

Christchurch firms are using the technical and commercial material of the Library more and more but this increase in use, emphasises the shortcomings of the collection and indicates that the problem of service to industry and commerce requires a great deal of attention. Such a service is an accepted part of public library service both overseas and in other major New Zealand libraries. In other centres, for instance, closer liaison between the public library and local firms including a survey of the periodical holdings of local firms to augment the library's technical resources and periodical holdings has made local industry aware of what the public library has to offer as well as revealing to the library concerned its strengths and weaknesses and how they can be best helped. This type of survey, however, would be inadvisable before the Library had something to show for itself and the first step would be to build up the collection by the purchase of current authoritative works and standard works which have appeared over the past ten years.

In this respect we are fortunate in having on the staff, the newly appointed Deputy City Librarian who is one of the few librarians in the country who have specialised in this field. Mr Wooliscroft, prior to his appointment, had just completed a survey of commercial and technical resources for the Wellington City Council and the N.Z. Library Association and it is proposed that he be asked to report more fully on the needs of this section of the Library and the steps to be taken to provide the business community with the service it can expect as a sizeable ratepayer.

Of all forms of public library service, reference service is the most exacting and in the long run the most rewarding to the civic authority. Because of the cost of maintaining this service little of significance has been done outside the city libraries, the use of whose reference collections extends far beyond their boundaries.

The State, through the Country Library Service, gives substantial aid-in-kind to most public libraries, but this aid is not given to the four main cities and is relatively limited in its application to the large secondary cities. In view of the value of the City Libraries' reference services to the whole community, and their non-participation in State aid, determined efforts should be made to persuade the Government to extend its aid to the City Libraries in the form of cash subsidies on a population basis for the support of reference services.

STAFF :

While the number of professional librarians employed is adequate at present, much of their time is being used on non-professional chores. Staff growth has not kept pace with growth of demand so that professional time spent on book selection, stock revision and reader advisor service has been gradually eroded in order to maintain essential services usually manned by assistants.

In both the Adults' and Children's Divisions long queues frequently form at service points while telephones go unanswered and there are often irritating delays at Enquiries Desks. In the Reference Division a similar situation arises from time to time. Here, however, an even more serious aspect is that, because of inadequate supervision, valuable material can be easily pilfered or mutilated. There is simply not the staff available to institute the additional routines necessary to reduce this waste of valuable assets.

In each of the three Divisions one additional appointment at the assistant level would give the professional staff more time to concentrate on the duties for which they were trained and for