

PHYSICAL WELFARE AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

THE fourth annual report, that for the year ending December 31 last, was submitted to the trustees of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust by the Executive Committee on February 26, and some of the matters dealt with in it are here summarised. The administration of the trust during the year was not an easy task. Restrictions of various kinds arising out of the war have militated against smooth and rapid progress, but the record of work done is, both in quality and amount, satisfactory.

The new developments opened up by the Executive Committee, with the approval of the trustees, are described in the report. The normal income of the trust in 1917 amounted to 124,419*l.*, and the grant promises made by the trustees in connection with these new developments reached for the year the total of 122,174*l.* For the last three years, during which the trust may be said to have been in full operation, the average amount of grant promises per annum has been 127,517*l.*, and the average normal income for the three years in question 11,528*l.* less than that sum. The income for the year 1917 may, however, be regarded as the minimum income available in the future, but even that figure is slightly less than the average grant commitment for the last three years.

Infant Welfare Centres.

The physical welfare of mothers and children, with all that is implied in that comprehensive phrase, has occupied public attention largely in recent months, and the committee's labours have also been directed towards furnishing, within the limits of its powers, some assistance in the solution of this national problem. The elaborate surveys referred to in the last annual report have been completed and published.

The committee has determined to erect and equip buildings for six infant welfare centres in urban areas in the United Kingdom. Broadly speaking, the centres will comprise an infant clinic, pre-natal clinic, school for mothers, and nursery, and the necessary accommodation for the staff. These buildings will be maintained by the local authority concerned by means of local rates and Imperial grants, and will be given on the following conditions:—That a suitable site is provided, and that the plans and estimates for the building prove acceptable to the trustees; that the authority undertakes the efficient maintenance of the centre as a part of its comprehensive system of physical welfare approved by the Local Government Board for the purpose of Imperial grants; and that full reports of the work of the centre are submitted to the trustees annually.

In selecting the urban areas to which the offer described above has been made, the committee has been influenced in the main by the likelihood of the local authority affording to the experimental institution the best chance of permanent success. The following towns have received and accepted the trustees' offer of assistance:—Birmingham, Liverpool, Rhondda, Shore-ditch, Motherwell, and Dublin.

Central Institutes.

Representation has been made to the committee that it might be extremely useful to Government Departments, local authorities, and voluntary organisations if a central institution were created the activities of which might serve to assist the movement generally. Under suitable conditions and with fully representative management such an institute might be of great value not only to voluntary workers, but also to authorities throughout the country. Its main functions would in-

clude the following:—(a) To form independent opinions in regard to the desirability or need of certain courses of action or policy, which could, when necessary, be presented to Government Departments or local bodies with the weight of recognised authority behind them; (b) to encourage, and to some extent direct and co-ordinate, experimental work by voluntary agencies which, if shown to be successful, could be recommended for official consideration; (c) to organise a thoroughly efficient information bureau by means of which inquirers could obtain full, accurate, and up-to-date knowledge of arrangements made both in this country and abroad for maternal and infant welfare, in addition to assistance and advice in regard to any investigation or personal work they desired to undertake; (d) to provide an adequate library of reference of English and foreign literature bearing on the subject; (e) to organise conferences, meetings, lectures, etc., for the instruction of those interested in infant welfare and for the education of public opinion in matters relating thereto; (f) to consider the training desirable for workers in maternity and infant welfare centres, health visitors, etc., and to formulate conditions of training which might be accepted as the standard for the country as a whole.

Accordingly, the committee has decided to provide the necessary accommodation and equipment for two institutes of this character—one to be situated in London and one in Edinburgh. The trustees will be responsible only for the capital outlays involved, and will not be concerned with the provision of the income required to maintain the institutes, although they will need to be satisfied that proper financial support is forthcoming. It is not contemplated that the function of the institutes will, in any way, supersede or encroach upon the proper spheres of the various voluntary and statutory bodies, and funds for their efficient administration ought not to be difficult to find, having regard to their wide sphere of usefulness. Preliminary consideration has already been given to the organisation of the two institutes referred to, and there seems every prospect that the suggestions will prove acceptable.

Travelling Welfare Exhibition.

In connection with the valuable report for Scotland received from Dr. Leslie Mackenzie, the committee's attention was directed to the useful work undertaken by the Travelling Welfare Exhibition inaugurated by the National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland. The work consists essentially in preparing the ground and educating public opinion as to the necessity for higher standards of domestic hygiene as applied to mothers and children. In order to extend the opportunities afforded by the exhibition, the committee has agreed to render financial assistance to the National Union of Women Workers in order that a second travelling exhibition may be set on foot in Scotland and two similar exhibitions established in England and Wales. The need for propagandist work of this nature ought to be only temporary, but it is important that it should be undertaken immediately in order that public opinion, particularly in the less advanced communities, may be prepared to welcome the larger ideals of national service to which Imperial and local effort will presently be directed.

Play Centres.

Another aspect of the problem which has engaged the attention of the committee is the question of the fuller provision of play facilities for children. The Government Education Departments have realised the possibilities for good which might arise from the efficient administration of centres, where children may have recreation after school hours, and grants are now

available for the assistance of municipal effort in this direction. In certain cases, however, the initial equipment of ground suitable for the purpose, which has already been acquired by local authorities, might prove an obstacle in the way of the early establishment of play centres. The committee, therefore, proposes to consider favourably applications for grants from local authorities for the preparation and equipment of such open spaces for children's playgrounds, on condition that the authorities are prepared to maintain them.

Library Policy.

The committee expressed the view last year that consideration of library matters should not be deferred entirely on account of the war, and that steps should be taken to strengthen a movement which will occupy a place of increased importance after the cessation of hostilities, when various reconstructive measures—educational and social—will call for prompt attention. Endorsement of this view has been given by the increased interest taken in libraries, and their future position in the educational system of the country, by those who are engaged in the consideration of reconstruction after the war. Probably the library movement has never before received the same degree of public attention as during the past twelve months.

There is a universal consensus of opinion in the library world that the greatest barrier to progress with which the public library movement is confronted is the present limitation of rate aid; in this view the committee fully concurs. It is useless to expect the library movement to fulfil its enlarged function in the educational system of the future, unless adequate means are forthcoming for its efficient development and maintenance. From time to time suggestions have been placed before the trust to the effect that it might supplement by endowment the meagre incomes at present available, and so make up for the deficiencies which exist in numerous instances owing to the inadequacy of the rate produce. Any step of this character would, in the opinion of the committee, be disastrous, and inevitably postpone the day when larger rating powers are placed within the reach of local authorities.

The Library Association has instituted an inquiry into the existing provision of scientific and technical literature in public and other libraries in the United Kingdom. Probably there is no branch of public library work relatively so neglected at the present time as that which deals with technical literature. The reason is not far to seek. Technical books bearing on industrial operations, scientific and commercial, are costly, and rapidly become out-of-date. The meagre income available for the purchase of books does not, as a rule, allow of extensive outlay in this direction. Book selection committees are apt to look askance at proposals which involve a substantial expenditure for the acquisition of a single work. But in the future, when the public libraries become more closely correlated with the educational system of the country, their reference sections will come to be of increasing importance. The existing state of affairs needs further examination, and the trust has responded to an appeal from the Library Association in order that a complete review may be obtained.

The activities of the Central Library for Students have continued to widen, and its work has promise of considerable importance in the future. The function of the library is to supply students with the loan of necessary books which they are not in a position to obtain otherwise. The books are lent, as a rule, to classes organised under the Workers' Educational Association, the Adult School Movement, or other similar organisations of working men and women engaged in systematic courses of study; they are also

lent to individual students. At the present time there is necessarily a considerable number of students who are prevented from following their studies in the usual manner by reason of their absence from the United Kingdom. In neutral countries and in enemy countries hundreds of students are interned, and consequently cut off from access to text-books. The British Prisoners of War Book Scheme is a voluntary organisation expressly constituted to supply books and literature to British subjects so situated. In normal times these students would have enjoyed the facilities provided by the Central Library for Students, and the committee has accordingly made a special grant to the Central Library in order that the organisation named above may supply more adequately books of study to those who are at present abroad. It is hoped that on the cessation of hostilities these books will be returned to this country, and, in that event, it has been arranged that they shall be handed over to the Central Library as a permanent addition to its contents.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

MR. THOMAS J. MACKIE has been appointed professor of bacteriology in the South African Medical College, Cape Town.

The impending resignation of the chair of materia medica and clinical medicine in the University of Edinburgh by Sir Thomas R. Fraser, F.R.S., is announced.

MR. F. J. HARLOW has been appointed to succeed Dr. R. S. Willows as head of the mathematics and physics department of the Sir John Cass Technical Institute.

DR. T. FRANKLIN SIBLY has been appointed professor of geology at Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in succession to the late Prof. Lebour. Dr. Sibly has been since 1913 professor of geology at University College, Cardiff, and was lecturer in geology at King's College, London, during the preceding five years. He was an 1851 Exhibition Research Scholar in 1905-7, and is a doctor of science of both London and Bristol Universities.

The course of public lectures on "Some Biological Problems of To-day" will be continued in the second term at University College, London, on Mondays, at 2 p.m. instead of at 4 p.m., as in the first term. Major Martin Flack, member of the research staff of the National Medical Research Committee, will lecture on "The Physiological Aspects of Flying" on May 6; and Dr. H. M. Vernon, of the University of Oxford, will lecture on "Industrial Efficiency and Fatigue" on May 13. Further particulars of the course may be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary, University College, London (Gower Street, W.C.1).

A SERIES of pamphlets urging the national necessity for the passage of the Education Bill, providing compulsory whole-time education until the age of fourteen and compulsory part-time education for some years afterwards, has been issued and distributed by the Messrs. Tootal Broadhurst, Lee Co., Ltd., of Manchester and London. A set of four leaflets is entitled "The Great Decision," and the various parts are called "Now or Never," "Our Success or Failure," "A Just Complaint," and "A First Step." Throughout they urge the paramount importance of improved educational facilities, if the future well-being of the nation is to be assured. Over and above the proposals of the Education Bill, one leaflet urges that "a straight road to the university should be open to all who desire the fullest development of their intellect. Only by