It is noted that the seminar may split into groups to discuss the following subjects:

(a) Organising Public Library Services on a Regional or National Basis.


(c) Professional Training for Public Library Service.

In Sierra Leone there is an awareness of the problem and these notes deal with libraries so far established, possible developments and the method of approach, taking into consideration the work being done at present. This information will undoubtedly be of value in a discussion under any of the three headings mentioned above.

ESTABLISHED LIBRARIES

Undoubtedly the best library service in Sierra Leone at present is provided by the British Council. The Freetown centre is equipped with a first-class library containing some 18,000 volumes. In addition, the Council sends book boxes to up-country centres and bulk loans to 5 towns. It also assists various institutions and organizations which intend to establish small lending libraries. The average turn-over in the Freetown library is 2,500 volumes per month.

All the principal Government departments maintain reference libraries: e.g. Colonial Secretary's Office; Attorney General (Law Library), Agriculture, Medical, Veterinary, Education Departments, etc. The Public Relations Department has a fairly comprehensive reference section which is available to the newspapers, Government Officials and others who wish to consult it.

The principal educational institution, Fourah Bay College, is gradually building up a library. Members of the staff feel
that it is extremely important to give great priority to this. The Training Colleges and Secondary Schools all possess libraries, but some consist of only a limited number of volumes.

In Freetown, the City Council has a library from which books may be borrowed if permission is sought. It is not, however, a public library in the strict sense of the word, but the City Council hope eventually that they will be able to establish such a library or perhaps, at some future date, "absorb" the British Council Library.

There is one other centre in Freetown, the J. J. Thomas Library which has available a limited number of books and periodicals. This library was established under a Trust Fund.

At Bonthe, the Sherbro Urban District Council possesses a small lending library.

During the past few years, mainly following Extra-Mural work carried out by Fourah Bay College in co-operation with the British Council, there has been marked enthusiasm in such important centres as Kenema, Bo, Makeni and Port Loko. At Port Loko a group have built their own library and have received help in the provision of books from the British Council and the Public Relations Department; in Kenema, too, the Community Centre houses a library, which has received similar assistance.

**FUTURE DEVELOPMENT - LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

It is apparent that with the development of local authorities, such organizations as District Councils will be able to undertake the sponsorship or perhaps management of public libraries.

At present all District Councils and Native Administrations receive and welcome publications from the Public Relations Department.

In 1952 it was suggested by Government to the Library Association's Advisory Committee on Library Services in the Colonies that papers might be prepared which could be circulated to these bodies. This would provide a sound basis on which to build in the future and advise such authorities on finance, to avoid a heavy burden in the initial stages.

This, it is considered, is the best approach to the problem.

**SUITABLE PUBLICATIONS AND THEIR PRESERVATION**

Many publishers are at present interested in the development of library services in West Africa and are aware of the fact that there is a demand for good books.
It will not be possible for small libraries to afford expensive volumes and thus the production of cheaper editions - possibly bound especially for the Tropics to avoid deterioration from insect attacks. A complaint from many small libraries is the fact that the books tend to deteriorate very quickly.

There is also a market for the Penguin type of books.

As the number of publishers on the spot in West Africa increases, some system should be inaugurated whereby libraries in each territory could be kept informed of publications available.

The Protectorate Literature Bureau, Bo (which has received a grant under Colonial Development and Welfare Funds of £35,000) is steadily increasing its output of publications in the vernacular. These prove extremely popular, particularly in areas where literacy campaigns have been undertaken by the Bureau. For example, at one recent Agricultural Show at Kenema, the Bureau had a book-selling stand and disposed of over 1,000 books in Mende in a few hours - the books cost up to 6d. This serves to indicate that the demand is considerable and where lending libraries are established, they should prove popular.

At present the two main bookselling organizations are the C.M.S. Bookshop (Freetown) and Kingsway Stores (Freetown). The former organization is expanding to up-country centres and, with assistance received under Colonial Development and Welfare Funds, hopes to place a mobile bookshop on the road this year.

It is believed that the C.M.S. Bookshop will operate in co-operation with the Protectorate Literature Bureau.

Publications to the value of £800 (mainly United Kingdom newspapers and periodicals) are at present purchased by the Public Relations Department and are used to augment the excellent supplies also received from the Colonial Office through the Central Office of Information. This material is distributed on a rota system to schools and Chiefdoms up-country where such publications are not readily available.

It is encouraging to note that in some Chiefdoms the publications are placed in a quiet corner of the main barri, which in effect becomes the reading room. In many cases the literates read out the material to the illiterates thus stimulating the desire to absorb information.

When the Public Relations Department moves into a new building in Freetown, a reading room is to be provided. Education Offices at Freetown, Bo, Kenema and Magburakaka also have their own reading rooms.
FILMS AND FILM STRIPS

A central 16 m.m. lending library is run by the Public Relations Department. The films are used by the Department for its portable and mobile units and, in addition, are loaned free of charge to the British Council, Colleges, Schools and other institutions possessing their own projector.

In addition, the Department also holds stocks of film strips which are also available free of charge to similar organisations.

Films and film strips have been kindly contributed by the Colonial Office (Central Office of Information and Colonial Film Unit) and borrowed from the United States Information Services (Monrovia) and Shell Film Service (Lagos). This Government will also participate in the Overseas Film Library Service established by the Central Office of Information.

A grant of £250 from UNESCO under the Gift Coupon Scheme was approved in 1952 and the Department is awaiting the films and film strips to be purchased which should prove a valuable addition to the library.

The Sierra Leone Government has to keep in view many pressing needs and the amount of money that can be devoted to the purchase of films and film strips is, therefore, limited. The question of the continuation of the production of local films (16 m.m. silent) on a small scale is under consideration. In the past, local films have been made under the Colonial Film Units Raw Stock Scheme.

Present stocks of films and film strips appear to meet demands, except in the technical field.

SUMMARY

It is considered that the demand for the establishment of local lending libraries should be met in cooperation with local government authorities. Such libraries should be developed on a set plan, which would ensure the establishment of adequate facilities but, at the same time, relate their development to the amount of money likely to be available.

A trained librarian, Mr. M. B. Jones, A.L.A., is attached to the Education Department and it would perhaps be advisable if he could tour the country discussing a set plan with the local authorities.