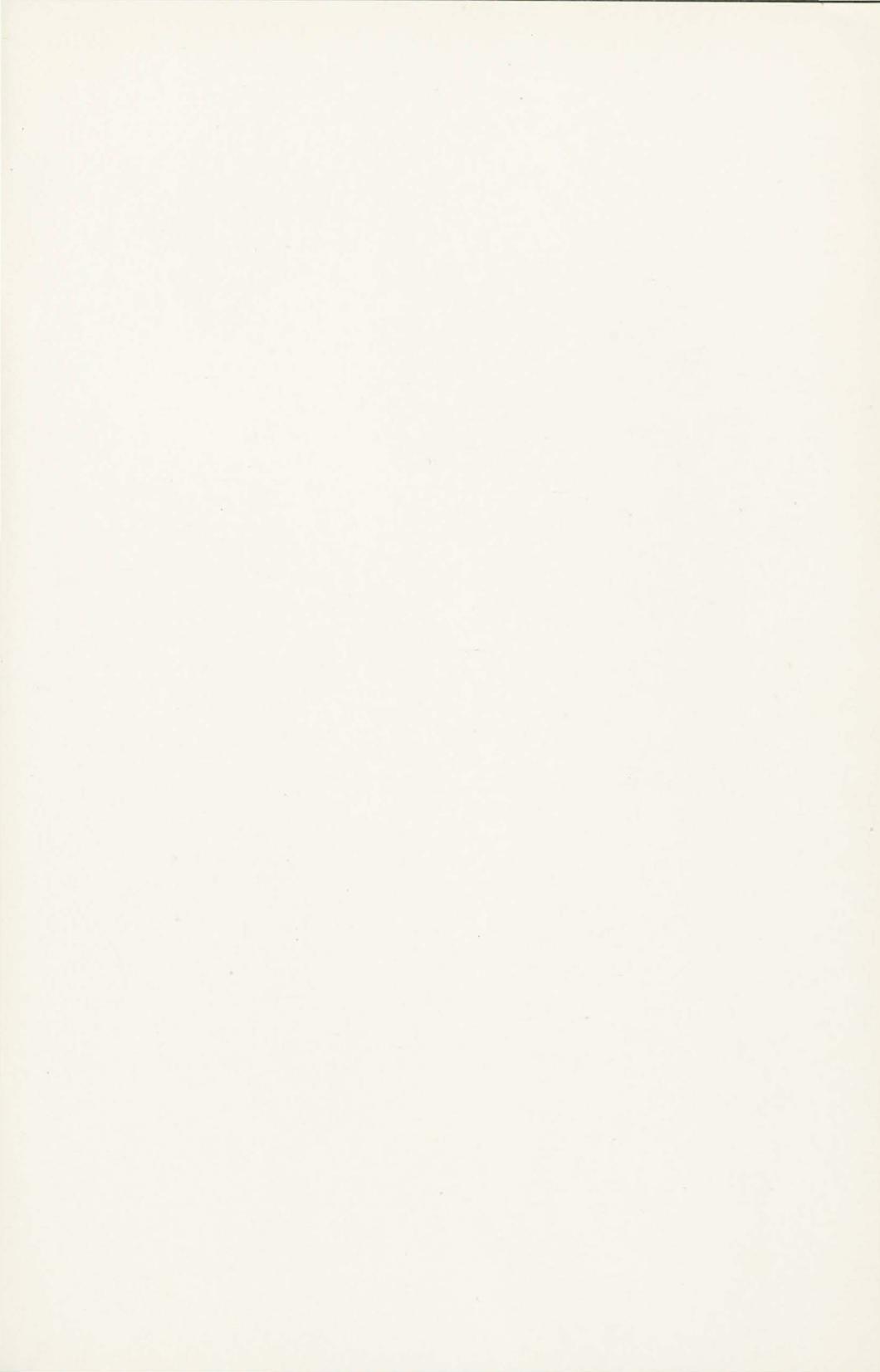
A library is a power house not a storehouse. It must have fuel if it is to function. Books and periodicals are its fuel; the staff, its dynamos. The effect of cutting the fuel supply was clearly to be seen in the old Public Library. The effort of the staff and the general satisfaction of the public will be wasted and frustrated if that mistake is ever made again.

As far as the lending service is concerned the Board's plan and policy was laid down in 1953: to cover the whole State with a minimum service over a period of 20 years. It is estimated by those competent to do so that the population of the State will be about one million in 1975. Therefore in planning its long range policy in 1953 on the basis of one book for each citizen the Board recognized that a net annual addition to stock of 50,000 volumes per year would be needed, after allowance had been made for those which wear out or become obsolete. The cost of such a programme would now be about two, later three, shillings per head of population per annum, to which local authorities would each contribute another two or three shillings as they entered the scheme. This is not extravagant and visionary planning; neither is it penny wise and pound foolish. The inherent economy of the Western Australian system permits a good service to be given for that expenditure; although of course higher expenditure could produce better service.

The Board is very appreciative of the funds and support which the Government has over the last three years allocated to the service. It can claim that it has not wasted those funds but has given a good account of its stewardship. It hopes that notwithstanding the State's financial difficulties, the Government will be able to permit the continued development of the service along the lines of the general policy laid down in 1953.

FRED ALEXANDER,
Chairman.

F. A. SHARR,
State Librarian.



The flower on the cover of the Report is the Many Headed Oxylobium, a wild flower of Western Australia which is found between Greenough and Bremer Bay. The design was executed by Miss Mary B. Devlin of the Government Lithographic Staff.