

NEW ZEALAND LIBRARIES

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CONTENTS

<i>Norfolk Island Public Library</i>	169
<i>The Lady Clark Memorial Children's Library</i>	171
<i>A National Library Building for New Zealand?</i>	176
<i>Preserving National Records</i>	178
<i>The Fight for Freedom</i>	179
<i>Reviews</i>	182
<i>Annual Meeting</i>	185
<i>News and Notes</i>	186
<i>Branch Notes</i>	189
<i>Fiction List</i>	190
<i>In Library Literature</i>	191

NORFOLK ISLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

B. G. HOOD

NORFOLK Island is a territory of the Commonwealth of Australia and is administered by an Administrator, appointed by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth, who makes ordinances for the 'peace, order and good government of Norfolk Island.' An advisory council of eight elected members advises the Administrator on any matters relating to the island. Virtually, power rests in the hands of the Administrator. An annual administrative grant is made by the Commonwealth Government, and other revenue comes from such sources as the sale of liquor, of which the Administration is the sole importer.

SOME STATISTICS

Approximate revenue and expenditure of the Territory	£40,000
Population (1946 census)	1,030

Mr Hood, who is now Library Development Officer, City of Cape Town, was until the beginning of this year Deputy City Librarian, Wellington Public Libraries.

Library book stock (including 600 fiction, 762 non-fiction, 193 reference, 1,282 books given by the Cable Company which include a lot of fairly rare standard fiction, 173 children's books)	3,064
Annual issues: Fiction	5,003
Non-fiction	1,231
Subscriptions: per half-year	1s. 3d.
per year	2s. 6d.
Subscribers, 1950: yearly	175
half-yearly	54

THE LIBRARY

The Norfolk Island Public Library is situated at Kingston, and it is unusual in that while it is a subscription library, it is run by the administration, which is at the same time the local authority, and derives no support from rates or taxes, as these do not exist on the island. It is referred to locally as a Carnegie Library, not because Carnegie supplied the quarters, but because in 1936 a three-year grant was made by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to supply library materials for the outlying territories of the Commonwealth of Australia. The administration was to supply quarters and staff.

The Advisory Council welcomed this provision, and recommended that the library ('a reference library') be opened at Burnt Pine, in the centre of the island, and that it specialize in books on 'agriculture, dairying, fruit growing, and kindred subjects.' The library finally opened on 2nd October 1939 with an initial stock of about 800 books from the Carnegie grant. The opening had been delayed through protracted argument with the owner of a local commercial library who demanded adequate compensation. The administrative headquarters are at Kingston in fine late Georgian stone buildings built during the convict era, and, as the administration apparently feared the expense of moving its facilities to a more accessible spot, the suggestion of the Advisory Council was not heeded and the library was housed at Kingston. It was noted at the time of opening that 'the librarian's wife has a nice garden, and she will undertake to keep the room brightened with flowers. She and her husband live within 300 yards of the library.'

The book expenditure of the library is now a charge on the vote of the Department of External Territories, Canberra, and a well chosen supply of up to date books is provided in generous quantities. Funds derived from subscriptions are banked, and a scheme has been put forward to use these funds for the purchase of pictures and other historical material about the island. No attempt has been made to specialize in non-fiction of special subject interest in the library, apart from a fairly recent attempt to provide material about the history of the island and the mutiny of the *Bounty*. Most of this material is now falling to pieces. The well balanced reference section has some particularly fine books in it, including several encyclopaedias (a new Chambers's) and such useful books as the latest Dykes *Automobile Encyclopedia*.

The library is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon (the Monday and Friday openings being coincident with the opening of the adjacent bond liquor store), and the librarian is a retired civil servant who works only when the library is open and receives the generous salary of 15s. a week. His duties of recording issues and

returns of books in a ledger, alphabetically arranged with a page for each borrower (and a new ledger every year), leave little time for the care, arrangement, or even order of the books.

At some stage or another someone, presumably the National Library, Canberra, has provided shelf guides with explanations of the Dewey numbers on the back of the non-fiction. To say the least, the labels are misleading. When the library gets too full, or when books need rebinding, they are sent back to Canberra in boxes. Periodicals regularly received are the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Weekly News*. Books received from Canberra are fully catalogued, and the catalogue cards are placed in the books, but there seems to be no proper use for them, and in almost any home on the island one will find a few catalogue cards lying around.

A generous supply of books is available from Canberra, and the library, the only cultural amenity on the island, could give much more effective service to this isolated community if attention were given to the following points:

1. Adequate siting and housing of the library.
2. Building up of useful subject collections.
3. Changeover from subscriptions to a rental charge for light fiction.
4. Provision from the Department of External Territories vote of some periodicals of value or interest, such as *Pacific Islands Monthly*, *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*, *Time*, *New Statesman and Nation*.
5. The advantage of having some professional advice, and the necessity for paying the librarian a salary at least commensurate with other administrative salaries paid on the island.
6. The building up of a request service from the National Library, Canberra, similar to that administered by the National Library Service of New Zealand.
7. Opening the library at more reasonable hours, and opening it longer; providing facilities for people to read in comfort in the library should they so desire.

THE LADY CLARK MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S LIBRARY, TASMANIA

JOYCE BONIWELL

IN my meetings with New Zealand people, I find that among many the impression of Tasmania is a vague confusion of convicts, snakes and apples! A brief picture may therefore help to make its library organization more understandable.

Miss Boniwell, now on the staff of the School Library Service, Wellington, came to us from the Lady Clark Memorial Library.