

THE UNIVERSITY AND LIBRARY TRAINING.

(By *Harold G. Miller, M.A., Librarian, Victoria University College, Wellington.*)

My views about the proposal to entrust the university with the training of librarians can be stated quite briefly. First, I don't think the university will be willing to take on the job, and second, I don't think the Library Association should let the control of training slip out of its own hands. On the first point it is perhaps sufficient to say that the university has already burnt its fingers badly with enterprises of this kind—for example in the training of forestry experts. Having provided staff and syllabuses and all the rest of it for two schools of forestry, it has been calmly told by the N.Z. Government (which initiated the whole thing) that there is not a sufficient demand for graduates to justify the maintenance of a single school! The advocates of a university school of library studies will have to be able to show that there will be a continuous demand for graduates in such numbers as will justify the trouble and expense involved. I'm afraid they will also have to be prepared for opposition arising out of a conviction that training of this kind is not the kind of work that a university should do at all.

I attach much more importance to the second point, namely that the Library Association would be unwise to let the control of training get out of its own hands. Anyone who is at all familiar with the University of New Zealand knows how hard it is to reach agreement upon a syllabus of instruction, and how maddeningly hard it is to get amendments adopted when once a syllabus has been agreed upon. It takes years! An any rate, whether it is easy or hard, short or long, the matter will not be in the hands of the Association.

In my opinion the N.Z.L.A. should issue its own diploma and keep control of examinations entirely in its own hands. This is not to say that it should not require candidates to pass university examinations in certain subjects. It might be thought wise to require candidates to pass the university examination in English and History prescribed for candidates for the B.A. degree, but the Association should remain perfectly free to alter this requirement as it saw fit. The purely professional subjects it should make its own arrangements for.

DUNEDIN'S INFORMATION DESK.

By *Miss Betty P. Randle, Dunedin Public Library.*

The information desk at the Dunedin Public Library has now been in operation three years. It began as a small table in a corner of the lending, and has since developed into an attractive green desk, equipped with a phone connecting the desk with all departments in the building. Here, too, is kept the Kardex Index of all magazines and newspapers taken by the library, from which can be found where each issue is kept, and where back numbers are filed. Other equipment at the desk includes a Concise Oxford dictionary, Whitaker's Almanac, Every place in New Zealand, Reference catalogue of Current Literature, Dunedin District Electors' Roll, Index to Plays, Fiction Standard Catalogue, Sequel Story Index, Authors' Handbook, Pears' Encyclopaedia, Constitutional Year Book, Dictionary of pronunciation of Artists' Names, etc., Brief Facts, Enquire Within, Titles and Forms of Address, What's the name Please? (a guide to the correct pronunciation of Current and Prominent Names), List of Newspapers

and Magazines registered at the G.P.O., Wellington, and the N.Z. Railway Timetable.

Both numerical and subject records of enquiries are made, and the analysis of these made last year, and published in the library annual report gave a somewhat surprising indication of the tastes of Dunedin's reading public. The record covered a period of nine months ending in March, 1939, and was divided into a general subject account and a more specific account. For instance a section headed Peoples, Places and International Affairs attracted over one thousand members, probably because at that time the European situation aroused interest, and secondly because there were sufficient books in the sections to supply the demand. The public had not lost interest in Health and Hygiene, which had 192 enquiries, 52 dealing with Diet. Out of 440 enquiries for the Home there were 80 for Interior Decoration, 32 for Cooking, while 23 concerned points of Etiquette. Actually these sections have never