

by teletype; and weather sequences rattle across them four times a day and on any special occasion. Uniform systems of communication by radio between ground and air are established at every large airport. Air traffic rules much more rigid than those pertaining to our highways, are established and enforced. Planes are spaced apart in distance, altitude and time, so that the risk of collision is negligible. Airport control has been established at all the large airports so that the arrival of several aircraft at one point, at one time, causes no danger or embarrassment since the operator in charge of the control tower can bring them into the airport with as much assurance as a railway despatcher brings trains into a terminal.

In the operating end, the efficiency of the company stands high on this continent. The percentage of seats occupied during the first ten months of 1941 was 69 as compared to 69.7 by the nearest U. S. competitor. The percentage of schedule miles flown was 98.1 for the same period, which is high above the American average.

To-day the company is flying 19,000 miles a day as against 15,000 a year ago. In January, 1941, it carried 4,190 passengers. Six months later the number had doubled.¹ The company reports that seventy-five per cent of these passengers were travelling on business directly connected with the war effort.

The latest monthly figures show a mail load of nearly 140,000 pounds; in January, 1941, it was 83,460 pounds. Air express has trebled from slightly better than 2,000 pounds a month at the beginning of last year to 6,680 in the last monthly figures.

This is indirect war work but the company is making a direct contribution also. From the beginning of the war it has been overhauling and calibrating aircraft instruments for the Royal Canadian Air Force. Recently it has undertaken to overhaul aircraft engines and accessories under contract to the Department of Munitions and Supply. That Department is erecting a building and installing plant on the Winnipeg Airport next to the T.C.A. shop where this work can be carried out under the direct supervision of the splendid aircraft engineering services established and developed by T.C.A.

In less than four years this organization has fitted itself into the life of Canada in a way and to a degree that is comparable to that of any of our great transportation systems. It is owned by the Canadian people and established to render service to them and this it is doing with enthusiasm and self-sacrifice on the part of every member of its staff, from the president, directing policy, to the latest apprentice, cleaning engine parts in the repair shop.

1. See the chart on the cover of this issue.

A Library for Our Fighting Forces

By NORA BATESON

ANY library for service men has two obvious functions. The first is to provide them with the information necessary for what is often a new kind of job. The other is to keep them in touch with what is being done and thought today and to

supply them with such stimulus and satisfaction to thought and imagination and curiosity as the printed word can offer.

It is such a programme on a rather modest scale that the Nova Scotia Regional Libraries Commission had in mind when it agreed to cooperate with the Canadian Legion War Services in

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providing libraries for the Atlantic Area. Up to December 1941 the Canadian Legion War Services has spent some \$18,000 for books and pamphlets in this Area, the books selected and distributed through the Nova Scotia Regional Libraries Commission.

With so many men drafted into service in a highly technical war, there is a great need for books both for instructors and instructed. Books on diesels, automobiles, wireless, welding, carpentry, shop work are widely read in all the services. Aeronautics has a constantly growing literature on aero-engines, navigation, structure, instruments, photography etc. and the rapid growth of the Canadian navy is reflected in a demand for books on navigation, marine engines, etc. The request for books on practical mathematics from arithmetic to calculus is very general.

Such books as these are part of the munitions of this war. They are evidently so regarded by the Japanese. Last summer a shipment to Japan of technical books valued at \$57,000 from one United States firm was stopped in the mail by United States Army Intelligence officers and returned to New York. After the attack on Pearl Harbour every technical book on sale in Honolulu was bought by those who had the job of rebuilding and repairing.

Besides the definitely technical book, requests come in for information on barbering, meat-cutting, the making of soap from salvage, cooking, etc.

In democracies fighting for the "four freedoms", the second function of the library is at least as important as its utilitarian, technical service. Many voices have been raised in England in the press and in meetings against measures which threaten the free production and circulation of current books. Tawney states what many confirm that "the demand of the Fighting Services for books during this war has been startling, and the demand has been for a very wide variety of books". There is a similar

demand here and if it is not so great that is because in general books have not yet had with us the same wide circulation as in Great Britain.

This war is being fought in the midst of and is part of a great world revolution, social, economic and political. What is happening and what is being thought in Russia, Germany, China as well as on this continent and in England can only be estimated with reference to the scores of books which have been written in the last few years. Many of them may have no permanent value but out of the evidence they offer there will be formed the shape of things to come. And many of the men who will help to determine that shape are now in our Fighting Forces.

There is a wide circulation of such books as Laski's *Where Do We Go From Here*, Muir's *Future for Democracy*, Mumford's *Faith for Living*, Snow's books on China; the many books on Russia, including one of the latest and most significant: Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*; books on England under fire; and on the pattern of conquest in Hitler's Europe.

Besides their specific value as material and mental munitions of war, books are an addition to the recreational facilities of the Services. One of the surprising facts that these libraries reveal is the great popularity of poetry. Whether it is the reaction from the routine of an ordered day or some less obvious reason, great use is made of our hundreds of volumes of verse. Not only Kipling and Service but every ype of poetry is asked for and it is in response to repeated demands from all quarters that our collection has been constantly expanded both in number of volumes and in variety.

Fiction is naturally popular although only half the books circulated come under that head and books of travel and adventure, biographies and books on general science have many readers.

These service libraries certainly bear out a fact already discovered by the

Reader's Digest with its several million readers and that is the real thirst for ideas and information among "ordinary" men. It is on this discovery that the *Digest* has built its huge circulation, the discovery of a wide-spread serious and sustained interest in the world of men and events. They declare that "the serious meaty type of subjects draw more cheers than articles dealing with sports or movies or radio."

There is evidence that there are men looking ahead and thinking about what they will do when the war is over. And some at least are looking to the land. There is a constant demand for books on agriculture and pamphlets issued by the Dominion Department of Agriculture. Only the other day a merchant seaman, once a farmer in the Canadian dust-bowl, came in to ask for material on how to control and check soil erosion in that area. He was to be in Halifax two months and wished to "get his teeth" into something that really interested him while he was here. He is not the first one to express that wish. Many men have leisure which they never have had before and some are disposed to make use of it.

The books in the Canadian Legion War Services library are scattered in about seventy-five collections varying from 20 or so books on boats and in small forts to 1000 or so in the larger camps. The books are new, carefully selected and an effort is made by purchase or by borrowing from local libraries to secure any book or information asked for. Because of the very limited funds the book outlets are mostly in the hands of volunteers and they are open only for a limited number of hours a week. For the same reason of limited funds as well as lack of accommodation the system has not yet been fully extended.

One fact emerges which cannot be ignored and that is the difference in the use made of these libraries by men from various parts of Canada. Those who use

them most are men from Ontario and the far west who are accustomed to libraries at home. During the last war Lord Haldane made the same discovery in Great Britain. He found that many men, though they had learnt to read in school, had never used their skill because there were no books available to them. This discovery led in Great Britain to nothing less than a revolution in the library service of the United Kingdom, a revolution which has given equal library service to everyone.

Not only in Great Britain but in most of the democracies of Europe the last war was followed by a remarkable extension of public libraries. When the state of Czecho-Slovakia was organised after 1918 it was a part of the national educational plan that every village with a population over three hundred should have its library. In the Scandinavian countries there were large regional systems taking books to all the people, and the country which read more books in proportion to its population than any country in Europe was Finland.

This recognition of the connection between the wide and free distribution of books among a people and the vigorous functioning of a democracy has not yet prevailed in all sections of Canada. In the last few years there has been a spreading interest in adult education. Discussion groups, forums, pamphlets, radio talks are all instruments but behind them and supporting and continuing their work must be the public library. Alvin Johnson, Dean of Adult Education in the United States, says, "Without the book there can be no adult education worthy of the name. The essential role of the public library in our democratic system is therefore cardinal." Libraries are not a guarantee but they are a condition of adult education. The experience of these war libraries underlines the need for the extension of library facilities to the less prosperous and wealthy provinces of the Dominion.