

advantage of the wider facilities that the city has to offer them. In one of his messages to the people of New Zealand, during his visit in 1935, Bernard Shaw told them to live down the bovine idea that the Dominion was destined to be a dairy for the rest of the universe. He added the constructive suggestion that, because of its remoteness, New Zealand should strive to make itself a cultural centre. (54) This ideal underlies the very practical scheme, formulated in the same year by the Canterbury Association of English Teachers, and sanctioned by the Minister of Education, to supply books to children of country schools by means of a travelling library. (55)

This service, which existed for six years from 1935 to 1941, provided a good supply of books with the emphasis on a personal link between the librarian and the children wherever possible. There were 164 schools using the service by September 1941 and they were able to draw on a stock of 7717 books which ranged from primer level to Form II. During that year there were 2347 children using the service, while the book issue, the highest on record, reached the excellent total of 16,438, an increase of almost 1000 on that of the previous year. (56) The reason for the disappearance of the scheme was the increased Government interest in rural library requirements as shown by the establishment of the Country Library Service.

The Country Library Service, which was inaugurated in 1939, was a social and cultural experiment which, within its own sphere, showed promise of great value. The first annual report showed that,

---

54. "Star-Sun" September 11, 1935. (editorial)

55. *ibid* (news item)

56. Annual Report of Travelling Library for Rural Schools of Canterbury and Westland September 25, 1941.