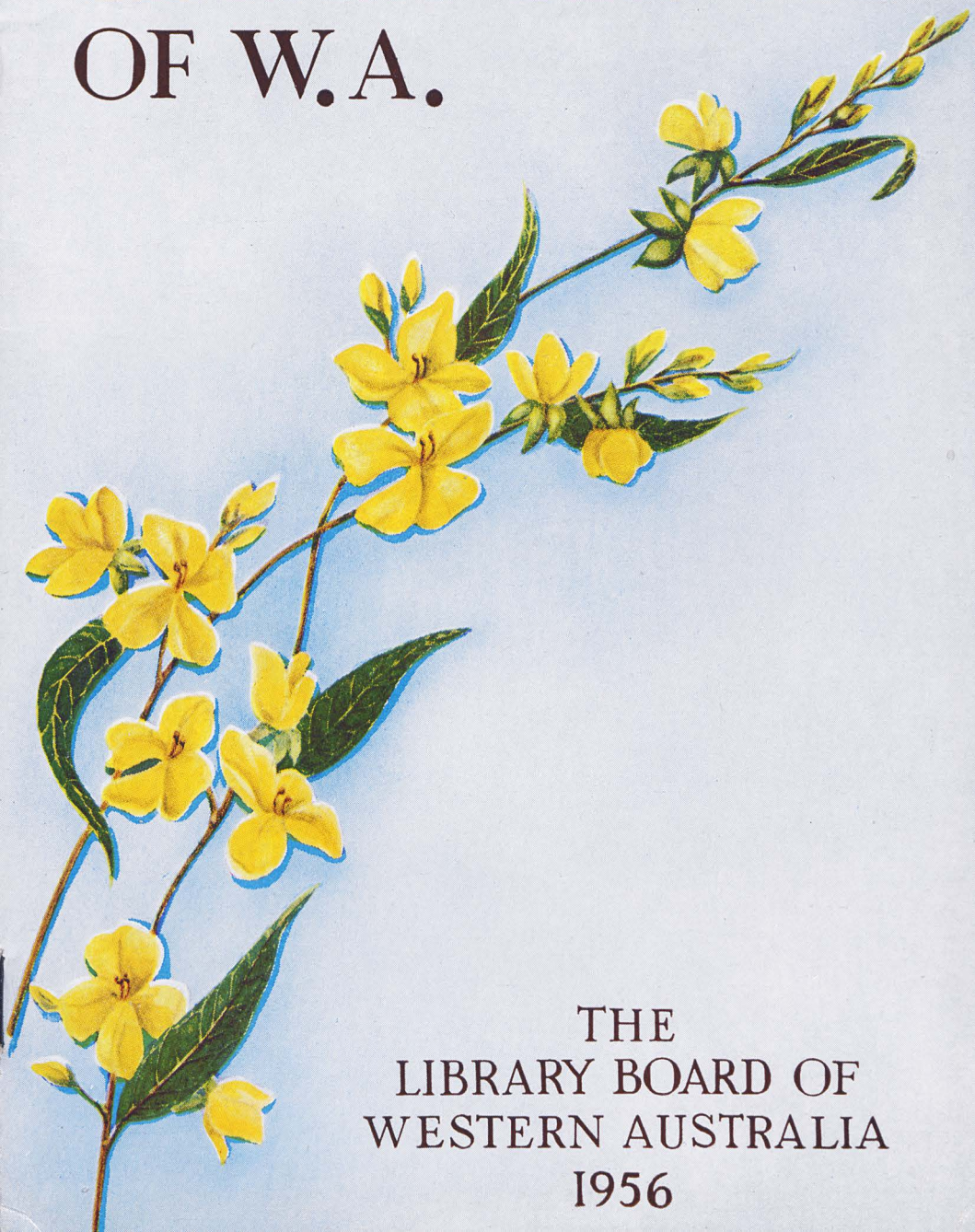


THE LIBRARY SERVICE OF W.A.



THE
LIBRARY BOARD OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
1956

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of
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

4th Annual Report of the Board, 1955-56

PERTH,
1956

THE LIBRARY BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Miss M. E. Wood, M.A., A.L.A.	(11 ; 9)

* Members of the Executive Committee

(*a*) Retired 1st December, 1955

(*b*) Appointed 1st December, 1955

(*c*) Deputy for Dr. Robertson

(*d*) On leave for a part of the year.

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

State Librarian :

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

Communications should be addressed to :

The State Librarian, The Library Board of W.A.,
11 Havelock Street, Perth.
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THIS has been quite a busy year and one in which important developments in the library service of the State have been made.

The books have been supplied for seven new libraries, including the first two in the metropolitan area ; the Board has taken over the work of the former Country Free Lending Libraries Committee ; and the former Public Library of Western Australia, renamed the State Library, has been incorporated into The Library Service of Western Australia. The Library Service of W.A. can thus be developed in the future as one integrated system with greater economy and better service to readers than were formerly possible.

Public use of the libraries has continued to grow both in quantity and in range of demand. The use of the Request & Information Service is increasing wherever libraries are established and it will be seen from the list on page 8 that while the readers of W.A. are certainly not blue stockings they ask for quite as many books of serious importance as of a more recreational type.

The Library Service of Western Australia is a joint enterprise between the Library Board and local authorities. While the Board supplies the books it is the local authority which provides the building and the local staff upon which the atmosphere and success of a library so largely depend. The Board wishes once again to record its appreciation of the ready and friendly co-operation which it has received from the local authorities with which it is associated, and from their staffs, and to draw attention to the indispensable contribution which they are making to the success of the library service.

Following the passing of the Acts Amendment (Libraries) Act, 1955, the Board was reconstituted on 1st December, 1955, on which date it became responsible for the former Public Library of Western Australia. (Details will be found on page 10.) During the passage of the Bill through Parliament several generous tributes were paid to the old Board by members of all Parties. The Minister for Education (Hon. W. Hegney, M.L.A.) said :

“ It [the Board] has performed a wonderful service, and is still performing a most essential public duty. As Minister for the time being interested in the Library Board, I think that being very representative in character, it is adopting a very sound policy. It is not attempting to establish a library in every town of the State instantly. Rather it is feeling its way and building up a solid foundation.”

The Hon. A. F. Watts, M.L.A., Leader of the Country Party who introduced the original Bill in 1951 said :

“ In passing I should like to pay a tribute to the work that has been done by the Library Board It has done more in the limited period of its existence than most of us expected would be possible in the time . . . ”

The practical achievements of the first Board, made possible by unflinching Governmental support, were not inconsiderable, but it may well be that its most significant contribution was something less tangible. In 1952 there were many who conceived the purpose of a public library as nothing more than to relieve the tedium of idle hours quite irrespective of intellectual profit or educational gain. The Board refused to accept that view. It had faith in the people of Western Australia. It believed, and in the event it proved, that given access to a wide range of books they would read widely and welcome the opportunity to do so. It placed the emphasis, despite some criticism, on breadth and quality in its bookstock. The establishment of that policy, and the demonstration of its success in practice, was probably the most significant contribution made by the first Board to the ultimate development of a good library service in this State.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

The Board has provided the books for the following six new public libraries, bringing the total to eighteen, serving twenty-three local authority areas :—

Claremont
Fremantle
Tammin
Esperance
Narrogin Districts
Kwinana.

The total number of books in these eighteen libraries is 50,125.

Claremont and Fremantle were the first libraries associated with the Board to be established in the metropolitan area. There was formerly no library in Claremont, but in Fremantle there had been a public library maintained by the City Council, the East Fremantle Council and the Cockburn Road Board since 1949. The results

achieved by these two libraries after five months working may give therefore some indication of what might be expected in other metropolitan areas.

At Claremont at the end of June, 47 per cent. of the total population had registered as readers, and of the books on loan to readers, 42 per cent. were non fiction. At Fremantle the number of readers practically doubled from 2,300 to 4,555 following the introduction of the new service and a great improvement and enlargement of the library building by the City Council, while the number of books on loan to readers rose from 4,200 in the first week after reopening to 7,300. The use made of the Request & Information Service by Claremont readers has been particularly heavy (629 requests were received in the six months to 30th June), a sure sign that a library is well run and has gained the confidence of its readers.

The libraries at Tammin and Esperance are, of course, small but from reports received and from the requests which are coming in from them it is clear that they have started well. Esperance is the furthest library from Perth yet established, over 500 miles away. The Narrogin Districts Public Library, opened on 15th June, serves the Narrogin Municipal and Road Board areas and the Cuballing Road Board. The library at Medina (Kwinana Road Board) was not in operation by 30th June because the new building was not quite finished.

It was unfortunate that the two largest libraries yet opened, Claremont and Fremantle, should have coincided in time. The work of preparing the two stocks simultaneously was more than could be handled in the present very restricted Headquarters premises without postponing exchanges of books for existing libraries. Despite this set back most of them have maintained or increased their level of work during the year. At Margaret River the Road Board has allocated a site in the centre of the town for a new permanent library to replace the present temporary accommodation and the local Committee is about to raise funds towards the building. There are now 1,000 readers at the library drawn from all over the Road District.

Most of the books borrowed from the libraries are, of course, chosen from their shelves but readers can apply for any other book which is not at the time in stock. General (non fiction) books so requested are supplied on loan immediately, if possible, from Headquarters or from another library; novels are sent with an exchange

collection from stock. The following list of all requests received at Headquarters during the last week in June gives an indication of the range and type of book asked for :—

REQUESTS FOR BOOKS—25TH TO 29TH JUNE, 1956.

- On being a bird*, P. A. Wills.
E.U.P. Canasta, K. Konstam.
His eye is on the sparrow, E. Waters and C. Samuels.
Golf for women, L. Suggs.
The woman golfer, L. G. Stanley.
Teach yourself golf, J. C. Jessop.
Teach yourself shorthand, Pitman's College.
Cutty Sark, A. J. Villiers.
A history of Ireland.
Florence Nightingale, C. Woodham-Smith.
Life of Johnson, J. Boswell.
Collected poems, Rupert Brooke.
The two Jacks, W. R. Bird.
Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen.
Great expectations, Charles Dickens.
A book on Acoustics.
From Southern Cross to Pole Star, A. S. Tschiffely.
The yellow joss, I. L. Idriess.
Madman's island, I. L. Idriess.
The great trek, I. L. Idriess.
The great boomerang, I. L. Idriess.
Here's how in golf, M. Morrison.
A new way to better golf, A. J. Morrison.
Constitutional history of England, G. B. Adams.
Practical dairy bacteriology, P. R. Elliker.
Ship and boat builder. Annual review, 1955.
Year of grace, V. Gollancz.
**A critical history of English poetry*, H. J. C. Grierson and J. C. Smith.
Milton and Wordsworth, H. J. C. Grierson.
Wollaston's Picton journal, J. R. Wollaston.
Ideal marriage, T. H. Van de Velde.
How to play your best golf all the time, T. Armour.
Law and procedure at meetings in Australia and New Zealand, P. E. Joske.
Elephant walk, R. Standish.

- London belongs to me*, N. Collins.
Pilling always pays, T. Armstrong.
Bride of liberty, F. Yerby.
Biography of Charles Dickens.
Wollaston's Albany journals, J. R. Wollaston.
†*Educational psychology*, C. E. Skinner.
A world of our own, G. M. Glaskin.
Thunder stone, S. Cooper.
Australia's Great Barrier Reef, V. Serventy.
The mirage, F. B. Vickers.
The Republic, Plato.
Life in her hands, A. Walsh.
Cactus growing.
Animals without backbones, R. Buchsbaum.
**Return to the lost planet*, A. MacVicar.
**Czesko-Anglicky, English Bohemian dictionary*, V. Panek comp.
Wireless world. Guide to broadcasting stations.
The voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay, A. Phillip.
Handbook of applied hydraulics. 2nd ed., C. V. Davis.
The white rabbit, B. Marshall.
*A.B.C. and X.Y.Z. of bee culture, A. J. Root.
Bismarck and British colonial policy, W. O. Aydelotte.
History of modern Europe, G. P. Gooch.
Mineral nutrition of fruit crops, N. F. Childers ed.
Diseases of fruits and hops, H. Wormald.
Tattersalls, V. Orchard.
The long walk, S. Rawicz.
‡*Marianne Thornton*, E. M. Forster.
‡*Memoirs Vol. II. Years of trial and hope*, H. S. Truman.
Number of requests for the week .. 63
Number supplied from stock 56 (89 per cent.)

All were supplied from stock except those marked with an asterisk which were ordered to meet the request, those marked ‡ which were already on order and that marked † which was borrowed from the W. J. Rooney Library in the Education Department.

Thirteen new local authorities applied for the Board's service during the year.

The Board was grieved to hear in November of the death of Mr. E. E. Kirkby, the first librarian of York Public Library. York

was the first library associated with the Board and Mr. Kirkby was until his death always a keen and interested librarian and his relations with the Headquarters staff most friendly and co-operative.

The Board, at the request of the Management of Royal Perth Hospital, supplied on repayment, a collection of books to establish a library for the nursing staff of the Hospital. Readers at the library have the use of all the main services of the Board including the Request & Information Service. In June, the Board agreed to lend books which might be specially asked for from time to time for the use of the patients of the Paraplegic Unit, Royal Perth Hospital, in connection with their treatment.

STATE LIBRARY DEVELOPMENTS.

A great deal of time has been spent both by the Board and by the staff on matters connected with the transfer to the Board of the State Library and subsequently on the development of its service.

In August, 1954, the Government decided that the library services provided by the Board and by the Trustees of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia should be amalgamated and invited the two bodies to suggest the best way of effecting the amalgamation. Lengthy discussion and conferences led to agreed proposals which the Government adopted. The necessary Bill was passed in the last Session of Parliament and the Public Library was separated administratively from the Museum and Art Gallery and transferred to the control and management of the Board on the 1st December, 1955.

On 5th December, the Executive Committee of the Board adopted an outline plan of alterations to the building and development of the service, which was approved in detail by the Board on the 19th January. A request for the necessary funds was made to the Government and subsequently granted. The building operations are expected to begin at the end of July, 1956.

It may therefore be appropriate to describe some of the Board's plans in this Report, which will appear while the work is in progress, rather than to wait until after they have been completed.

Policy.

The provision of a lending service in Perth, as in the country and the suburbs, is the responsibility of the local authority : the Perth City Council. The function of the State Library should therefore be to pro-

vide a service of a more advanced and specialised nature than is appropriate to a local public library, and primarily as a reference library. This implies that the bibliographical facilities and the staff should be appropriate to meet the needs of the serious student, the research worker or even the advanced scholar, wherever he may live in the State.

The Board has in its lending stock a considerable number of more erudite or specialised works, acquired for the Request & Information Service, which are unsuitable for normal lending library stocks, and would be more useful in a library to which the public had access than on the closed shelves of Headquarters. There are many books of which one copy is sufficient to meet the needs of the whole State and such books can best be housed in the State Library. They should however be available for use wherever in the State they may be needed, and not be restricted to use by those who can visit the State Library. Therefore in suitable circumstances they should be lent from the State Library.

A cardinal principle of the Library Board of Western Australia Act, 1951, is that lending library services should be jointly financed by the Board and by local authorities. It would be contrary to that principle for the Board to lend directly from the State Library, quite apart from the fact that indiscriminate loans would prevent the proper functioning of the library as a reference library. Therefore while suitable books which for convenience are kept in the State Library will be lent through the Request & Information Service to public and other approved libraries, direct loans to individuals cannot be made from the State Library except in exceptional circumstances.

The State Library has been, and is, used by the public much less than it might be. The Board intends to improve the bookstock, the appearance of the building and the service to readers. The Government, believing that a good library is necessary and worthwhile, has made the necessary initial funds available. The Board is confident that the public response will justify the effort and the expenditure, as it has done that on lending libraries.

Creation of four libraries.

There are two schools of thought on how a reference service should be organised. One, the older, favours placing all the books in one collection, available in one reading room, and operated by one fairly large staff. The other, which has found increasing favour of

recent years, divides the books and staff into subject departments, each with its own smaller reading room. This has the advantage that it permits specialisation in the staff and is the main reason for its increasing popularity. The library user of today, unlike his predecessor of 50 years ago, is often a specialist and needs the aid of a bibliographical specialist as his librarian. The reader, for example, who wants to know the magnetic permeability of Cr-Ni steel or methods of testing for rancidity in edible fats is unlikely to be best served by a librarian whose experience and interests lie in literature and the arts or local history, and vice versa.

The Archives Section is in effect a subject departmental library, devoted to local history. The excellent reputation which it enjoys testifies to the success of this method of organisation. The Board intends to extend the principle and to divide the rest of the library into three further subject departments devoted to—

Business, Science and Technology
Literature and the Arts
Social Sciences, Philosophy and Religion.

The J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History. State Archives.

This library will be developed from the present so called Archives Section, which is of course concerned with local history generally and not only with the archives of the government. All material relating to West Australian history whether official, unofficial, printed or manuscript will be concentrated and co-ordinated in one library, which will also contain—and it is hoped greatly expand—the collection of Western Australian literature.

The management of the deposited archives of the government will, of course, remain a separate function, though carried out by the staff of the local history library.

What happens today will be history tomorrow. The Library of West Australian History should therefore engage in a systematic programme of collecting and preserving the fugitive material of the day—election addresses, theatre and concert programmes, programmes of public gatherings of importance and the like—for the benefit of future students.

The Board hopes to see a marked intensification of effort on local history and literature in the State Library. This, to be successful, must stir the interest of the public. The Library of West Australian History should be not only a distinguished but also a distinctive and

well known part of the State Library and nothing would serve better than to give it a distinctive name. It has therefore been decided to name the Library The J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History. Dr. Battye served this State over a long period in many capacities and there is no memorial to him. Nothing could be more suitable than a library devoted to the subject of his especial interest.

The Library of Business, Science and Technology.

The industrial, technical and commercial standing of this State can be maintained and developed only if business and industry master the techniques of exploiting both existing knowledge and new knowledge as it becomes available.

At present there is some degree of unemployment in Western Australia. This is probably only a temporary state of affairs but as John Maynard Keynes said at the end of the war "the maintenance of full employment requires that we should be not only good but clever." "Clever" in this connection means technically efficient.

There is already some demand for technical information but little means of meeting it. The Board has therefore decided that the first of the new subject libraries to be organised will be devoted to the needs of industry and commerce in this State. The Board is fortunate in having, as Chief Assistant Librarian, Mr. James Hammond who was formerly the Librarian of the Technical Library in Manchester, one of the largest in Great Britain.

It is, of course, well known that a library is of value to students and apprentices ; it is less often realised that it can serve management, trade unions, technical staff and sales staff, and can give them help and information which lead directly to better industrial conditions, more output, more profit and indirectly to a better standard of living for everyone.

The technical library itself will be housed in a separate part of the present reading room on the first floor, and it will have as an offshoot an Information Centre on the ground floor close to the new entrance. The primary aim of the Information Centre will be to answer enquiries, particularly commercial enquiries, which do not need prolonged study.

About £4,000 worth of new technical books and about 300 new periodicals and abstracting journals have been ordered. In addition a fairly comprehensive collection of telephone and other directories together with atlases, codes, commercial and official journals and general quick reference works will be placed in the Information Centre. A well qualified librarian has been appointed to take charge of the new service.

The Bibliographical Centre.

Efficient catalogues and comprehensive bibliographies are essential to effective library service. They indicate what books there are and where exactly a particular piece of information can be found, either within the library or elsewhere in the world.

The Bibliographical Centre will concentrate all the library's catalogues and much of its bibliographical material in one place. Its function will be :—

- (a) to assist readers find what they want in the State Library ;
- (b) to assist readers locate what they want, if it is not in the State Library ;
- (c) to promote and assist inter-library co-operation within the State ;
- (d) to assist inter-state and international library co-operation ;
- (e) to provide bibliographical information or assistance to other libraries or to individuals in the State or, exceptionally, elsewhere.

An organised system of inter-library co-operation is needed to mobilize the resources of all libraries within the State and to enable users' needs to be met as quickly and efficiently as possible. The spirit of co-operation already exists, but it needs organisation to achieve the best results. The following are the sort of enquiries which are made :—

Where is a certain periodical to be found ?

Can I get a photocopy of an article I need ?

Is there a copy of a certain book anywhere in the State, or elsewhere ?

If so, can I borrow it or consult it ?

What is the name and address of the publisher of ?

Can you verify the details of the following book, etc. ?

Since the library resources of W.A., especially in more advanced and unusual material, are meagre, material is often needed from other States. It would be a convenience to many of the smaller libraries to have a centre through which such interstate requests could be made. A State centre would often be more successful in negotiating loans, etc., than a less well known body. Likewise it would facilitate the location of material in W.A. needed by libraries in other States, and so help general co-operation.

There is no question of making the use of any such co-operative facilities obligatory or of limiting in any way the freedom of any other library. The intention is that such a service should be established ; there is little doubt that it will be freely used.

The lack of a Commonwealth-wide organised system of inter-library loan and co-operation is one of the most serious defects in the library system of Australia, and Western Australia could by establishing such a State Bibliographical Centre give a lead to the other States of the Commonwealth.

Other Changes.

The other two subject libraries devoted to Literature and the Arts, and Social Sciences, Philosophy and Religion will be fully developed later.

The whole of the ground floor of the library is to be rearranged and redecorated. A new entrance and the new Battye Library will be built. It is hoped that these and other changes will revolutionise the appearance and atmosphere of the ground floor.

No structural improvements are planned on the first floor at present but the books in the reading room will be rearranged to obviate the public use of the galleries and to place some 20,000 of the most used and recent books on open shelves within reach of the floor level. Many of the books at present in the reading room are seldom used and they will be transferred to the stack.

The Accessions and Catalogue Sections will move down from Havelock Street and occupy a large room which was used for the storage of newspapers. This will enable Circulation Section to expand somewhat in Havelock Street and enable it and the other two Sections to deal more effectively with the continually expanding demands of libraries in Country Districts and elsewhere in the Metropolitan Area.

These various changes will require much work spread perhaps over a considerable period of time. They will entail examining, sorting and re-locating some 200,000 volumes on over three miles of shelving ; a thorough examination of the stock to reveal missing books, subjects unrepresented and important works which have not been acquired ; and the cataloguing in standard form of much of the present stock. A start has been made on all these.

The State Library, as its name implies, is a library for the State, the whole State and not merely the metropolitan area. It is being integrated into The Library Service of Western Australia, so that its

services will be available through any local public library associated with the Board. If, for example, a reader at Nyabing wants some information, he will be able to go to the Nyabing library which will forward the request to Headquarters. It will be referred to the subject specialist concerned, in the State Library, and the necessary books, photocopies or information passed back to the reader through the Nyabing library. The resources of the country libraries will thus be considerably enriched by the integration of the State Library into the Board's activities.

DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES. HEADQUARTERS.

BOOK SELECTION.

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

The Board's book selection policy was described at some length in last year's Annual Report. That it is a good policy and successfully carried out is shown by the heavy use of libraries as they are established and by the high proportion of the requests made by readers for special books which can be supplied from stock.

In the latter part of the year considerable time was devoted to the selection of books to improve, and fill gaps in, the stock of the State Library. As mentioned elsewhere in this Report a large number of books and periodicals on science and technology in particular has been ordered, together with telephone directories of the principal cities of the world, maps, business men's guides to export conditions, and so on.

A very welcome opportunity was taken to purchase a small collection of private press books. These, in addition to their intrinsic value as books, are valuable as examples of fine printing and book production. It is intended, when the pressure of immediate re-organisation is relaxed, to begin the judicious purchase for the State Library of examples of the great presses of the past, if they are offered at a reasonable price.

The Board has, from the beginning, sought to build up a good collection of bibliographies, and still greater emphasis has been laid on this policy during this year with the needs of the State Library in view. These bibliographies range from such monumental works as the Library of Congress Catalogue through large subject indexes like Chemical Abstracts or Engineering Index to small and specialised items such as the Monthly Cumulated List of Periodical Articles on the

Far East and South East Asia published by the School of Oriental Studies, London, or the catalogue of the British Drama League Library. All in their several spheres are the keys to knowledge and the use of books.

The Board wishes to express its deep appreciation to all those, too numerous to list, who have presented books during the year. Many otherwise unobtainable books have been added through their generosity.

ACCESSIONS SECTION.

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

Accessions Section is responsible for all processes involved in the ordering, receipt and processing of books. With the increase in the size of the stock and particularly since heavy ordering of more out of the way titles for the State Library began, the work of the Section has become more complex and onerous.

A total of 38,192 books were accessioned during the year including those received by purchase, donation, interlibrary exchange and the vesting of the former stocks of libraries which became associated with the Board.

As the service has expanded readers and librarians have taken increasing advantage of the service offered by the Board to supply to local libraries books which are not already in stock ; about fifty applications a week are received for such books. By meeting them whenever possible, the Board ensures that local bookstocks conform to local needs and wishes.

Several collections of books were ordered to meet the special needs or requests of particular types of reader. About a hundred plays were ordered in sets, on a scale of roughly one copy per main character and one for the producer, for the use of dramatic societies, C.W.A. Branches, Youth Clubs, etc., for play readings. One copy of every book in print recommended for external students of the University was bought to assist country students who cannot visit the University Library. An experimental collection of music was provided for Claremont Library, to test public demand. A selection of fifty Italian novels was supplied to Drakesbrook Library for the use of the Italian community there. A number of books recommended by the Marriage Guidance Council was added to stock to meet requests which might arise from the work and lectures of the Council.

The addition of material of that sort greatly improves the service but it also adds to the work of Accessions Section because the bibliographical checking of such titles is more difficult and occupies more time than that of current publications of which the details are easily accessible.

CATALOGUE SECTION.

Joyce B. S. Jackson, B.A., A.L.A., Chief Cataloguer.

The Catalogue Section prepares and prints all the catalogue and stock record cards required by the whole service, and the printed catalogue of the non fiction stock.

A total of 10,147 new titles (27,680 volumes) have been catalogued during the year and 135,000 cards printed and filed in the various catalogues and stock files. The difference between this figure and that given as accessioned, above, is accounted for by the fact that the fiction stock vested by Fremantle which remained at Fremantle was not catalogued and by the stock at Headquarters, mainly for the State Library, which is awaiting cataloguing in the new year.

The work of the Section will be considerably increased by the addition of the State Library to the Board's activities. The effect has already been felt and it will become much more apparent in the coming year. The effect is threefold: more books will be handled; the number of catalogues to be maintained will be increased, and the actual cataloguing process will be slower because the type of book added to the State Library is more advanced and therefore more difficult to analyse and classify than the majority in the lending libraries.

At the end of last year the printed catalogue provided in each library was in the course of being revised for the first time. This and a second revision have been completed. In all 444 new pages were produced during the year and the catalogue itself grew from its original 60 to 344 pages.

As well as the bi-monthly list of new books on agriculture compiled for the Journal of Agriculture, a list of books on librarianship and bibliography is now supplied for each issue of the Australian Library Journal. A book list on current problems of government was produced, and circulated to Members of Parliament and libraries. Work has almost been completed on a Union List of bibliographies and abstracting journals in the major libraries of Perth. It is hoped that this will be published shortly; it should prove of great value to students.

CIRCULATION SECTION.

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

Circulation Section is responsible for all work involved in the supply of books to libraries : making up initial collections, the despatch and receipt of exchanges and the Request and Information Service.

All aspects of the work have grown in volume during the year, particularly the Request and Information Service. A total of 2,211 requests were received from libraries as against 343 last year and a number of the requests now being received particularly from Claremont and the State Library are for unusual or old books or for information not easy to locate, which require lengthy bibliographical searches.

The existence of a copy of the printed catalogue in every library stimulates requests by bringing to the notice of readers books, sometimes quite specialised, of which they were unaware. The greater proportion of books are, of course, supplied from stock but a number have been borrowed from other libraries within and beyond the borders of the State to meet requests. The Board is glad to record its appreciation of the co-operation it has received from those other libraries. A number of books have also been lent to other libraries at their request.

A stocktaking was carried out at one library, York. Out of a stock of 2,000 volumes, two were found to be missing after 18 months operation.

The Havelock Street premises are now so over-crowded with staff and equipment as seriously to interfere with efficiency. The Board wishes to record its appreciation to the staff of all Sections for the way they have cheerfully accepted very inconvenient working conditions and not only maintained but increased their output despite them.

STATE LIBRARY.

C. L. Drake, M.A., A.L.A., *Deputy Librarian : State Library:*

The main activity of the general library staff since 1st December has been on work preparatory to the changes described in the section *State Library Developments.*

The whole of the books on science and technology have been examined by the Chief Assistant Librarian, Mr. Hammond, and obsolete titles and editions discarded to make room for the new stock on order for the technical library.

A list of about 1,000 titles, all duplicates, was compiled and circulated to other libraries through the Commonwealth National Library Clearing Centre. Over 70 per cent. were asked for by other libraries on the exchange plan which operates throughout Australia. Nearly 1,000 volumes have been presented by request to the University Library, many of them serials which will help to complete incomplete sets. A major move of books in the stack was completed to enable all the bound volumes of Western Australian newspapers to be moved from the present newspaper store to the stack preparatory to the building operations.

Immediately on taking over the State Library the Board installed photocopy equipment to provide quickly copies of periodical articles, etc., required by readers. This service has been much appreciated and its use is growing steadily. A total of 1,183 pages were copied for readers between 22nd December and 30th June.

The staff has been increased to enable at least one member of staff to be on duty in the reading room throughout the hours that the library is open. This has improved the service to readers and will also, in conjunction with a tightening of the regulations, reduce the heavy losses of books which appear to have been suffered formerly.

As a matter of policy, little has been done to stimulate greater use of the library because the staff were fully occupied in getting ready for the alterations. As soon, however, as the Board took over, the Request and Information Service was extended to the State Library and a growing number of requests (3 in January, 20 in June) has been received for books not in the State Library stock. Most of these, which arose from the printed catalogue placed in the library, were supplied from the lending stock, others were obtained by inter-library loan.

ARCHIVES SECTION.

Mollie Lukis, B.A., Archivist.

As might have been expected, there has been a steady increase in the work of the Section in the months which have elapsed since the move was made in August to better accommodation. The additional space provided has made possible the transfer of valuable records from a number of government departments. A notable example of such records, both for their general interest and for their value in specialised research, were some 400 volumes from the Department of Lands and Surveys—description books and registers of land sold,

and records of all pastoral leases in the Colony from 1829 to 1890—which enable the spread of land settlement in the older country districts to be traced.

Work has continued on the location of descendants of pioneer settlers and officials, who may hold valuable private records bearing on the history of the State which they are prepared to make available. A considerable body of important documents from such sources has already been received.

A valuable addition to the collection of Western Australian material in the State Library was made by the recent purchase in London of the "Journal of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Western Australia for the year 1842," printed in Perth in 1843. It is perhaps not generally realised that many of the first Western Australian publications are almost as rare and as important for research workers as manuscripts. This little volume of which there are only four known copies, and this the only complete one, was the sixth book printed in the Colony; in addition to the activities of the Agricultural Society, it contains statistics, reports on the weather, and information about the aborigines, the state of society, prices and wages and similar information.

Photographic copies of a number of other rare early books relating to Western Australia which are at present unobtainable have also been purchased, making available to research students and others works which could formerly be consulted only at the Mitchell or National Libraries.

With the gradual extension of the work of the Archives Section and knowledge of its activities, increasing support in the collection of material has been received from interested persons, sometimes ex-students now working overseas, sometimes people living in country districts who have themselves made use of its resources. There is no doubt that much important material for the study of local history—letters, diaries, records of local organisations, pamphlets, souvenir programmes, maps, photographs, etc.—is scattered throughout the country. Ideally, systematic collection of this material should be made by trained staff travelling throughout the State. Until resources are available to make possible such systematic collection, the help given by the many interested friends who themselves gather material and bring it in, who forward information about records as they hear of them, and who take considerable trouble in tracing elusive documents, is of the greatest importance. Not less important is their

contribution in making more widely known the need for the collection and preservation of records. Too many people, though appreciative of the value of records of national importance, discount local records ; as a result, much valuable material has been and still is being lost through lack of interest or neglect.

An important step towards the preservation of basic local material was made recently when the necessity for Road Boards and Councils to preserve important records, particularly Minute Books, was emphasised in a Local Government Department Bulletin ; where safe storage is not available locally, deposit of such records in the Archives was advocated.

TRAINING OF LIBRARIANS.

With the amalgamation of library services and consequent increase in the Board's staff, and in view of further increases which may be expected as the service expands, the Board has decided that it is now practical to arrange classes for the professional examinations to be held in Perth in co-operation with the Education Department. This will enable young West Australians to train as librarians while working and will avoid the necessity of their going to the Eastern States for the purpose. The classes will not, of course, be restricted to the Board's staff but will be open to the staffs of other libraries.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

The Board wishes to record its gratitude to the Lord Mayor and the City of Perth for their continued hospitality in placing a committee room at the Board's disposal for meetings.

The work of the Board has been materially assisted on many occasions during the year by the ready and cordial co-operation offered by departments of the State Government and particularly by the Office of the Agent General for Western Australia in London which has handled the considerable volume of detailed overseas business with unflinching efficiency. To all these departments, and to the officers concerned, the Board wishes formally, but none the less sincerely, to express its thanks and appreciation. Especial thanks are due to the State Treasury which at the beginning of the Board's activities in 1953 offered to help by undertaking the detailed work of paying accounts, and has continued to do so until the end of this year. This help at a time when the staff was very small and hard pressed was invaluable.

CONCLUSION.

When the Amending Bill was before Parliament some of the Board's friends in the country were concerned lest responsibility for the State Library should deflect the Board's interest from library development in the country. They need not fear. The State Library is only one part—albeit an important one—of the Board's concern.

Through the centuries until recent years libraries have tended to be few and their use restricted to a small elite of literate scholars. There is still an instinctive tendency to measure a library's importance by its size. That is an out of date concept.

Today in Australia, almost everyone is literate. A reader of serious or scholarly books is as likely to be found way out in the bush as in a big city ; and the countryman has within reason, as much right as the metropolitan resident to get the books he wants in his own home or town. It is true that certain types of research require a large library and can only be carried out within that library. It is equally true that a large collection of books immediately at call and not scattered in innumerable homes is necessary for reference. But it is not true that the large reference library is intrinsically more important than the aggregate of small lending libraries, provided that the small lending libraries can, as they can in W.A., provide, though not all at once, almost as wide a range of books as the reference library. The reference library is essential for the peaks of scholarship, and they are necessary for the progress and development of our culture and society. But for every reader in a reference library there are hundreds at the lending libraries and if the quality of the lending service is good the benefit to society of the hundreds is every bit as great as that of the few scholars. The national welfare depends as much on general education as on universities.

The Board will therefore hold as true a balance as it can, in emphasis and in the allocation of funds, between the lending and the reference services. It hopes to build up the State Library into one in which Western Australia can take genuine pride, but it will not do so at the expense of the lending and particularly the country lending libraries.

The preceding paragraphs inevitably tended to emphasise the difference, and perhaps by implication a certain competition, between the two aspects of the service. It is the wish of the Board that the differences should in fact be minimised and competition be replaced

by co-operation. Already readers at the State Library are benefiting by access to the Board's lending stock and vice versa ; readers at country libraries can get photocopies of material in the State Library which cannot be lent. When the alterations at the State Library are completed the bibliographical work of the Request Service will be transferred to the Bibliographical Centre and the Information Service to the subject libraries. In these and other ways the reference and lending services will intermingle, each supporting the other.

The Board believes that Parliament has this year laid the foundations upon which the most economical and effective library system for Western Australia can be built. It will apply itself to erecting a worthy structure upon those foundations, in co-operation with the local authorities and in confident expectation of continuing support by the Honourable the Minister for Education and other members of the State Government, without which the activities surveyed in this Report would have been impossible.

FRED ALEXANDER,
Chairman.

F. A. SHARR,
State Librarian.

The flower on the cover of this Report is the Lance Leaved Cassia, a wild flower of Western Australia which is found mainly in the Darling Ranges between Mooliabeenie and Harvey. The design was executed by Miss Mary B. Devlin of the Government Lithographic Staff.