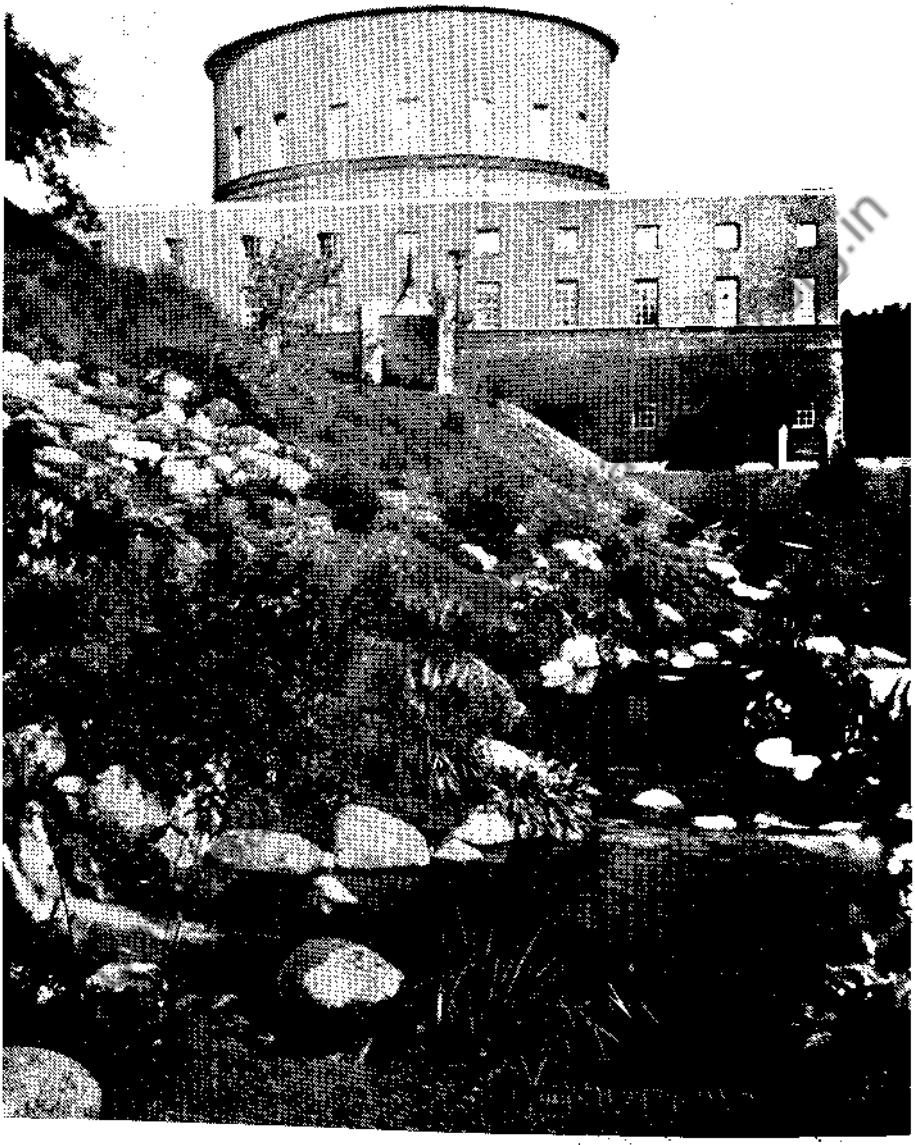

Stockholm City Library.

THE CHANCE TO READ

Public Libraries in the World Today

by

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Introduction

1

FUTURE HISTORIANS MAY well write of this, our present age, as one in which the minds of men were, as never before, obsessed with the fear of destruction, when the dominant achievement was that of the swift complete means of global suicide. This will be an imperfect conception, for it is also an age in which, as never before, the minds of *some* have been occupied with problems of survival and construction—of a fight, armed with the weapons forged by science no less surely than science has invented the H bomb, against disease and poverty, concerned with the full exploitation of the resources of the world for the benefit of the peoples of the world—of a fight also against ignorance, against all the unnecessary limitations which have through the centuries prevented men in the mass, as societies and nations, and man as an individual, from achieving growth, happiness, satisfaction, and fulfilment.

That is the paradox of our age. On the one hand we can think with almost callous indifference, forgivable because no mind can appreciate the true horror of the situation, of the massacre of tens of thousands in the twinkling of an eye. On the other hand we can accept a conception of human rights wider and more free from racial and social prejudice than has been accepted by any previous generation—a conception that, in its simplest terms, is the recognition of the right of any and every man to live, to be healthy, to have enough to eat, to have his own opinions—and the means to shape them according to his inherent ability—and to exercise his influence for his own good and that of his fellows.

It would be a gross exaggeration to say that this conception is generally accepted—that there are not powerful forces seeking to enslave the minds, and indeed the bodies, of men, nor strong racial and ideological, religious, and other prejudices still rampant, that narrow self-interest does not dictate the action and the beliefs of even a large majority. But at least the conception is strong enough, and sufficiently widespread, for most of those who do not accept it to give it lip service. And *that* is an important stage in progress towards this true democracy that at least a few are seeking. There was a time, to quote a parallel, when people in this country were not ashamed openly to say that they did not believe that education for all was a good thing, because it would

make the ordinary man too big for his shoes, cause him to think that Jack was as good as his master, render him less willing to accept bad conditions of labour and living. Few people, whatever they may think privately, would say so today. Again, today, even in the most totalitarian of regimes the myth of democracy is bruited about. And in more 'enlightened' lands the resistance to democratic progress is that of apathy and indifference rather than direct attack. Therefore we can have hope. Indifference can be undermined, worn down, outwitted.

This may seem a strange introduction to a book on public libraries. But is it? Between the two attitudes of destructiveness and construction men can and must make a choice. If they choose construction they must seek out and promote institutions and movements which are constructive, which enable human growth. If they choose freedom and not enslavement they must learn how freedom—which is fundamentally an attitude of mind—can be encouraged. If they believe in democracy in the widest sense of the word, if they believe that the opportunity to live fully is one which cannot be given to some people, and some races, and not to others, they must choose institutions for human development which are equally accessible to, equally suitable for, all men of all races, of all conditions and circumstances, and all types of ability. The public library can be such an institution—and sometimes is.

I will shortly define the term 'public library'. Now let me but say that the basis of all my argument is this: I believe that though human growth is determined by a wide variety of influences, external and internal, it can be fostered by fertilization with the ideas, knowledge, dreams, and ideals of other people; that without such contacts it must be limited, maybe seriously and mortally. I believe that this process of fertilization can often best be achieved by reading, because books (and related media of communication) are the most adaptable, most easily accepted means by which man can make the widest and most appropriate contacts with the ideas and knowledge of other men, and because they are better calculated to encourage both individuality and a sense of community with others than are other media of communication. I believe, therefore, that growth, as well as construction, freedom, democracy, self-respect, and fulfilment will best be encouraged when it becomes possible for all men to use books, according to their needs and abilities, and when they have the full opportunity to do so. The best way to give most people this opportunity is to provide them with public libraries or, better, let them provide public libraries for themselves.

I frankly confess, therefore, that my purpose in writing this book is that of encouraging and assisting the development of public libraries throughout the world. I am not interested in giving a factual account of what is being done and not being done merely in order to provide comparative statistics and material for academic discussion. I *am* interested to discuss what has been done and what has not been done so that the hard-won lessons of some may be read as warning or encouragement by others. I even hope that I may cause a prick of conscience here and there. I hope to show that the best public libraries are not good enough, and thus how bad are the worst. I hope to raise everywhere the question 'Why are we not, in our own country, making better use of a potential defence against destruction, prejudice, and ignorance?'

II

Such being my aim I necessarily write as a private person—not as the librarian of the City of Westminster, not on behalf of the Library Association, not as Chairman of the Public Libraries Section of the International Federation of Library Associations, not as a member of the British National Unesco Co-operating Body for Libraries; yet I could not attempt this book had I not enjoyed the opportunities given me by these offices. In my work as City Librarian of Westminster I have been given, by a generous and progressive Council, not only the means and encouragement to help provide a public library service planned on a much more ample basis than is usual, but also the opportunity to travel and see libraries and meet librarians in many countries. As an honorary officer of the Library Association for many years, I have been in close touch with public library development in this country, and learned much of the ideals and of the difficulties and limitations experienced by my professional colleagues that I could never have appreciated otherwise. My connection with the International Federation of Library Associations has enabled me to discuss the public library service with those in other countries who are no less eager to promote it, and many have provided me with invaluable information. And my work with Unesco has kept me informed regarding those important phases of the Organization's work—the spread of fundamental and technical education and the initiation of library schemes for under-developed countries.

The information given in this book has, therefore, been gathered from a variety of sources. As regards certain countries it is largely based

on personal experience, for I have myself seen much or little of the libraries of several countries. I have visited, in the course of years, possibly a majority of the typical library systems of this country. I have seen many in the United States, in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the British Zone of Western Germany and the Western Sectors of Berlin, Australia, and New Zealand. I have seen some in Egypt, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Austria, France, Belgium, Yugoslavia, and Singapore. Varied though these may be, however, they represent but part of the whole picture. For the rest I have had to rely upon information provided by friends and 'contacts' in different countries and upon published accounts in books and journals and statistical compilations. I would like to make public acknowledgment of the help that has been given me, but some of the most useful of my informants might be embarrassed were their frank appraisal of conditions to be indicated. And so I think it wiser to mention none, excepting only Mr D. C. Henrik Jones, Librarian of the Library Association, who has, as on many previous occasions, given me invaluable assistance in many ways.

III

This is a book about public libraries. What *is* a public library? When the man in the street in Great Britain or the United States speaks of a public library he refers to a well-recognized, well-understood institution—a library provided by the local authority (the town or county council) and entirely or mostly at its own expense, governed and administered by the authority or a committee wholly or largely appointed by itself, available free of any charge to all who live in its area (and often to others as well), and offering a wide selection of materials chosen to embrace as completely as possible the varied interests of the individual and the community, free from bias or religious, political, or other motives.

But elsewhere there are other conceptions—as will later become apparent. For example, it may be maintained that any library is 'public' which is available to the public or to a section thereof, even though it may be subject to considerable limitations, or is one which is provided at the public expense. In this sense, for example, the British Museum is a 'public' library. Again, elsewhere many libraries are called 'public' although they are provided not by and for the use of the whole community but by a section of the community, maybe with sectional objectives, or provided wholly or in part by those who subscribe or pay

fees in order to use them. Moreover, in some countries there is a distinction between 'libraries of learning' and 'popular' libraries—the former may or may not be available to some of the public, the latter are so limited to material of general 'popular' appeal that alone they cannot perform the full work of a public library as the words are understood in, say, England or Sweden.

Library services of all these—and other types—will be discussed in this book. Whether they are the 'right' type or not must be discovered.

What *is* the 'right' type of public library? What is the type of library with which we are primarily concerned? How they are provided, governed, financed may or may not matter. What does matter is simply this: are there libraries which can be used, freely and fully, by the ordinary man, woman, and child, which will give them the opportunity to use all those books which may be of value or interest to them, and which they are not better able to obtain from other, maybe more specialized, libraries to which they can enjoy access?

This book is, in brief, a study of the extent to which people, in general, enjoy—or can be enabled to enjoy—access to books. But it is not a survey of libraries of all kinds; it will have little to say about national and university libraries or other libraries of 'learning' and specialization because I am not concerned here with the limited minority who, knowing full well that without libraries there can be no research, no scholarship, no cultural, scientific, or technological progress, have, on the whole, made reasonably adequate provision for their needs. I am concerned with the generality of men who may or may not yet have appreciated the values of books and libraries, or whose need has not been recognized by those responsible for library provision. I am concerned, too, with the generality of materials, because just as the 'right type' of public library will cater for all sorts and conditions of men so it will embrace all sorts and conditions of effective books—and the things with which books deal. The many libraries that are outside this inquiry cater on the whole for specialized needs and may not necessarily cater for the non-specialized needs of the specialist.

In other words one may find in any community two categories of people and two categories of library. There are, as regards people, those with the educational qualifications, the social background, the vocational needs and so on which cause them to need the kind of materials that are provided by, say, university libraries, the libraries of research institutions, of professional societies, and the like—and there are the libraries to meet these needs. On the other hand there are people who

want to read so as to increase their understanding and enjoyment of life, to enrich their experience, to develop their interests and further their abilities, to find help in the everyday matters of earning a living, of living decently and constructively and happily; there are the people who need books in order to secure their foothold as individuals, as citizens, to find practical aid in seeking and maintaining the basic necessities of life; there are people who are ill-accustomed to using books, people who are newly literate, people who are illiterate. It is with libraries for those in this second category with which I am concerned.

As will be clear later, however, the line of demarcation between the two categories of people and the two categories of libraries is very ill-defined. Those who use libraries of specialization use them only in relation to those parts of their needs which are specialized; there *are* other parts. The research chemist may want to read novels, or poetry, or books on politics or music, or on how to 'make and mend'. Apart from his specialization he is an 'ordinary' man—and to meet his non-specialized needs he has to have the same kind of public library service as anyone else. Again, the user of the specializing library often passes beyond the borders of his specialization; his chemical researches may lead to demands for information on geology, geography, trade conditions, the translation of foreign technical terms and so on, *ad infinitum* —and thus he must have recourse to a more general library, such as the right type of public library will be. Even the apparently all-embracing institution such as, say, the British Museum, fails its user, not maybe because it does not possess the material he needs but because for certain purposes other libraries, including the public library, are easier to use, and otherwise better able to serve his needs, e.g. to provide material for use at home, for perusal at different hours, with greater speed and facility. To illustrate my point let me say that a substantial proportion of the users of a general public library well known to me are the *librarians* of various specialist libraries, who seek there the materials outside their own well-defined provinces.

Conversely there are a great many people who seek specialized material who, for one reason or another, do not enjoy access to the specialized libraries in the field concerned. And these need recourse to public libraries, which must, accordingly, provide a great deal of specialized material.

We have, indeed, specialists who are also ordinary men, and ordinary men who are sometimes specialists, and this is important because it helps to make clear that in this discussion of public libraries I am not

thinking of them as institutions designed solely to meet popular needs —a conception too prevalent in some countries, as will be seen. I am thinking of them as libraries capable of giving all that is necessary to people of all kinds unless, as already stated, these people can better get what they want from non-public libraries. Only thus can the public library play its proper role.

I do not forget that just as the specialist reader has other libraries to which to turn, so has the 'general' reader. I refer to the numerous and varied subscription and other circulating libraries ranging from the Times Book Club to the 'twopenny' library at the local tobacconist's shop, which flourish especially in this country though they are to be found elsewhere in various forms. These libraries on the one hand provide especially the more popular material in a profusion and with facilities that could not be emulated by the public library, and on the other hand relieve the public library of much of the need to cater for this demand, thus better enabling it to provide other things—for the 'circulating' libraries do not by any means cover the same range of material as the public library.

And, of course, I do not forget that people buy books—and should do so to their maximum ability, especially if they buy wisely. Every good librarian does his utmost to encourage private book buying, and it is undeniable that public libraries have in many ways, by educating people, and especially young people, to recognize the personal value of books and reading and by demonstrating the range of material available, done much to increase the sale of books and particularly of the more worth-while books. Nevertheless the facts remain that all who use books fully will use far more than they can afford, or would be well advised, to buy for themselves, that many cannot or will not afford to buy any, or any but the cheapest, and that the libraries can offer innumerable books, such as those which are out of print, which cannot be bought.

We consider the public library therefore in its background—not as a sole provider, by any means, but as one of several sources of book supply with which it does not compete but which it supplements and with which it co-operates, as will be seen. As one would expect, where public libraries are best organized and best provided these other sources are generally most flourishing.

IV

When I first planned this book I intended to cover, so far as I could, conditions throughout the world and give an all-embracing, if sometimes very superficial, picture of the state of public library provision in every country. I have abandoned this idea, however, for two reasons. First, had I tried to cover too much ground I should not have had space to give, for *any* country, those details which have to be presented if any valid conclusions are to be reached. Secondly, I found it impossible to obtain any really useful information about library services in many countries.

Therefore, I have had to select certain countries, choosing those which displayed different methods, standards, and ideals, and omit others. Thus I say nothing about the Iron Curtain countries (except, probably unsatisfactorily, Russia), about South and Central America, Spain, China, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, large parts of Africa, Austria, the Balkans, the Middle East, and other important areas. It does not follow that there is not significant library activity in these areas. I trust that the librarians of these countries will forgive my neglect of their often valuable endeavours. Of work in certain of these omitted countries I have some first-hand knowledge—and it is one of my dreams that on some future occasions I may explore other parts of this territory. So maybe I will one day write about *other* library services. To have dealt with them now would have been to defeat my present objectives by presenting more evidence than I needed. One is wise to recognize the limitations of any single book.

As to *this* book—its plan is simple. I have first given a fairly simple account of our own British public library service so that readers may have a background against which to relate developments and problems elsewhere. In writing this section I have borrowed freely from a pamphlet on 'British Libraries', which I wrote a few years ago for the British Council in collaboration with the late James Revie.

Next I deal with certain aspects of public library developments in the United States and in the Scandinavian countries, because in them conditions are more akin to our own. Thus, as it were, I consolidate the conception of what I regard as a 'normal' service. Then I pass to certain European countries where development has been on somewhat different lines.

After this I discuss conditions in the British Commonwealth, following this by a study of libraries in certain of our colonies, because the

lessons of experiments in these under-developed territories have general applicability in other similar areas.

Finally I describe some of the forces that are at work to promote library provision throughout the world and some of the obstacles that are impeding progress—and I express some of my own personal opinions, hoping that some readers may agree with them and others will argue about them.

THE CHANCE TO READ

[1]

The Public Library in Great Britain and Ireland

ENGLAND AND WALES

1

IT IS CERTAIN that human progress, that civilization as we now conceive it, that most advances in science and technology, the development and interchange of thought, have arisen from the invention of writing and printing—that otherwise mankind would have endured such grave limitations through being unable to record, communicate, disseminate, and give permanence to his thoughts and experience, that life would still be as primitive, undeveloped, and isolated as it was long before the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians. That men have emerged from the primitive is due very largely to the fact that from the beginning of written records some people have read and written and kept their writings, for use and preservation in libraries. But until relatively recently all these libraries have been libraries of learning provided for and used by the lawyers, the theologians, the philosophers, the scientists—a very small minority. Until quite recently only a small minority could read. Indeed, the great majority of the world's population *still* cannot read—there are several countries where over 90% of the people, and even as many as 99%, are illiterate. To this we shall return. In even the most advanced countries, however, literacy was not general until a century or less ago. Even in 1870 nearly 25% of the people of England could neither read nor write. It is not surprising, therefore, that the provision of libraries for the 'ordinary' man, as distinct from the scholar, is, if one views the matter in its historial perspective, a very recent development. It is indeed very surprising that the existing conception of a rate-supported free public library should have emerged over one hundred years ago, when one considers the educational and social standards of the time and the comparative youth, then, of its forerunners—the private subscription libraries and the mechanics' institutes.

The former began in the latter half of the eighteenth century. By then education had spread sufficiently through the middle classes for there to be a greater demand for books than could be fully met by private purchase at a time when books were, in relation to the cost of living, expensive. Friends and neighbours would band together to buy books for their common use, meeting maybe at one another's houses to discuss them and decide on future purchases. As demand and the need for wider selection increased, the circle widened, and such subscription libraries as the Liverpool Lyceum, the Leeds Library, the Bradford Library and Literary Society, the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, and many others were established. Some survive to this date; the majority, after many years of healthy activity, lapsed as their functions were assumed—and performed more effectively and on a wider basis—by the public libraries and the commercial circulating libraries. They were the first effective means by which those of reasonable income and accepted social standing could enjoy access to a representative selection of books of general appeal. They were essentially 'middle class' institutions.

Towards the turn of the century, however, a minority of the working class and artisan population became aware of the need for education both as a means of economic advancement and as essential to the struggle for political rights and social betterment. For education there must be books and libraries. In 1800 George Birkbeck, a professor in Glasgow, started classes for the mechanics of that city, and before long a library was established and a movement begun which spread throughout the country, so that by 1849 there were 400 mechanics' institutes and by 1863 over 700. These libraries were provided and managed by the members themselves, and depended on their own enthusiasm and their own meagre contributions. Often the enthusiasm wavered; always the contributions were too meagre. They proved two important points, however—that libraries for the ordinary man, libraries far better than these, were needed and would be used, and that such libraries had to be placed on a much more secure basis. Thus they led up to and stimulated the initiation of the rate-supported public library of today which in turn supplanted them.

Before we consider the beginnings of the rate-supported public library let it be noted that there were in this country—as in others in continental Europe—a few examples of an earlier type of public, or 'town', library. As a result of private benefaction municipal libraries were established in Coventry, Norwich, Leicester, Ipswich, Manchester,

Bristol, and elsewhere. With one exception—the Chetham Library at Manchester, founded in 1653 and still active—they all soon died or became moribund through lack of continuing funds and adequate management, all were modest in extent, and none could be regarded as genuinely catering for the ordinary man, as examination of the stock, for example, of that at Bristol, which is now housed at the Public Library, will show.

The public library service of this country began in 1850, when the first Public Libraries Act, enabling certain local authorities to provide libraries for the free use of the people, was passed by a not over enthusiastic Parliament, and in 1852 when the first public library established under this Act was opened at Manchester. The story of what preceded this vital enactment, of the efforts of the few men responsible—notably William Ewart, Member of Parliament for Dumfries Burghs, Joseph Brotherton, Member of Parliament for Salford and, especially, Edward Edwards, an assistant at the British Museum who became Manchester's first librarian—has been told often before and will not be retold here. Those interested should consult W. A. Munford's *Penny Rate: Aspects of British Public Library History, 1850–1950* (The Library Association, 1951).

I would only draw special attention to two aspects of this most important event because they are especially germane to the whole argument of this book, though I may not disclose their full significance until it emerges from the evidence.

First of all I would emphasize that the passing of this Act was the result, almost entirely, of the efforts of the three men mentioned. It was the personal achievement of well-informed, indomitable enthusiasts. Apart from these there was no *demand* for public libraries. The people did not ask for public libraries. Why *should* they do so?—they had no idea of what a public library could do or mean. They did not know that they needed or would use it. They did not, on the whole, even know that books had anything worth while to give them. It was only when there were public libraries that most people had any realization that they had anything to give. In other words here is, definitely, a case when supply created demand, not where demand created supply. And the same, let us never forget, is true today in every country in the world, be it Indonesia or Italy, Pakistan or Peru.

Neither did the demand come from the users of the already established subscription libraries or mechanics' institutes. On the contrary, had they had any idea of the way in which they would be superseded by

the more efficient, better based institution that was being brought into existence they would surely have opposed the Public Libraries Act. They had no such conception, but that has not been the case elsewhere, because in several parts of the world the vested interest of the subscription library has proved a powerful deterrent to the promotion of true public libraries. By way of example one may point to South Australia and other parts of that continent, or to South Africa, or to certain of our colonies. Neither did any demand come from the 'town' libraries—of course not—because by then none of them, excepting the Chetham at Manchester, was alive—but in other countries, as will be seen later, the town library, with its older, outworn traditions, has not been favourable to newer, better conceptions. Neither did the government of the day promote or support this Act—what government, unless it is compelled, ever wants to find new ways in which public money may be spent? In brief, this movement was born of the well-informed enthusiasm and faith of individuals—as I think it will always and everywhere be true that the initiation and development of public library services will depend upon such enthusiasm and faith.

The second matter I would emphasize is that these three men were wise enough and sufficiently well informed to choose that method of providing public libraries which, a hundred years later, has produced one of the best, most widespread, most developing public library services in the world. I do not suggest that this method may not need modification and expansion to meet changing conditions and remove inherent limitations, about which much will have to be said, but I do assert that from the outset they established the five basic principles which remain unshaken: *one*, that the provision of public library services should be the responsibility of appropriate public, governing, authorities (in our case the local government authorities), and not that of any private or sectional groups; *two*, that they should be administered, governed, and financed by these authorities; *three*, that they should be *freely* available for the use of *all* the people in the community served; *four*, that they should, so far as they could, embrace *all* the needs and interests of those people; *five*, that they should be free not only financially but intellectually—i.e. that they should be free from bias and purposive objectives, that they should afford a full, free, unprejudiced opportunity to all who would use them.

I fear, however, that I may be misunderstood. I am implying that these five bases were implicit in the Public Libraries Act of 1850, and that is not true. This enactment did not say that the provision of public

libraries should be a responsibility of local authorities; it said that it *could* be. It said that, subject to certain conditions which were later waived (i.e. that there should be a public poll to decide whether the Act should be adopted), local authorities could, if they wished, provide libraries and levy a rate at first of not more than ½*d.* in the pound—in 1855 of 1*d.*—to defray the cost. It *did* provide that the libraries should be open to all who lived in the authorities' areas, and, very important, that no charge should be levied upon users.

For establishing the principles that they should embrace all the needs and interests of the people and that the libraries should be intellectually free, the authorities themselves have been responsible. These conditions, it may well be argued, follow naturally from the basis of public provision at the common expense because, since all contribute (through the rates) and all may use, it would be inconsistent to exclude some categories of user and of need and to favour others, and equally it would be wrong to favour or neglect political, religious, or other controversial matters with which some of the inhabitants may or may not concur. With this argument no fair-minded person could disagree. It would, for example, be manifestly unfair to tax a man in order to provide books for the promotion of, say, Catholicism or Conservatism if that man preferred to read but was denied access to books on Congregationalism or Communism, just as it would be unfair to give the gardener books on gardening and not the carpenter books on carpentry when both contributed equally to library upkeep, or even to deny those who sought recreational material while catering for purely non-recreational demands.

Here, indeed, is an essential difference between the provision of libraries by a section of the community and their provision by the whole community—the section can, and according to its own lights maybe should, discriminate; when all provide there can and should be no discrimination. A library provided *by* all must be *for* all. Nevertheless it is to the great credit of local authorities that they have from the beginning accepted these principles. As will be seen, they may not always have supported them adequately; they have never denied them. And this attitude has been more than any other factor responsible for the present status of the British public library, which is used by all sections of the community, for all manner of purposes, free from bias and objective and sectional limitations. Limitations there have been and are, but they are the limitations of adequacy, not of scope or intention.

To local authorities must also go the credit for providing, in the

course of years, practically complete nation-wide coverage. They have never been *compelled* to provide libraries. It is now agreed by library propagandists that public library provision should be compulsory—that people have a *right* to these services which it should not be within the power of the responsible authority to deny them, but the fact remains that in the four countries where anything approaching complete coverage has been secured (Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden) it has been achieved on a voluntary basis. It is true that provision is now obligatory in Norway, that it will become so soon in Denmark, but in both cases the obligation is allied with minimum standards, which raises an entirely different question, and it is also true that it has taken these countries so long to achieve this coverage that in other countries it may be unwise to wait so long if compulsion can hasten provision. Nevertheless, since we are now viewing the matter historically rather than critically and constructively, the fact must be noted that the British public library service has developed at the free will of the responsible local authorities. In just over a hundred years almost complete nation-wide coverage has been secured. The only town in Great Britain without a public library, good, bad, or indifferent, is Mountain Ash in Wales, with about 31,000 population—and here there is a miners' institute which, though not a public library, is probably not much different from the public libraries to be found in similar mining towns (though, of course, there should be something much better).

Progress at first was very slow—which is not surprising when one remembers that the Britain of 1850 was hardly ready for a movement which was indeed, though fortunately, ahead of its time. There were only the barest rudiments of a health service; less than 8% of the children then attended school, and such education as was available often did not go very far. Moreover, the adoption of the Act depended upon the local enthusiasm of the few, and, a further initial hindrance, the 1850 Act did not permit the product of the $\frac{1}{2}d.$ rate to be spent on books, which had to be provided by private benefactors, a stupidity repealed in 1855.

The City of Norwich was the first to adopt the Act, but did not provide any service until 1857. Brighton began library activities in 1850, but by virtue of a private act. Winchester adopted the Act in 1851, Bolton, Ipswich, Manchester, and Oxford in 1852, Liverpool used private act powers the same year, Blackburn, Sheffield, and Cambridge in 1853. The credit for establishing the first effective public

library service must go to Manchester, which appointed Edward Edwards as its first librarian, a step of inestimable significance, as there he gave effect to principles and methods which set the pattern for future development throughout the country.

By 1870 when elementary education first became compulsory, only 35 towns had established libraries. Again, may one point the moral that civic emulation of other towns' achievement is a singularly ineffective factor. One might have thought that the undoubted worth and success of the first libraries would have induced other corporations to do likewise, but such was not the case. For example, though one London vestry, Westminster, provided a library in 1857, nowhere else in London was anything done for twenty-eight years; or again—to turn to another country for an example—though for many years two of the cities constituting Greater Melbourne have had effective public library services, none of their twenty-seven neighbours seemed aware of what they were doing.

Between 1870 and 1889, however, the number of library authorities rose to 153; by the end of the century that total was doubled. This was due largely to the general advance in education and social progress but probably no less to personal enthusiasm, such as that of Thomas Greenwood, a publisher, to the activities of the Library Association, which was founded in 1877, and, especially, to private benefaction. Some of the earlier libraries owed their existence to the generosity of local wealthy citizens. But the outstanding benefactors were John Passmore Edwards, a newspaper proprietor, who provided buildings for over twenty libraries, mostly in Cornwall and London, and Andrew Carnegie who, commencing with a gift of £8,000 to his native town of Dunfermline in Scotland, gave help to 213 towns in England and Wales, 50 in Scotland, and 47 in Ireland, so that when he died in 1919 there were 380 separate library buildings associated with his name. His was indeed a great contribution to the public library movement.

In retrospect one can see disadvantages and limitations in this widespread benefaction. For one thing, it is not enough to provide a building. To do so is to relieve the local authority of a heavy burden of loan charges which could be very crippling, especially in those days of rate limitations—for until 1919 authorities (unless they obtained special powers in local acts) could spend no more, in total, than the product of a 1*d.* rate. Nevertheless it must be admitted that some authorities acquired bigger buildings than they could or would furnish with adequate book stocks and staff. Moreover, ability to obtain gifts may

have deterred some authorities from making adequate efforts themselves—and the scale of Carnegie assistance created in many minds the idea that Carnegie aid was more important than local support. Indeed, only three years ago I heard a very senior civil servant remark, 'Public libraries, yes, those are financed by the Carnegie people, aren't they?' He had to be disillusioned.

In short, I would say that though private benefactions *have* played a great part here, in America, and elsewhere, the period has passed when there should be any substantial reliance upon any source of support other than that of governments. Most useful social services begin on a voluntary basis, but the time soon comes when this basis proves insufficient and insufficiently reliable. Those places which, like Singapore, today enjoy important benefactions must regard themselves as singularly fortunate; other cities must not wait for similar aid.

Despite this digression, however, no fair-minded person can minimize the effect of Andrew Carnegie's help, and, especially, the influence exerted by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust which he founded in 1913. The C.U.K.T., guided during the critical period by Colonel J. M. Mitchell, got quickly to the root of the matter. It concerned itself hardly at all with bricks and mortar but devoted itself to three basic tasks, working in close co-operation with the Library Association, which it also did much to strengthen. These tasks were the establishment of county library services to cover the rural areas and the fast developing 'non-urban' suburban districts, the promotion of professional education in librarianship, and the establishment of a system of co-operation between libraries based upon the National Central Library and the regional bureaux—matters to which we shall return.[1]

One of the first important actions of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust was to appoint Professor W. G. S. Adams to report on the state of the service and its needs, which he did in 1915, when it was shown that though only 19 out of 222 towns with a population of over 30,000 had failed to adopt the Libraries Acts, provision in rural areas was negligible, and 38% of the people of England, 54% of those of Wales, 50% of the Scots, and 72% of the Irish were without any public library provision. His report led to the passing of the Public Libraries Act of 1919 for England and Wales which for the first time enabled county councils to provide library services and also permitted local authorities to spend as much as they chose on their libraries. This was

[1] See pages 46–9.

the turning-point. County library service was, certainly, at first very meagre, but gradually new standards were established, so that today, on the whole, it is fair to say that town and country standards are comparable. Allowing for the inevitable problems of catering often for small and scattered communities, which make it much more difficult and expensive to provide for country folk than for townspeople, the average countryman is getting as good a service as the average townsman. There are, of course, immense variations between standards in different counties, as there surely are between different towns, but to that matter we shall return.

What must be emphasized here is that the British public library is now a thriving, progressive, nation-wide service. This service is being given by 577 separate, independent library authorities [1] which, in the year 1954–5, expended over £12,810,000. In that period 386 million books were lent for home reading from no fewer than 31,249 service points, made up as follows: 577 central libraries and county headquarters; 1,191 full-time branches open at least thirty hours a week; 28,833 part-time branches, village centres, and school libraries provided by the public library service; 559 hospital libraries provided by local authorities; 89 prison libraries; 158 mobile libraries.

II

It is time that their work was described in greater detail.

First, as to provision and management: As already noted, public libraries are provided by the local councils of towns and counties and they are managed by library committees appointed by these councils. In the case of counties they are sub-committees of the education committee—which is a matter for regret, despite the high achievement of many county libraries, for various reasons.

There is, in Great Britain, no control, supervision, inspection, or other intervention whatever by the National Government—excepting that sanction for loans or permission to build must be obtained from the appropriate government department in precisely the same way as loans and building permits for other local government purposes. Neither does the state (the national exchequer) provide any part of the cost (excepting in the Scottish counties). The responsibility—and the burden—is entirely a local one.

The amount expended varies very considerably—a matter of great

[1] Since ten of these are 'joint-services' there are actually 587 public library *authorities*.

significance because it means that, as the best supported yet lack sufficient, all the rest have much too little to spend. The median annual expenditure in 1954–5 was 55·6*d.* per head of resident population—a misleading figure as the lowest was 5·9*d.* and the highest 344*d.* The latter was by a central London authority serving a large day-time population, but the highest outside the County of London was still as high, comparatively, as 132·9*d.* Altogether 116 libraries spent more than 6*s.* per head and approximately 60 spent less than 2*s.*

Confronted with such variations it may seem strange to speak of a 'typical' public library. All the same, most libraries are doing much the same *kind* of work, in much the same way, with much the same methods; the difference, and it is a great difference, is one of quality, and, of course, of extent, according to the population concerned. Most, to a varying extent, make three main types of provision: (*a*) the supply of books for home reading from lending departments, (*b*) the supply of information and the provision of facilities for study on the library premises—known as reference work, and (*c*) the provision of current periodicals. At the smaller service points there may be few or no periodicals and reference work may be rudimentary, confined perhaps to the supply of a handful of basic reference books—but when those service points are part of a larger system (e.g. county library centres) requests for information can be passed on and met from wider resources. There are no service points, so far as I am aware, from which books cannot be borrowed for home reading (excepting the City of London, where lending facilities are afforded freely by other means). Conversely, many of the larger libraries, and indeed of the smaller, provide additional facilities such as special departments and 'extension activities' (i.e. lectures, exhibitions, and the like).

To illustrate how a library operates let us take one such as we may find up and down the country—we will not call it 'typical'. So we visit a fairly small compact town with, say, 40,000 inhabitants. As everyone lives fairly near the town centre and goes there regularly and easily for many purposes—to work, to shop, to visit places of amusement—one building will suffice. It will be centrally situated, in or near the main shopping street. Too many of our libraries were built in a bad period of British architecture—over-ornamental, with too much functionless brickwork, too few windows, and an air of dinginess and unfriendliness. The only quality they ever possessed was that they were substantial, and that is no longer an advantage, because although the premises are now too small and ill-suited for modern requirements it is

difficult to secure their replacement. It is a great pity that some of our oldest systems are the most handicapped by outmoded buildings.

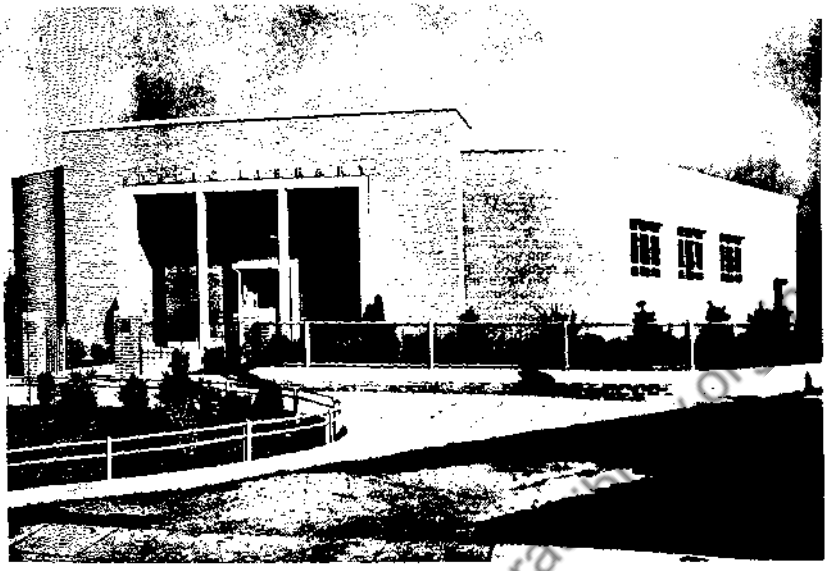
So let us suppose that the one we visit is a more modern erection. It will probably, if it is a good example, be mainly or wholly of one story, with windows all round, mostly starting at about 7 feet above ground level—so that inside there can be bookcases below the windows—though some of the windows may stretch from ground level so as to give a glimpse of the interior, and, when one is inside, afford an air of spaciousness and light. It will stand well back from the road, with parking space for cars and bicycles. The brick or concrete exterior will be simple in design, free from unnecessary ornamentation—because no library authorities have had money to spend, fortunately, on frills. And it will be well kept and clean—inside as well as outside. A small entrance hall gives access to the three departments already mentioned. At the rear may be a department yet to be described—the children's library, placed in the rear deliberately if the building is in a busy main street so that the children can be encouraged to enter more safely from a side street. Or, if such traffic hazards do not arise, the children's room may open out of the entrance hall. At the back, too, will be work-rooms, and a staff rest-room and storage for books. These last are important. There is much 'back-room' work, such as the purchase, cataloguing, and preparation of books, sending them for rebinding, and so on. The staff, who are always hard-worked, need facilities for rest and for meals. Every library possesses some book stock which must be kept available though it does not justify display on the open shelves of the public departments, and for this store space must be provided.

If, as we assume, this is a good example, there will be plenty of room within and plenty of light. An older library might well be crowded with over-high bookcases. Maybe it would afford an example of a once popular plan intended, mistakenly, to afford better supervision, known as 'radiating stacks', with bookcases placed like the spokes of a wheel with the staff counter as the hub—a stupid arrangement which meant that at one end these cases were far too close together and at the other too far apart. But ours is a good example and will have bookcases only around the walls, with perhaps a few wide alcoves—the centre of the room furnished with chairs for the browser, or low display cases and a few tables. The bookcases themselves will not be more than 6 feet 6 inches high and the lowest shelf will be about 18 inches off the ground, so that readers can see the books without either grovelling on the floor or standing on steps. In the reference department there will be either

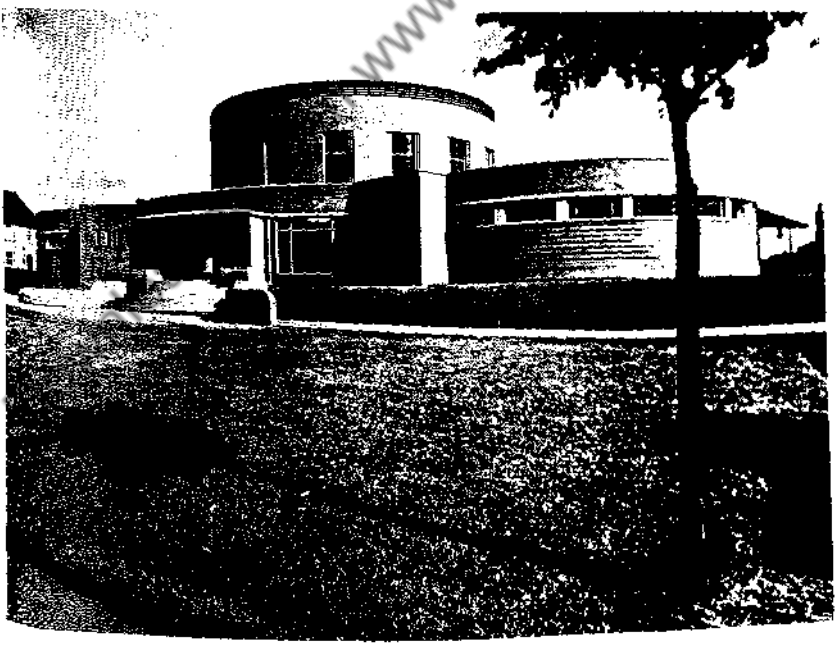
individual tables or at least sufficient space between the readers sharing one table, as well as ample room between tables, and between them and the bookcases, to permit every reader reasonable privacy and elbow room.

The lending library is the most used department, and contains a wide variety of books—all in good, clean condition, some in their original publishers' cases, some rebound in a variety of colourful, attractive library bindings. In addition to a good selection of novels of all types there will be books on every subject in which readers are likely to be interested—that is to say, on most of the main matters upon which books have been written. Let us be quite frank. It is not easy to maintain such a book stock, which will always afford a good selection, presenting a map of the world of knowledge and imagination and displaying the many-sided interests of the intelligent reading public. One must remember that, at any time, a large proportion of the library's books are not on the shelves but in the hands of borrowers. Obviously these latter will be the books that most people find most useful and most interesting. If the librarian would avoid having on his shelves largely those books which are of least interest and least value he must keep a constant watch upon his shelf stock, filling gaps as they are disclosed, striving to reach saturation point in the more worth-while fields. Thus only can he be sure, for example, that the reader who is willing to borrow the works of an outstanding novelist, past or present, will have a reasonable chance of obtaining them—or that the man who is about to redecorate his house, or spend a holiday in Austria, or wherever his urgent need may be, will not find his library wanting. Side by side with this constant process of stock-building will go the process of eliminating the little used or the no longer useful, either withdrawing such items or transferring them to the reserve stock already mentioned. These related processes ensure that the library shelves will always be educational, be a proper demonstration of the wealth and usefulness of books, and always fresh and interesting.

The books in this library (as in virtually every public library in this country) are classified—that is to say arranged according to their subject-matter in such a way that books on the same subject are brought together and, more or less, adjacent to related subjects. The great majority of libraries use the Dewey Decimal system, which has become fairly well understood by habitual library users and is reasonably satisfactory. I say 'reasonably' because neither books nor people, fortunately, lend themselves to being put into clear-cut compartments; many books embrace several themes or aspects of a theme and could be



The Henry A. Cole Branch Library, Norris Green, Liverpool.



Southfields Branch Library, Leicester.

Manor Branch, Sheffield, adult lending library.

classified—or parts of them could be classified—in two, three, or more places, though they can only go on one place in the shelves. Similarly, people may need to explore various sections of the library before they find all they need. Nevertheless these things can be looked after by references in catalogues—and by competent staff—and the classified shelf arrangement does enable 95% or more of readers to find most of their books. Without classification a library would be a nightmare, a lottery, a jumble—yet the general application of classification to library shelves is not fifty years old.

Catalogues are, of course, provided. They are used mostly by the staff; only a minority of readers consult them. The majority, once they have discovered the whereabouts on the shelves of the subjects that interest them, are content to look there—and, when in difficulty, consult the staff. Catalogues are of three main types: (*a*) the name or author catalogue, which gives entries in alphabetical order under the names of authors, of people written about, perhaps of titles, so that the reader who knows the author, etc., can find whereabouts the book is classified and can be sought on the shelves; (*b*) the classified catalogue, in which entries are arranged in exactly the same sequence as the books on the shelves, with, of course, an alphabetical index of subjects; (*c*) the dictionary catalogue, which gives one alphabetical sequence of authors, etc., and of subjects, the latter, of course, appearing under the *name* of the subject. Some British libraries have classified catalogues and must necessarily also provide author catalogues; others have dictionary catalogues, which are general in the United States and are probably better understood by the general public.

The people who borrow are as diverse as the books on the shelves—of all ages and from all walks of life. There is no class distinction; poverty and shabby clothes are no hindrance, and many wealthy people come for books and services they can get nowhere else. What a reader chooses to borrow is his own private affair and no records are kept of what he reads. But if such records were available they would show that reading interests bear little relationship to social class or (excepting those which deal specifically with the reader's occupation) vocation. Neither is there any marked difference between the reading interests of different localities. Equally, of course, were such records of borrowing to exist they would show that no two readers ever read the same selection—a very important point because it means that, given access to a good collection, each reader chooses according to his personal tastes, interests, and reading abilities. Therefore the library inevitably

encourages the development of individuality, and produces a community richly varied and different in knowledge and outlook. In no other way in this modern world of mass media can this highly desirable individuality and variety be better promoted.

Let us follow some of these readers as they enter the library. Going first to the counter—which in the most modern libraries will be outside the department itself, perhaps between it and the entrance hall—they hand in the books they have just read and receive in exchange their readers' tickets. All except one or two British libraries use a simple method known as the Brown system of 'card-charging'. Each reader has two, three, or occasionally more tickets, made in the form of a pocket. In every book on the shelves is a 'book card', bearing its author, title, and number. When a book is borrowed this book card is taken out of the book and put inside the reader's ticket. These 'pairs' are arranged in order to facilitate the finding of each pair, which is done when the book is returned, when the book card is put back in the book ready for use when next it is borrowed, and the reader is given his ticket to use again.

Practically every British public library operates on the 'open-access' system, which means that readers are free to go to the shelves and choose their own books. The introduction of open access has been the most revolutionary and valuable step in the history of public libraries. It started in the United States, and was introduced into this country just over fifty years ago by that great librarian James Duff Brown, then Librarian at Clerkenwell. Before then the unfortunate reader had to choose his books from uninformative entries in a catalogue, lucky indeed if what he most wanted was then 'in'—i.e. not already in the possession of another borrower. There was at first much opposition—and, indeed, open access is denied the users of most libraries in other countries, though it is now invariably afforded in this country, the United States, Scandinavia, and the more recently established libraries of New Zealand and Australia, and it is being gradually introduced in Germany and elsewhere.

Today no British librarian would countenance any other system. Readers can browse at will among the shelves until they find what best suits their requirements. In the process they learn a great deal about books in general, and so extend their reading interests and learn something of the wealth and variety of books and of life that they could never have learned otherwise. With open access a library becomes not only educational in the widest sense of the word; it becomes an

easy and pleasant place to frequent. Even more important, it is very much better and more extensively used and it is more economical to administer. A closed (i.e. non-open-access) library, where readers are denied access to the shelves, is never used more than a fraction as much as a comparable open-access library, though it probably requires no fewer staff, as in the closed library the staff have to fetch the books for the readers whereas with open access borrowers fetch them themselves.

Undoubtedly there are losses, and in a busy library books get deranged and must be checked and put in order every day. But the disadvantages are far outweighed by the advantages, and so it is a cardinal principle that every effective public library, anywhere, *must* give open access. About this those who have had practical experience will admit no argument.

Many of the readers we see are seeking recreation, and choose novels, plays, popular biography, or works of travel. Librarians have avoided the great mistake of despising the lighter forms of literature, recognizing the obligation to meet the needs of those who read for relaxation, provided that a reasonable standard of quality of writing is observed. Manifestly many novels and plays are far more than media for relaxation. Moreover, it should be noted that it is not possible to divide readers into those who read only for relaxation and those who never do so. On the contrary, the most 'recreational' of readers from time to time need something practical or serious—and are more likely to choose such books if they enjoy free access to all the shelves; and the most serious-minded, studious borrowers, often, wisely, relax. Another point of importance is that in every community there are those who, because of lack of other interests or because of under-developed reading ability, are little likely to read difficult material, but find pleasure and benefit from the things which are within their capacity.

These readers, however, will display a variety of approach, from the escapist who finds escape in sugary coating to the most purposive. A great many of the users are students—young people studying for examinations, university students, research workers. Others are no less purposive in that they seek help in their work, maybe to keep abreast of current developments, to learn of new methods and discoveries, perhaps to solve the problems that arise day by day, perhaps to become better qualified and more successful. Others read not for educational or vocational reasons but because they seek to understand better the world in which they live, its social and economic conditions and problems, its forms of government and systems of law. Probably a majority are

concerned with the humanities, choosing to broaden their outlook and increase their enjoyment of life by recourse to the works of poets, essayists, historians, musicians, philosophers, and all who have ideas and the ability to express them. Many—and it is important to encourage this type of demand because it brings books to considerable numbers who have no desire for education, 'culture', or anything which they might regard as 'highbrow'—come for practical help in everyday matters—on how to cook, grow flowers, mend radio sets, make furniture, tend the sick, make toys, clothes, and a thousand other things, or seek material on their hobbies and pastimes, be these philately, chess, genealogy, or any of those pursuits which so fortunately 'matter' because they 'don't matter'. All these folk will find something in the library stock which will serve them—and not all the books will be in the English language; some, for students and foreign residents, will be in French, German, Spanish, Italian, and other languages.

Most users need little assistance from the staff. They discover the whereabouts of the books from which *their* selection will be made. If a reader wants anything in particular that is not there he will ask an assistant, who will reserve it for him when it is returned and send him a postcard to tell him it is available—or, if the library does not itself have a copy it will be obtained for him, a process to be described later.[1] On busy days as many as a thousand borrowers may use even this medium-sized library, and twice as many visit the lending departments of the larger libraries; so it is a good thing that most can help themselves, or the staff would be overwhelmed. Nevertheless some do often need help—and most do so occasionally. Therefore there will be on duty, at a desk in a conspicuous position, probably near the catalogues, an experienced assistant whose duty it is to give help when required. Such assistants in American libraries are often called 'readers' advisers', but the term is, in a way, a misnomer because, generally speaking, we refrain from 'advising' readers; the word implies that we suggest to borrowers what they *should* read—and it is a basic principle that our libraries are a free opportunity which each must use as he prefers, that, since there is nothing unworthy to be read in our stock it is of no significance what a man chooses from it. We show a man how to find what he wants, and what we have, tell him about what we do not have but can get, we help him to find his way about the material and to discover whether it does or does not fill his requirements, but we never suggest that he should or should not read this or that.

[1] See pages 46–9.

How many books will one find in this library of ours? How many will it possess altogether? The stock of a lending library will be disposed in four groups: (*a*) the books on the shelves at a given time; (*b*) the books then in the hands of readers; (*c*) the less used books, in reserve stock which can be fetched, although they are not displayed, and (*d*) books that are being rebound or repaired or set aside for that or some similar purpose. As to shelf stock—there is undoubtedly an 'optimum' stock which on the one hand is large enough to offer a fully representative selection, and on the other hand not so large that it makes selection difficult with an excess of material, or that it embraces too many books that are less used, less useful, and consequently become all too familiar permanent residents. For the average library, such as our example, between 20,000 and 25,000 would be an optimum shelf stock. As, with 40,000 population, there would be about 12,000 borrowers each with two books, some 24,000 volumes would always be out. Allowing for reserve stock and books at binders, etc., this suggests a maximum stock of, say, 60,000 volumes. The central library of a larger city would need a larger shelf stock because it would probably attract a higher proportion of more specializing readers. Smaller libraries would not be able to afford or house as many but should have larger stocks behind them, from which their shelves can be refreshed and from which individual requests can be met.

To return, however, to the library we are studying. Although in most libraries 60% or more of the books lent will be novels, the shelf stock itself will comprise at least 80% of non-fiction. This difference arises from three causes: the range of non-fiction is much more extensive; fiction readers have more in common and, moreover, if one particular novel is not available at the time others equally enjoyable will be found, whereas the needs of non-fiction readers are more specific and permit of fewer substitutes; and, thirdly, the rate of turnover of novels is higher.

We pass from the lending library to the reference library, which is a department from which books are not normally lent for home use but *in which* they are used. But it is much more than that. It is a place at which people can obtain information—about anything and almost everything. Some use it as a workshop in which to pursue their studies and their research with all their tools ready at hand. Most come to it seeking specific information. Therefore the salient part of this stock is information-giving material—dictionaries and encyclopaedias both general and of special subjects, foreign dictionaries, directories, year

books, atlases, guides, gazetteers, tables, formulae, government publications, law cases and statutes and compendia, text-books and standard works on all important fields of knowledge, sets of the works of leading authors, county and national histories, and so on. These will be supplemented by sets of periodicals, bibliographies, abstracts and indexes, files of cuttings, pamphlets, and photographs and illustrations. The stock is built up with that main purpose—to provide information when it is needed. The books that the average reader would read in their entirety or in large part, or to which he would give prolonged study, are put in the lending departments—though some may be duplicated in the reference library because they are also sources of information (just as some purely reference books are put also in the lending library because they will be useful for home study purposes, e.g. a Middle English dictionary which the student of early texts needs beside him, or a map or guide-book for the tourist to take away with him, or a dictionary of quotations for the speaker preparing an address).

The staff play a much more important part in reference libraries than in the lending departments because a majority of users —other than the 'casuals' who come in to browse and pass a free hour—need assistance. They require information but have little or no knowledge of sources of information. The experienced assistant who knows his material can readily answer questions, whereas the average inquirer could not know how to begin looking. And if the question is difficult or out of the way considerable research may be needed, and only one who is trained in research methods may succeed at all. Moreover, a library such as 'ours' will not itself have the material necessary to answer many of the more specialized inquiries that will be made—and this applies to lesser and greater degree in larger and smaller libraries. But the experienced assistant will be aware of other possible sources whence the information can be sought.

Like the lending department, the reference department is general in scope, that is to say it will seek to embrace all those matters most likely to be needed. It will recognize no limitation of function or field—only of extent of provision. Nevertheless, in addition to this general provision, most reference libraries have one or more special collections, in limited fields wherein more intensive, more detailed coverage is attempted. One such specialization is usual—the 'local' collection, embracing as completely as possible every book, periodical, pamphlet, map, print, manuscript, or other items relating to the town or district, its history, topography, social and cultural life, natural history,

notabilities, and so on. Usually, too, one finds special collections dealing with important local industries—and such collections are often also available in the lending department. Sometimes, again, there are specializations due to the accident of bequests or the personal interests of librarians, not specifically related to that town more than to others but valuable both there and to the nation at large. Such special collections—of local and non-local subjects, for lending and for reference—will play an increasing part in the national scheme of library development.

The third adult department is the magazine or periodicals room, where are to be found the current issues of a wide variety of weekly, monthly, and quarterly publications. Some are of general interest, like the *Illustrated London News*, the weekly and monthly reviews—*Spectator*, *New Statesman*, *Time and Tide*, *Fortnightly*, *Contemporary*, etc.—some will be for women, others dealing with different aspects of the British scene, such as *Country Life*, others on art, music, literature, the stage, on science, and on each of the more important commercial, technical, business, professional, and other special interests—engineering, electronics, geology, building, carpentry, photography, law, economics, medicine, and so forth. Our library will probably display a few dealing with the Commonwealth and America; larger libraries include a much wider selection of foreign periodicals, including those on scientific and technical matters. Some of the more specialized are kept not in the magazine room but in the reference library, because they are most usefully associated with other material on their subjects and with back files. Once upon a time most libraries had newspaper rooms, but they have long fallen out of favour, because they attract loungers and undesirables and are not economically justified; very few recent libraries have provided such a room, and in old buildings they have been got rid of as soon as opportunity permitted. This objection to newspaper rooms does not, of course, apply to those devoted to outstanding foreign papers, such as are occasionally found in large commercial or shipping centres.

The children's library offers all three services for the younger readers, usually up to about fourteen or fifteen—books to borrow, books to read on the premises, a small carefully selected reference section, and the best of the all too few children's periodicals. Work with children has since the beginning of the century received particular attention from librarians because it has been realized not only that attractive libraries and attractive books can give immense pleasure to

young people, but also because, if they get the habit of reading and using books during the formative years, they are more likely to remain readers throughout life. This does not always happen. A much larger proportion of children of school age than of adults will use libraries if these are readily available; nevertheless a majority continue to use the library when they leave school or resume the habit in later years. It is difficult to assess the effect of some fifty years of children's library provision because during that period there have been so many other influences inimical to reading. On the whole I believe the children's library has been a vital factor in maintaining the position of the book in present-day life.

Because there has been that desire to attract and encourage the children to read, the children's library has usually been the most pleasing, bright, and colourful of all departments, with good clean book stocks—because shabby books would induce lack of respect for books in general—and an air of informality. The staff, chosen for their interest and sympathy with and understanding of children, are eager to help, and, by means of displays and story telling and other activities, to widen the range of reading. And they select the material with care, realizing that it is not much use merely encouraging their borrowers to *read*; the indiscriminate provision of fourth-rate books (and alas too many juvenile books *are* fourth rate) might only serve to create adult readers of fourth-rate adult books, which is hardly a worth-while pursuit. It is not easy to maintain high standards, because children are voracious readers, and good books for children, especially non-fiction books, are not plentiful. The widest possible range of interests is covered, and a good many 'grown-up' books will be included, because some children mature much earlier than others, while some continue using the familiar children's department when others of the same age have started to use the adult lending library. To assist the transition a few libraries have provided departments for teenagers, or teenager selections in the adult departments.

There may also be, to complete our tour of inspection, a lecture room or study room or both, for the use of the library itself for lectures and exhibitions and classes designed to help readers make better use of the library and its contents, and for use by local adult educational organizations and the like.

Had we gone to a smaller place, instead of to our town of 40,000 population, the pattern would have been much the same, excepting that maybe two or more of the departments would have been combined,

e.g. the reference books or the children's department in one part of the lending library, the magazines in the reference department, or even all services in one all-purpose room.

Similar arrangements will often be found in the branch libraries of larger towns, because in these, and even in smaller towns that are not compact with one easily accessible centre, one service point will not suffice. Therefore, in addition to the main or central library, smaller branch libraries will be established to serve the more general needs of the people in outlying districts. Generally speaking, the more serious student will find it worth his while to use the wider book stocks of the central library—though he can have specific items sent for him to his nearest branch. The ordinary reader, however, will not and should not have to travel more than a mile or a mile and a half to his nearest service point. Experience shows that, within such a radius, library use is fairly evenly distributed, but that the percentage of population borrowing is much less if greater distances have to be travelled. There is a happy medium. Branches should not be so small that they encourage too many readers to be satisfied with an inevitably limited selection—and if there are too many branches they are likely to be over small. Moreover, the more service points there are to be staffed and maintained the greater the overall cost. Nevertheless, most towns of 40,000 population and over—and several with less—need at least one branch, and some have ten, twenty, even thirty and more branches.

The central library of the bigger city will, of course, be larger and more comprehensively stocked than our example, with larger shelf stocks and bigger reserves. Beyond a certain size it becomes necessary to break down the service into further sections, because a very large lending or reference department would be both difficult to use and difficult to staff. So we often encounter some departmentalization, such as the provision of technical, commercial, local history, music, and other special departments which can be staffed by specialists in those fields. A few libraries in America and elsewhere (e.g. Stockholm Central) have secured complete departmentalization, with the whole field of knowledge divided between six, eight, or more departments, each embracing part (e.g. science and technology, fine arts, history and travel, and so on) and sometimes embracing both lending and reference work and materials, but I know of no such library in this country.

III

So much for the town. Library provision for the country districts is of much more recent origin, though it is now nation wide. Until 1919 any town or urban district or parish could provide public libraries, and many of even the smallest did so, but it was not possible for county councils to adopt the Libraries Acts. The Act of 1919 gave them power to do so, placing the work under the county education committee. It did not, however, remove library powers from authorities which had previously provided libraries, though these could if they wished relinquish their powers to the county and some, though too few, have done so. The result is that, on the one hand, there remain far too many far too small independent libraries within each geographical county, and, on the other hand, the counties give service to all the rest of the geographical county area. Thus, maps of their area of operation often show a variety of pockets of independent service when it would be so much more sensible and convenient both for the public and the library administrator if all but the larger towns came within the county library system. However, vested interests are always difficult to dislodge, and reform will probably be slow. Conversely some of the counties—and an outstanding example is Middlesex—give service to large urban areas which either had not provided their own libraries before 1919 or have grown up since.

What is significant is that the county system may serve people living under a variety of circumstances—in isolated farms, in little villages, in mining and industrial townships or market towns, in new towns and in the suburbs. It may cover a considerable area in a large part of which the population is sparse and scattered. To reach these people a great many service points are needed—and these are of different types according to population density, ranging from large county branches in no way different from the central libraries of even largish towns (excepting that they are part of the county service, which should have important implications) and often much larger than the majority of independent urban libraries, to postal delivery, or travelling library service to readers far from any place big enough even to maintain a centre. The centre is the normal means of reaching the villages and very small towns. Somewhere a place is found—in school, village hall, shop, inn, private house, council office—in which the county library can deposit a small collection of books. Open at regular times for a few hours each week it is usually looked after by a local voluntary

'librarian'. One county system has 46 full-time branches each open more than 30 hours a week, and 876 'other points' (i.e. smaller branches, centres, mobile libraries, school, hospital, and prison libraries); another has 14 full-time branches and 983 other points; the average county operates through between 100 and 500 different places where books are to be seen and borrowed.

In most areas the centre is the only possible service point. It has its advantages and its disadvantages. Though the book stock is small it is changed three or four times a year and specific items not in stock are sent on request from headquarters; it is a point of contact between the reader and the wider resources of the system. On the other hand much depends on the volunteer librarian, who may or may not be keen or intelligent or *persona grata*. Even with three-monthly exchanges the reader sees only a small part of the total range of books, and naturally those he sees are chosen because they are of more general interest. Usually there is little convenience or comfort—a locked cupboard, a few book boxes set out on tables (I've even seen them just put on the floor). There is no expert help available for the more purposive reader.

Some librarians are therefore making more and more use of mobile libraries—fitted vans in which 1,500 or more volumes can be carried on shelves so that they can be seen by borrowers, as in a small branch library, and accompanied by a qualified professional library assistant. Mobile libraries are used mainly for three purposes: (*a*) to take books to isolated readers and groups of readers out of touch even with a centre; (*b*) to act instead of centres, visiting a village, for example, at regular intervals, staying there for specified hours so that readers can go to the van, as to a branch, to choose their books—this is clearly more expensive than centre supply, but is much better as it offers a wider, more varied selection and expert staffing; and (*c*) to facilitate the exchange of centre stocks and to some extent supplement the centre service—when the mobile library visits the centre less frequently than in the case of (*b*), so that the librarian can choose his next lot of books from those carried in the van and, maybe, such readers as happen to be available can choose items for their own use. Where exchanges are not made by van the fresh consignments of books are made up at headquarters, when the expressed desires and special needs of the readers are taken into consideration, and the books dispatched by rail or carrier or by the county's own transport.

In the larger places branches are established—or should I say are *being* established, because much must be done before all communities

with, say, 1,000 people or more will have their branches. These are larger collections, housed in buildings or rooms set aside solely for library purposes, many erected specially as libraries, others in converted shops, halls, and other suitable premises. The larger ones are open twenty, thirty, and more hours a week; the staff are either paid part-time local people who have been given some training, or full-time professional members of the county staff. At even the larger branches some part of the stock is, or certainly should be, exchanged from time to time, because it is axiomatic that in all excepting the larger communities there are only so many potential readers for any books other than the most popular and standard publications. Sooner or later all who want to read them have done so; unless they are taken away and replaced with other material they will lie idle on the shelves and, even more important, the reader seeking something other than the popular books will have nothing fresh to read. This exchange is possible when a service point forms part of a larger system such as a county library; it is not possible in the case of the too numerous small independent libraries which rely on their own resources—and this is one fundamental reason why small communities cannot hope ever to give a full library service.

To return, however, to this summary of the county library. Each county system has its headquarters, usually at the county town, where the service as a whole is organized—books are selected, bought, catalogued, and made ready for use, distributed to centres, mobile libraries, and branches, exchanged, sent for binding, and so on. Here, too, is maintained the machinery for providing the individual reader with whatever he needs and which does not happen to be at his own local service point at the time. He sends his requests either through his branch or direct by post—for specified books or books on a subject, etc.—and the headquarters finds what he wants either by locating a copy at a branch and instructing that branch to post it to him, or by drawing upon a headquarters central stock which has been built up with the object of meeting such individual requirements, in which case the item sought is sent to the reader perhaps by post if it is needed at once, or in the next branch or centre exchange, or by mobile library delivery according to circumstances. In addition to this stock of more individualized, specialized material, there is also at headquarters a pool stock from which service point exchanges are selected.

Certain of the larger counties have successfully introduced an intermediate stage between headquarters and local service points. This is the 'regional library'—a larger branch intended not only to supply the

local readers but also to look after the smaller branches and centres and individual readers in the region. This is a valuable provision; it saves time and transport and reduces mobile library journeys; it brings the centres and small branches under the close supervision of a senior librarian; it makes it possible for those living within the region, when they can visit the regional library much more easily than they could travel to headquarters, to see a much wider selection than they could do otherwise. Incidentally, most county headquarters can also be visited by borrowers from anywhere in the county who have occasion to go to the headquarters town, and in a few cases the headquarters provide a full library service for that town's own inhabitants—though usually there is also an independent town library operating in that locality, an undesirable, wasteful example of duplication.

As was said earlier, many county library centres are at schools, and these cater for children as well as adults (sometimes only for children, the adults having centres elsewhere). Supply of books and library service to schools is still most inadequate in this country. Sometimes in the counties it is the responsibility of the county library; sometimes it is run independently by the school authorities. Less frequently a town library will serve the schools; usually in towns (i.e. those with independent, non-county libraries) service to children is given by children's departments and sections at the local central and branch libraries, and this may or not be supplemented—and usually is *not*—by collections provided by the schools themselves. Some librarians say that it is wise to encourage children from the outset to frequent the public libraries, from which they must get their books in after life; others assert that reading is best encouraged in the schools and that *there* the children should find their books. The ideal lies between these extremes. There should be good, appropriate libraries at all schools, but where public libraries are properly accessible, as they should be excepting in scattered areas, these should also afford facilities for children, and where such dual service is possible the public library should cater for the recreational and the free choice needs of the youngsters, and the school concern itself chiefly with the material associated with the educational process and with encouraging the wider use of books and libraries.

IV

There are altogether 31,249 library service points in Great Britain, including Northern Ireland, provided by 577 independent local library

authorities—authorities free to spend as much *or as little* as they like on their libraries, to buy what books, employ what staff, provide what service points they choose. Freedom is a good thing—one of the very best, possibly even *the* best. But we must not be surprised if this local freedom to decide standards has produced a wide variety of library services, not all of which are as efficient or useful as others. Let us defer further consideration of these variations, however, for they are important and must be discussed again. The point now is that no two library systems in the country are the same. They are all the same in certain respects but all are different as regards the opportunities they afford and how they afford them.

It would be wrong, however, to think of them as operating in independent isolation, for such is not the case. Until a few years after the First World War they *did* operate in isolation. A man could use and borrow from his local library but he was strictly limited to what it provided. If it did not possess and would not acquire the books he wanted he had to do without them—or get them somewhere outside the framework of the public library service if he could. Since then we have developed a system of co-operation, one of the best in the world for all its limitations, and the picture has entirely changed. Let us never forget that so far as the books to be found on the shelves are concerned—so far as the educational, demonstrating value of the library is concerned—the public are dependent still upon local provision. But co-operation has made it possible for the reader who wants some specific book to obtain it, wherever he may live, whoever he may be.

The British system of library co-operation, in relation to the loan of books from one library to another, was, like the county library service, largely fostered by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. The keystone of co-operation is the National Central Library, which was founded in 1916 as the Central Library for Students, designed primarily to supply books for adult education classes. Its scope gradually widened as the need to borrow from other libraries became more and more apparent. In 1931 its present title and constitution were adopted. Its function is not so much to lend books from its own stock—though it has material of its own largely intended to supplement other resources—as to act as a clearing house for inter-library loans. The basic idea was that it should establish contact with libraries willing to lend, build up a union catalogue of their holdings, and thus be able to put the requiring library in touch with a library able and willing to lend what was needed.

Between the wars, however, it became manifest that the task was beyond the resources of one centre, and that a great part of inter-library borrowing could better be undertaken by an intermediate agency. This is the regional bureau. England-Wales is divided into nine regions. To the regional bureaux are allied nearly all the public and many specialist, non-public libraries in the region. Most maintain a union catalogue, more or less complete; others rely upon circularization and other machinery.

The procedure is for the reader requiring something to apply first to his local library. If the book is not in stock there or cannot be acquired for its stock, for financial or other reasons, the library sends the request to the regional bureau. If a copy is available in any other library in the region, that library is asked to supply it to the requirer's local library or, less often, to the borrower direct. If there is no copy available in the region the request is forwarded to the National Central Library, which does one of several things. Associated with the National Central Library are some two hundred non-public (university and special) libraries willing to lend; reference to an appropriate library, or to the union catalogue, may locate the work. Or the request may be met by a library in another region. Or the National Central Library may supply it from its own stock. Or it may buy it, or ask an appropriate specializing library to do so. It may even obtain it from some library in another country, for there is growing international library co-operation.

In practice, about 90% of the required books *are* supplied sooner or later, though, and this is the chief present limitation, often it takes over long to supply. Nevertheless, as already noted, this co-operation has changed the face of library service so far as the purposive reader with specific needs is concerned. He is no longer limited to local resources. He can draw upon the whole country, even a large part of the world. During the year 1953–4 nearly 400,000 volumes were lent by libraries to one another through the National Central Library and regional systems and, through the National Central Library, 2,531 books were lent to libraries in 41 overseas countries, including Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, and 1,158 obtained for English libraries from 19 other countries, including those just mentioned.

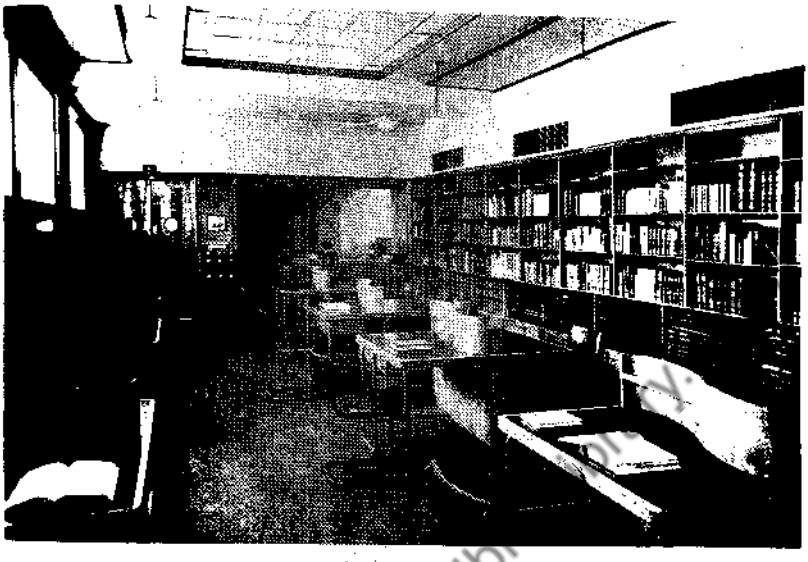
Until recent years the National Central Library was supported partly by contributions from borrowing libraries and chiefly by grants from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. These latter have now been discontinued, and in their place the National Central Library receives a

grant from the Treasury. The regional bureaux are supported entirely by contributions from the constituent libraries.

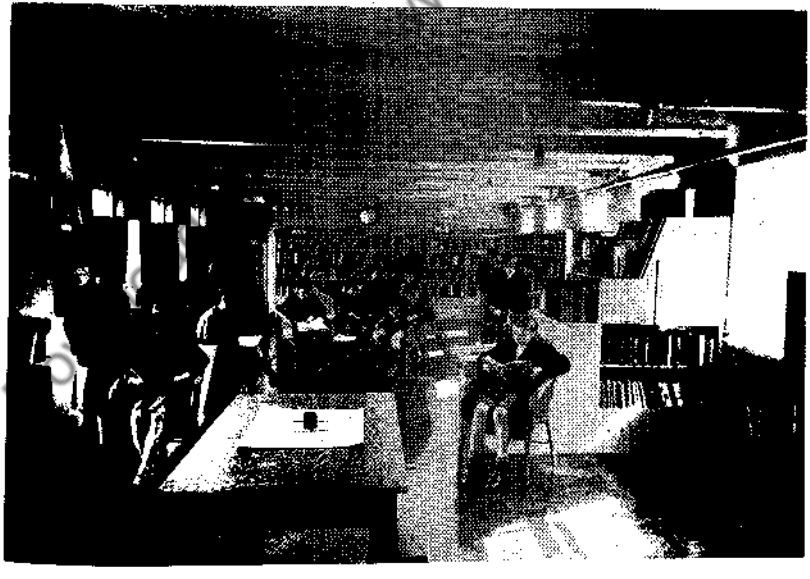
The obvious next stage in co-operation—which has already been taken in certain regions, notably the Metropolitan Boroughs of London—is to seek full coverage, to ensure that somewhere every useful book shall be provided. One must remember that all libraries are primarily interested in their own public; they have to use most of their invariably limited funds to provide the books that will be most useful to most of their readers. And the inevitable result is that though most provide some less general books—and much the same books—there will be some items which no library obtains, unless deliberate steps are taken to fill these gaps. Such steps are now being taken, though gradually and partially. In the Metropolitan area, for example, the field of knowledge has been divided between the constituent libraries, and each has undertaken to buy, so far as it can, every worth-while British publication and important foreign books in its allotted field. Similar schemes of subject specialization have been started in other regions, and schemes to embrace periodicals and foreign publications of a highly specialized nature are in being or under discussion among groups of related specializing libraries. Much has yet to be done but much has been done. And it is realized, too, that a full system of co-operation must make it possible to supply not only books as such but also information.

Another valuable form of co-operation is spreading also. Normally a borrower is limited to his own public library. That is to say everyone who lives or pays rates—and usually everyone who works, or studies at a whole-time educational institution—in a town or county is entitled to borrow from its libraries, free of charge. And, of course, reference libraries and reading rooms are always open to any who visit them, without limitation. But often a man would prefer, or find it more convenient, to use the library of a neighbouring authority, or would find only in a larger library the material he requires.

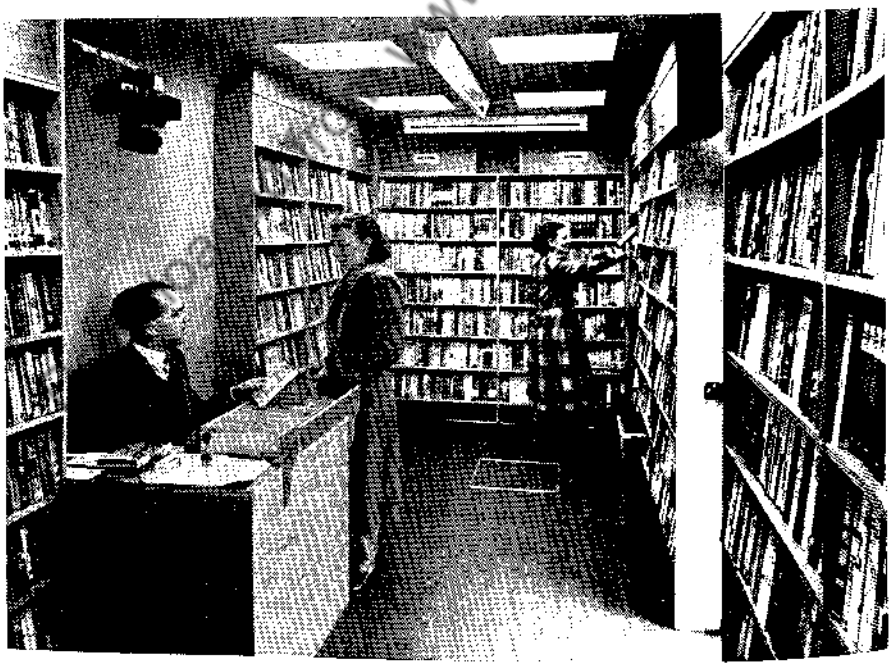
The way to overcome the often serious limitations of local boundaries is to afford inter-availability of tickets, i.e. to let a man borrow from libraries other than his own. The great obstacle to inter-availability is variation in standards of service, which might mean that the good library would be called upon to give free service to people from a neighbouring area that was offering a much less worth-while service. Thus it is unlikely to become general until good standards are general. Nevertheless much inter-availability exists—and it is extending by local and neighbourly arrangements, and by the increasing acceptance



Malden and Coombe (Surrey County), reference library.



Stonehouse Branch, Plymouth, children's library.



Battersea Public Libraries, mobile library.

of the principle. Thus all the Metropolitan Borough libraries will lend to one another's borrowers—and some libraries will, without question, lend to anyone presenting the membership ticket of any public library in the country—or the world.

V

The factor most responsible for the development and present position of British public libraries has been its personnel. This is said advisedly and without minimizing the work of benefactors and many, many keen and far-seeing members of local library committees. The objectives, ideals, and methods of public librarianship have been created by a succession of librarians, and these have been exploited for the benefit of the public by their staffs. Librarianship is not merely a process of collecting books; it is a process of relating books to the lives of the people who use the library—of selecting those which will serve their needs, of arranging them so that they can be used easily and fully, perhaps of discovering and defining the precise needs so that the precise material can be given, often of encouraging the further use of books and widening both the circle of readers and the interests of those within it. To achieve this task successfully a librarian needs a wide knowledge of books and of life, and a catholic understanding of and sympathy with people; he needs also to be a good business man able to make the most of limited resources, and a good administrator capable of managing a complex organization catering for a clientele drawn from all sorts and conditions of life, and a likable personality capable of securing support, often unwillingly given, for his work. Having listed such a formidable catalogue of virtues it need not be said that there are probably few completely successful librarians, but there are many who go far towards securing or deserving success. In plain words, librarianship has become a profession, which means that it needs specialized training and experience and that it involves dedication to the public service. It has become a profession because in the course of years an increasing number of men and women have acquired that specialized knowledge and evidenced that sense of responsibility, and have been so manifestly better able to provide better libraries that gradually—and maybe not yet completely—people have realized that librarianship is a task for professional people, that it is not just something that anyone can do, as it had to be in the beginning and still is, alas, in some places.

Most of the credit for the creation of professional librarianship and

thus for professionally provided public service—excepting that, of course, which goes to the individuals concerned—must go to the Library Association, which was founded in 1877 and has since then both promoted the establishment and the better administration of libraries—to quote from its Royal Charter granted in 1898—and provided for the examination and the registration of qualified librarians. It has been active in ensuring that there were adequate facilities for professional education, though it has not itself taught—for one should not be both judge and advocate. The Library Association unites both the librarians employed in all types of library work and representatives of local library authorities and members of the governing boards of other libraries. It is concerned with the status and rewards of practising librarians, because these affect the quality of the library services that can be given, but it is not a trade union. It maintains a Register of Chartered Librarians who have passed fairly comprehensive and exacting examinations and had some suitable experience, holds meetings and conferences, collects and publishes information on library services, maintains an information bureau and library, organizes research into various fields of library study, and generally affords machinery for united action when this is desirable and for the exchange of ideas. In the absence of any department of the national government primarily interested in libraries in general, the Association does many of those things which are done in other countries by library departments of the government where such exist. But it has many functions which no such government agency could undertake. Indeed, it might be said, in passing, that there is everywhere need for a strong, active, professional association, not least where there is also a government library department, to which it could be both a corrective or a spur and a necessary ally.

As regards British library personnel, however: The public libraries of Great Britain, including Northern Ireland, in 1954–5 employed 12,390 full-time staff. It is difficult to estimate how many of these are qualified 'chartered' librarians. Much of the work is of a routine character and can be done adequately by unqualified people, usually and best by young people, the most suitable of whom will in time qualify and the least suitable leave library work. Nevertheless there should always be at least one qualified assistant on duty at every service point, however small, and for other duties (such as reference work, cataloguing, readers' assistance, book selection, etc.) and for supervisory work, professional staff are essential. On an average between 30% and 35% of the total staff should be professionals. This proportion is attained in

many systems. In others, particularly the smaller ones, there are unfortunately no qualified staff at all. Conditions have improved considerably in recent years. Salaries throughout the professional grades are far too low and there are far too few posts in the professional grades of the local authorities' grading scheme. Nevertheless the need to employ qualified staff is now so generally recognized that no local authority would think of appointing unqualified people to senior, professional posts.

Professional education is given at the School of Librarianship at University College, London, the first to be established (in 1919), and until after the last war the only one. Since then nine further schools giving whole-time courses have been established at schools of technology in London and various provincial centres; these prepare students for the Library Association examinations. Most of the students obtain grants to cover subsistence and fees, or help towards covering these expenses, from local education authorities. Others who cannot for varied reasons attend whole-time schools are taught at evening classes or by correspondence courses.

VI

Earlier in this chapter a few statistics were given.[1] There were in 1954–5—the period to which all the following figures relate—386 million books lent for home reading. Of these 58·9% were works of fiction, 21% non-fiction, and 20·1% children's books. The non-fiction percentage of adult issues alone was 26·3%. This is, as are other figures quoted, an overall average; there are libraries where 40% and more of the issues are non-fiction—which of course means that in others, in order to compensate, the non-fiction percentage is much less than 25·1%. One hundred and seven libraries record over 10 issues per head of population per annum and 64 record less than 5. This may mean one of two things, so let us beware of jumping to conclusions. The average non-fiction book is kept by the borrower much longer than the average novel; so high issues per head of population may mean a high percentage of fiction issues. On the other hand high issues per head may mean that a library is well used by a high proportion of the population —and low issues may mean that neither the fiction nor the non-fiction is sufficient or of good enough quality to attract the normal percentage of the population. We must always treat statistics with many reservations unless we know a great deal about the quality of service, when

[1] See page 29.

maybe we don't need to bother about statistics at all. By way of an example, loans per head of population are much fewer in Denmark and Sweden than in Great Britain, but we know from personal observation that Danish and Swedish libraries do much less to attract the purely 'pass time' reader, and so it would be wrong to argue from this difference that Danish and Swedish libraries were making a less important contribution.

Of all the lying statistics none tell the truth less than those of book stocks—of the number of volumes provided per hundred of population. It depends upon *what* those books are. I have seen hundreds of libraries, up and down the world, that had far too many books because most of them were useless, unused, outdated, outworn books that only served to make the libraries difficult and unpleasant to use and expensive to maintain. Hoping that readers of this book will bear this fact in mind, let it be said that these libraries serving 50,600,000 people had total stocks of 61,500,000. I have no information as to how this total was divided in 1955, but in 1953 30% was fiction, 16·6% children's books, and 53·4% non-fiction, including reference works, and I do not think these proportions will have changed much. The median (i.e. not average but midway figure) expenditure on books per head of population for the year 1954–5 was 13·8*d.* The highest expenditure was 84·2*d.* in a central London library and the highest outside the County of London was 31·9*d.*—saving in one Scottish county with an exceptionally sparse population where the figure was 64·4*d.*

Clearly, as we have described an 'average' library system and how it operates, and discussed some of the good points of our system, it is time to turn to some of its bad features, for one has just been disclosed. We may make one very reasonable assumption at the outset, which is that there is no library system in the country which is spending extravagantly, more than it should, more than it needs in order to meet public demands. My own experience, which has fortunately been for the last twenty-five years as librarian successively of the two library authorities which spent *more* than any others per head of population, is that *no* public library has as much to spend as it could usefully and economically spend. However, if we leave out of account the central London libraries, which serve considerable non-resident populations, so that their expenditure ratio to resident population is meaningless, we can safely say that all those libraries which are not spending as much as 142·3*d.*—say 12*s.*—per head altogether, and 38*d.*—say 3*s.* 6*d.*—per head on books, are not giving and cannot give a really satisfactory

service. May I say here that though I am suspicious of nearly all statistics there is one which I accept—that of expenditure per head—because none of it is wasted ever and, conversely, unless one has the money one cannot provide the books or the staff and the other essentials. I know that even this figure can be misleading because some libraries have excessive loan charges and other overheads, which may suggest that their real library service (books and staff) is better than it really is, but such cases strengthen rather than weaken my argument. So, if few libraries in the country are even reasonably supported financially what kind of service can be offered by those many authorities which spend even less than the median? It can only be a very bad service.

That, therefore, is the first defect in our service to be noted. It is the result of our system of local autonomy, of the freedom of local authorities to spend as little, or as much, as they wish—and so to deny their readers the freedom to be given them in so many ways by a good, well-provided library. Of our 577 library systems, large and small, at least 215 spent less than 4*s.* per head of population, over 105 less than 3*s.*, about 60 less than 2*s.*, and perhaps as many as 22 spent even less than 1*s.* The national median was 4*s.* 8*d.* Let it be noted that these bad authorities are to be found in every population group—that is to say that one can find examples of places spending twice, three times, and more per head than others serving much the same kind of population and often in other respects similar.

To some extent this grave disparity arises from genuine general local financial difficulties, from low rateable value, and prevailing economic limitations. But this is not the whole story by any means. Some authorities with low rate product per head have very good public libraries, and vice versa. The basic reason is local lack of interest and of appreciation of the value of libraries. This is a cause that is very difficult to overcome. Under present conditions no one can tell these authorities that they should and must spend more; they probably do not even employ a librarian of sufficient calibre to make them see the light. And that remark is not made in jest, because there *is* a close relationship between the quality of the librarian and the quality of the library service—a relationship often proved by changes of personnel. The point is that the bad authorities too seldom appoint, or offer enough to attract, a good librarian—and if they do, they make him gradually into a bad one. The only remedy would be a state public library department with powers to compel at least acceptable minimum standards and with the means to help, with grant aid. So far proposals to this end have met

genuinely out-of-the-way, highly specialized material but most inappropriate for the provision of everyday books such as those small libraries would need in considerable numbers. Supply from, say, a county headquarters is very different, a more prompt, more economical process in every way. Therefore, it is quite certain that comparable standards—of staffing and of book supply—will not be attained until all these small libraries are either part of large systems or linked together in a very closely integrated pattern, such as we shall see when we study conditions in Denmark and Sweden.

A third disadvantage of our present British system is that not only are many of our library areas too small, they are inappropriate and uneconomical. There is an illogical, undesirable divorce of the central city, suburban, and rural services. An ideal library service area would embrace a large city centre, its suburbs, and the surrounding countryside—all that area the inhabitants of which looked upon that city as its focal point. In such a system the headquarters would be situated at the main urban centre, whence materials were distributed to all the outlying service points; it would provide for its own inhabitants a large, well-stocked central lending library and a comprehensive, well-staffed reference and information department; and various appropriate specialized provisions would be made for those people in the area who could visit them, and which would be centres of book stock and expert staffing from which books to meet special requirements and information could be sent as required.

But we do not find such a set-up in this country. The town is separate; the suburbs are separate; the rural areas are separate. To some extent the barriers are lifted—the town's reference library is open to all and usually its lending library is available to those who work or study within its boundary. Occasionally there are mutual availability agreements enabling people from neighbouring areas or adjoining town systems to use one another's facilities. There is, as already noted, an excellent example in the Metropolitan Boroughs, which accept one another's borrowers, but this is practicable because all the Metropolitan Boroughs provide much the same kind of service, and borough boundaries and the ways of people are such that availability is a mutual process—the number of people from one borough who use others is much the same as the number from other boroughs who use that one. In most areas this could not happen. Usually there is in an area one bigger and better library that would have to give much more than its own inhabitants would seek elsewhere in return.

Nevertheless it is highly desirable that there *should* be complete availability. It is wrong that the people in a small town or suburb or village near to a large town, to which maybe they came regularly to shop, should not be able to enjoy the wider library resources they could find there. Were there some system of state grant this factor could be taken into consideration in the allocation of grants, so that a library which gave service to people from outside who did not contribute to its rate-levied expenditure could enjoy some compensation—and the people could enjoy better library services. Moreover, a wise system of state grants would encourage neighbouring library authorities to create wider, more economical, and efficient areas of service by preparing joint schemes.

Another result of our present system is much duplication of effort, because most of the county library systems have their headquarters in towns which have their own independent libraries. If, as usually the county must do, it maintains a good lending library at headquarters for the use of county visitors and from which to send books to meet individual requests, and a reference department to deal with inquiries, there will be in that town two lending libraries and two reference libraries, with separate stock and staff, where *one*, somewhat larger surely but not twice as large, would suffice.

VII

So much for the overall picture. This pattern of good and bad, of large and small, is fairly well distributed over the country, though there are marked regional differences. For example, judging by expenditure per head London and South-East England are far ahead. In 1952–3 (the latest year for which this analysis is available) in London all but one system spent at least the national average of 4*s.* 6*d.*; in South-East England 27% of the libraries spent less. Of the rest of the country Yorkshire and Lancashire-Cheshire were the better supported regions, with respectively only 50% and 57% of the libraries spending less than the average. The worst regions were the East Midlands (71% spending less than the average), the North—Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmorland, North Riding of Yorkshire (excluding Scarborough)—(73%), Scotland (76%), and Northern Ireland (93%).

As Scotland and Northern Ireland both operate under different legislation from England and Wales we should note certain particular aspects of their library position.

SCOTLAND

Though public library services in Scotland are very similar in nature, scope, and standards to those south of the border, there are three differences in the legal basis that should be noted.

First, the Scottish burghs, which operate under the Public Libraries (Scotland) Acts, are still subject to a threepenny rate limit, which seriously prejudices development.[1] The county library services of Scotland do *not* operate under these Acts but are provided under a clause in the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, which says that 'it shall be lawful for the education authority of a county, as an ancillary means of promoting education, to make such provision of books . . . as they may think desirable, and to make the same available not only to the children and young persons attending schools or continuation classes in the county but also to the adult population resident therein'.

The county library systems of Scotland are in fact exactly similar in methods and intentions to those of England and Wales. The difference is a financial one. In the first place, as there is no library rate there is not, as in the Scottish burghs, any rate limit.[1] County education authorities can spend as much as they like on their libraries. Even more important, their expenditure on libraries, being part of their expenditure on education, earns government grant on the same basis. Consequently the Scottish county libraries are the *only* libraries in Great Britain which receive any government assistance—and it is substantial. Having regard to these two advantages one would expect the Scottish county libraries to be more generously supported than either the Scottish burghs or the English counties. Such, however, is not the case. On the contrary their average expenditure per head of population is lower than that of the other two categories mentioned. The moral of this state of affairs is obvious. It is that government grant *in itself* need not lead to better development; it may be merely a means by which local contributions and local interest can be reduced. Government grants, to be effective, must be allied to an active government library department able to formulate and insist upon appropriate standards.

[1] Since this was written the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act, 1955, has received the royal assent. One of its clauses removes the rate limitation. Another important provision of this Act is that not only are library authorities permitted to contribute to the funds of the Scottish Central Library (which they could not do before) but subject to the agreement of the associations representing the local authorities they are *obliged* to do so, according to a specified scale of apportionment.

and the grant system must be one which will encourage and not discourage local authority support.

The third feature of the Scottish scene is that known as 'double-rating'. Excepting Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee, all the Scottish burghs form part of the administrative counties, which are education authorities, and, since 1929, levy the education rate upon the whole of the county area, including the burghs. This means that the inhabitants of a burgh with its own public library have to pay twice for library services, i.e. for their own and for the county library. It is true that the counties have sought to remedy this position by making contributions, or providing books, to the burghs. But this has not as a rule been equivalent to the amount of the contribution made by burgh residents to the county scheme. In truth, as most of these burghs—and of the counties—are too small to maintain independently adequate services, the best solution of this problem would be the formation of joint county-burgh schemes. This has been achieved in certain instances but is unlikely to become general in the near future.

Conditions are somewhat different also in Northern Ireland, with which I shall next deal. And after Northern Ireland we will glance at the service in the Irish Republic, which is most appropriately described here as it began while that country was still subject to laws made in London.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Library provision in Northern Ireland has lagged far behind that in the rest of the British Isles, both in time and in standards. A Public Libraries (Ireland) Act, corresponding to the 1850 Act for England and Wales, was passed in 1855, but though three authorities adopted it before 1861 two of them did nothing to implement it and only one established any library. In that part of the island which in 1920 was to become Northern Ireland the first public library was not set up until 1888. This was in Belfast. The next, at Lurgan, an urban district, was opened in 1895, and between then and 1910 seven other urban districts commenced operations, all with the help of building grants from Andrew Carnegie. These all remain in operation except Downpatrick, which later was incorporated in the County Down system, and to them were added Londonderry which, though it adopted the Act in 1898, did not provide anything until 1924, and then only a very modest

service indeed, and Holywood in 1947. Thus there are, in addition to Belfast, nine urban libraries, which together serve a population of 154,000. One, Londonderry, has some 50,000 inhabitants; two have only about 6,000; the rest serve populations of between 12,000 and 20,000.

Meanwhile the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust began pioneer work similar to that which had laid the sound foundations of the county library services in England and Wales and Scotland. An experimental county library was established in County Antrim in 1922, and proved so successful that in 1924 a Public Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) was passed empowering county councils to provide libraries for rural districts and to make arrangements with urban districts for library provision. All the counties, excepting County Down, had adopted this by 1927, and received Carnegie grants for the purchase of initial stocks. In County Antrim the stock of the experimental library was handed over to the county council. County Down adopted the act in 1940. There are thus now six county systems, serving a total population of 750,000, the smallest serving 54,000, and the largest 160,000.

Northern Ireland has, therefore, achieved complete coverage, which is something, though it does not follow that adequate facilities are available. Indeed, speaking generally, this is very far from the case. Mr T. MacCallum Walker, in an excellent article on 'Libraries and Librarianship in Northern Ireland' (*Libri*, vol. iv, No. 4, 1954), gives an illuminating summary which shows that standards are far below the average for the United Kingdom.

As regards the urban libraries (excluding Belfast) he states that they provide an overall average stock of 0·66 volumes per head of population (the United Kingdom average is 1·11 per head), provision ranging from 0·29 in the worst to 1·45 in the best.

Annual issues per head range from 0·03 to 7·23, with an average of 3·1 (compared with 7·5 in the United Kingdom), and annual expenditure per head ranges from 3·3*d.* to 42·8*d.*, with an average of 17·5*d.* (the United Kingdom median is 55·6*d.*).

For the county libraries the book stock per head ranges from 0·26 to 0·69 with an average of 0·45; annual issues per head from 0·53 to 3·42 with an average of 1·51; and annual expenditure per head from 7*d.* to 34*d.* The total expenditure of all libraries (excluding Belfast) was (in 1953–4) only £57,000, or 1*s.* 2½*d.* a head, very little more than a quarter of the average for the whole of Great Britain, Northern Ireland included.

Miss A. S. Cooke, writing in 1936 (*A Survey of Libraries*, The Library Association, 1938, p. 30), said, 'Conditions in Northern Ireland are very bad indeed from every point of view. With the exception of Belfast itself, Bangor and one or two of the county libraries . . . there are no libraries worthy of the name. . . . It is true that the educational level of the borrowers is far lower than in England, but at the same time there is nothing whatsoever to encourage a student or serious reader to enter the library.' Were she to revisit the country now she would see great improvement, but it is doubtful if she would yet be satisfied.

'Belfast itself' has had a chequered career. Late in starting compared with other great cities in the British Isles, the central library soon outgrew its premises. Five branches were erected with Carnegie money and a sixth in 1940. During the war the central library was badly damaged and one branch destroyed. But apart from these disasters the Belfast Public Library never seems to have, until recently, enjoyed adequate support. One reason undoubtedly was that it had a formidable competitor in the Linen Hall Library, an outstanding example of the subscription library, founded in 1788 and, building up a really good stock, attracting the bulk of the more serious readers, who were indeed much better served than they would have been by the public library as it was until a very few years ago. This, let it be noted in parentheses, is by no means the only case of a good subscription library proving prejudicial to public library service. Other instances will be cited—and, in this country, I can think of how the Newcastle-upon-Tyne public library suffered because of the Literary and Philosophical Library. However, to return to Belfast. To indicate its status in the past, one may note that in the *Report of the Departmental Committee on Libraries in Northern Ireland* of 1929, it is stated 'both library provision and the use made of it are definitely below the standards of England and Wales, which could hardly be surprising as the total expenditure was only £19,282 for a then population of 415,151'.

A great change has, however, taken place since 1950. The central library is being reconstructed and modernized, two new branches are to be provided and, most important of all, the book fund has been quadrupled in two or three years, and the effects of this are being seen in increased and better use. In 1953–4 lending library issues well exceeded 2 million, and a total expenditure of £92,761 represented a *per capita* expenditure slightly above the median of all cities in the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, in the population group 300,000–499,999—a very considerable achievement in so brief a period.

Generally speaking, however, the prospects outside Belfast are not good. What are the reasons for this prognosis? What indeed are the causes of the tardy and limited progress of these libraries? The first have been (and to some measure still are) general lack of interest and (in the words of the Departmental Committee of 1929) 'the failure of library authorities in some places to realize the true functions of the library [which] has tended to bring public libraries into discredit not only in their own area but generally'. Next was the existence of a rate limit. A limit of 1*d.* was imposed in the first Act of 1855. This was not altered until 1920 (before partition) when the maximum was raised to 3*d.* with the proviso that county boroughs could, with consent of the appropriate government department, raise up to 6*d.* When, in 1924, county councils were given powers a limit of 1*d.* was, however, imposed upon them. The only exception to this was that in urban districts within the county systems an extra 2*d.* might be expended—making the total the 3*d.* that the urban district could have expended had it been or become independent. These limits were abolished in 1946, but the effects of limitation die hard. During the years of starvation the authorities have been taught to think of the library as something so little desirable that the wise government imposes a barrier to their 'extravagance'; they are only able to provide an unworthy and relatively useless service and so never learn, nor teach their inhabitants, how useful it should and could become. I am personally absolutely convinced that the imposition of rate (or other) limitations to library expenditure is, and always has been, unwise and prejudicial. It has not only retarded progress; it has led to results exactly opposite to those that were sought—not to economy but to extravagance, because (to quote this Departmental Committee once more) 'a library service which is inadequate even for ordinary needs is not worth the 1*d.* or 2*d.* in the £ which has to be paid for it; it is not worth any expenditure at all in some cases'.

A further cause of backwardness is that the rateable value of these authorities is far too low. In one typical county with over 100,000 people a 1*d.* rate only yields £2,000. And, most important perhaps of all, these authorities are much too small.

Mr MacCallum Walker (in the article already cited) sums up the position, and suggests remedies, as follows: 'In a predominantly rural area, however, the rateable value is low and adequate services for each independent authority could be provided only from rates beyond the capabilities of the area. Of the urban areas (again excluding Belfast)

the town with the highest rateable value is Londonderry . . . it is relatively more able than any other urban area to effect an increase. Yet to place the city's library service on the same annual expenditure basis as comparable towns in Great Britain would require an addition of 8*d.* to the rate levied; this figure, it should be noted, would be for normal annual library estimates; it does not take into account the large capital outlay required to place the library on a footing comparable with those of similar size in Britain. If, then, such an increase in rates could not be effected in Londonderry, it would be entirely beyond the realms of possibility in the smaller urban areas. At the present time only two authorities in the whole of Northern Ireland are capable of raising income adequate to provide library services on the normal British standard, these being Belfast City and Antrim County.

'It is clear that some form of integration is required if all Northern Ireland areas are to receive adequate library service. It is equally evident that any form of integration must be based on the two public libraries best able to offer the foundations for any new structure. As early as 1927 it was pointed out that no urban area with a population of less than 20,000 could reasonably support an adequate library service; that figure was repeated in 1942; with the complete change which has taken place in the economic life of the country since then, that estimate is even more true today; indeed, 40,000 might be a more realistic figure. On this basis, it would seem obvious that a preliminary step would be for all urban areas to surrender (if necessary, compulsorily) their library powers to their appropriate county authorities. There would thus be eight authorities operating library services (instead of sixteen), these being the six counties, Belfast in the east and Londonderry City in the west. . . .

'As indicated above, there is a limit to each county's ability to produce adequate income from its own rates. This is a problem which cannot be alleviated in the foreseeable future and is, in fact, likely to be aggravated. The only form of additional income which can be sought to maintain, much less advance, library provision in Northern Ireland is through government subsidy. Any form of subsidy to individual library authorities must be based on local conditions and the ability of those authorities in raising rates. . . . It is unrealistic to expect a government to subsidize individually eight (or even seven, if Belfast be excluded) separate county systems, each of which must inevitably and needlessly duplicate administrative factors elsewhere. An obvious condition of receiving government subsidy, therefore, would appear to be

unification of the existing systems to form one national library service. Full administrative details need not concern us now but, broadly, the picture would be that of a national system providing one major reference library and several regional centres, the whole administered by a national librarian operating under a library council appointed by the appropriate government department in association with other appropriate local and professional bodies. . . .

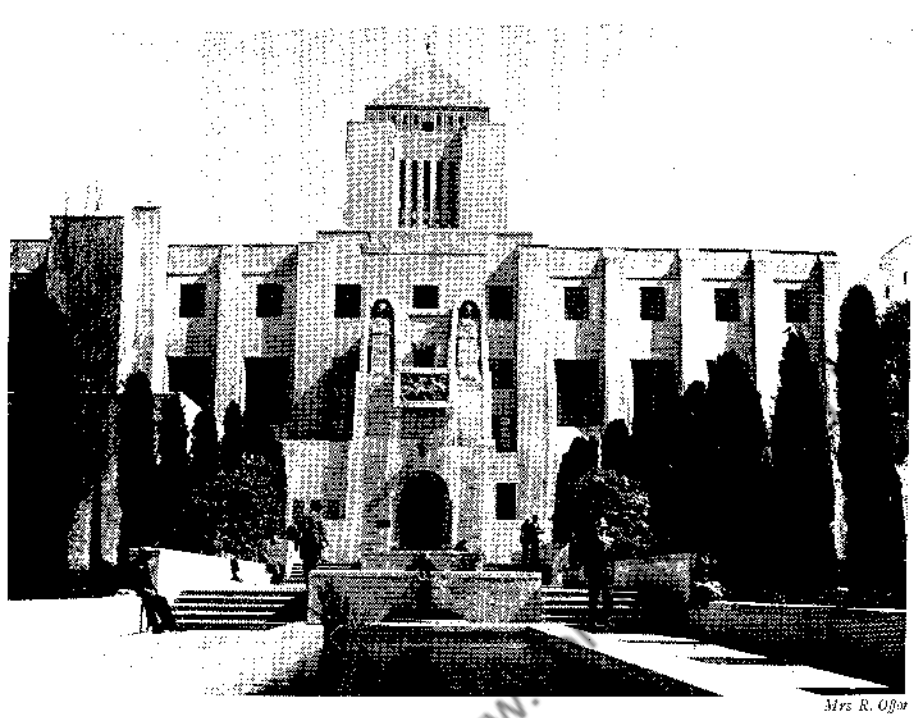
'Conditions in Northern Ireland would appear to be ideal for the formation of such a scheme, so much so, indeed, that it might serve as a model for other small countries tackling the problems of national library services. There is an effective government. The country is small enough to form a natural unit yet large enough to justify the establishment of a comprehensive service. Its local authorities are unable to support financially the type of library provision to which other parts of the United Kingdom are accustomed. It does lack a natural geographical centre, and Belfast is not easily accessible for residents in western parts of the country. In view of its size, however, it would seem reasonable that the public library in Londonderry City, the natural focal point in the west as Belfast is in the east, should be built up to provide a comprehensive reference service commensurate with its situation. Together with the university college library there, Londonderry could provide for the west what Belfast, on a much larger scale, provides for the east.'

Though this scheme, which would of course have to face the opposition of the 'parish pump', may be difficult to implement one step has already been taken in the right direction. In 1949 the Northern Ireland Library Advisory Council was established. 'Its membership of slightly over thirty comprises the librarians of the nine principal public libraries (county and borough) and a representative from each of their respective authorities; the librarians of the two university institutions; Linen Hall Library and Stranmillis Training College; the Director of Education for Belfast; a representative of Queen's University; the University's Director of Extra-Mural Studies; and representatives of the Association of Municipal Authorities and Association of Education Committees; observers have also been accredited by the Ministry of Education.'

'It will be seen, therefore,' says Mr MacCallum Walker, 'that the Council is representative of all those whose interest is to improve library facilities in the country, librarians, library authorities, and educational agencies. In its first four years of life the Council has laid the foundations upon which much of future development must be

National Central Library, London, union catalogue.

Hutchinson Public Library, Kansas, browsing alcove.



Mrs R. Ofor

Los Angeles Public Library, California, U.S.A.

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based. A report on the provision of school libraries was prepared in 1950. . . . The influence of this report is already being felt in the Ministry of Education's latest schools development plans. A committee on inter-library co-operation was formed and in 1953 produced a report on inter-lending. . . . Another of the Council's activities which is near completion is a union list of periodicals to be completed in two parts, i.e. a list of all periodicals of Northern Ireland interest held in Northern Ireland libraries, and a list of all current periodicals in these libraries, which have not been included in the first list. So broadly based a council as this provides a somewhat distinctive approach to the study of the problems and difficulties which are, in some respects, peculiar to Northern Ireland, and there is every reason to hope that, in time, it will prove successful.'

THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The municipal and town councils of Ireland were given authority to establish rate-supported libraries by the Public Libraries (Ireland) Act of 1855, which also fixed a rate limit of 1*d.*—a limitation which was not changed until 1920 when (as for Scotland) it was raised to 3*d.* (with authority for it to be increased by a further 3*d.* in the case of county boroughs) and not abolished until 1946. But during the following twenty-nine years only two libraries were established—at Dundalk in 1858 and Sligo in 1880. In 1884 Dublin opened two small libraries in converted houses. By 1905 fifteen other authorities (in the *whole* of Ireland) established libraries, as meanwhile the Public Libraries (Amendment) Act, 1894, had given library powers to urban districts and the Public Libraries (Ireland) Act of 1902 extended these to rural districts.

Most of these authorities had grants from Andrew Carnegie for the buildings only, as it was understood that the local authorities would provide book stocks and provide for upkeep. As Miss Christina A. Keogh said in her *Report on Public Library Provision in the Irish Free State, 1935*, 'It was clear that in the majority of cases Mr Carnegie's grants had been made without sufficient knowledge of local conditions; or of the fact that the value of the rate in Ireland is so low that the income derived from one penny in the £ (the maximum allowed by the Act) was totally inadequate for the maintenance of libraries in the majority of the districts which had applied for them'.

In 1913 Carnegie had transferred, *inter alia*, the task of improving library facilities to the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. When the Trustees investigated conditions in Ireland 'they found (*a*) that the majority of library buildings in rural areas had fallen into disuse, or otherwise failed to fulfil the objects for which they were erected; (*b*) that the greater portion of the country had no form whatever of library provision'. As a sidelight on the first finding I would quote an article written by Mr Daniel Doyle, County Librarian of Limerick (in the journal of the Library Association of Ireland, March 1953), 'Some Rural District Councils, apparently tempted by the offer of Carnegie money, made use of their powers under the Libraries Acts. It is difficult now to guess the nature of the impulse which resulted in the provision of these buildings. Probably the motives were mixed. Some wanted real libraries, some wanted halls for concerts, meetings, and dances. Some may have wanted parish halls only, and realized that the easiest way to get them was to apply for libraries. There is justification for this latter assumption. There were many built in which practically no provision was made for shelving, while in some, crude presses were recessed in damp walls. A proper press would take up floor space.' He goes on to describe some of them: 'These were rectangular buildings about 45 feet long by 16 feet wide. They varied very little in design, and apparently it was never intended to supply more than a couple of hundred books. To each of these was appointed a type of caretaker-cum-librarian, who was paid by the Rural Council, that body also making an annual allowance for fire and light. The general conduct of these buildings was governed by local Library Committees, who let them from time to time for social purposes and who controlled the revenues received from such lettings, spending the money mostly on minor repairs as they became necessary.'

The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust decided that the only way to improve existing services and extend them was to adopt the county as the unit. But at that time county councils had no powers to provide libraries so, as in England, the Trust expressed themselves willing to pay the cost of maintenance of the service in such counties as were prepared to accept it, on the understanding that, if and when legislation permitted it to do so, the county council would levy a rate for the continuance of the library. In 1922 and 1923 experimental services were launched in Donegal, Wexford, and Kilkenny. In 1923 the Trust also established the Irish Central Library for Students, which has developed on lines comparable with the National Central Library of England and

Wales. By the end of 1924 thirteen county libraries had been established, and in the following year the Irish Free State Local Government Act gave county councils the necessary library powers, handed over the control of libraries from rural district councils to county councils, and permitted urban district councils to relinquish their library powers to the counties.

It is always easy to be wise after the event, but equally desirable to learn the lessons of past experience. The plain truth is that, whatever the reasons, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust grants were on too small a scale to secure the desired objectives. Statistics published in the 1935 report show that with one exception (Dublin County) average total expenditure per head of population was deplorably low—the highest $6\frac{3}{4}d.$; the lowest $\frac{3}{4}d.$; the average less than $4d.$ In the words of P. J. Madden, Cork County Librarian, 'It is, however, unquestionable that many of the present and continuing ills of the public library service can be traced to the absence of firm, clearly defined policy in the beginnings. The moneys granted by the Carnegie Trust imposed a standard which we must now admit to have been unreal. We can appreciate that the county libraries should have been experimental in the early years and that the financial provision made by the Carnegie Trust was designed to provide only for the experiment, but as might have been foreseen the early libraries were not empirical, their performance was accepted and their standards were imposed, and the experiment passed unobtrusively into practice.'

In fairness to the Trust it must be said that in certain cases when the county councils took over they failed even to maintain the standards of the experimental period. It is true also that similarly low standards were operative in the case of the first county systems in England, Wales, and Scotland but that in the course of time the local authorities themselves have brought about great improvements; therefore much of the blame must rest upon the Irish county authorities themselves. Nevertheless the fact remains—and we shall point this moral again—that it is unwise and even dangerous to initiate 'demonstrations' which are not truly capable of demonstrating the real value of *good* library services. Where library development is concerned the policy of 'small beginnings' is thoroughly unsound.

Probably there are other factors at work, such as the existence of a tangible measure of censorship, both official and unofficial. We all know about the official index, but censorship goes beyond this. Mr Dermot Foley, Clare County Librarian, in a recent article speaks of

books which are 'not acceptable to local taste' and which 'on the advice of the Panel of Readers are kept out of circulation. . . . I find myself proposing books for purchase that are later rejected by the Panel; books, that is, with the recommendation of reputable and reliable critics, amongst them well-known Catholic laymen and priests. Or some books having been approved by the Panel, they are afterwards disapproved by a reader at some library and are taken in for further investigation. . . . But one is beginning to wonder if in the last few years fear of complaints has not become the criterion by which a book is judged. I cannot avoid thinking so in some cases; if it should become general, it raises a serious problem for libraries which, no matter what the state of the publishing market, have to acquire the best books that are honest in intention and get people to read them. That, I think I am right in saying, is a cardinal principle, and if it is to be put aside, we are putting ourselves outside the business of adult education.'

Whatever the reasons it must be recognized that as yet public library provision in Ireland lags far behind that in the United Kingdom. This is true of the county boroughs equally with the counties. In 1951–2 Cork spent only 2*s.* 3*d.* per head of population, Dublin 2*s.* 9*d.*, Limerick 1*s.* 8*d.*, and Waterford 1*s.* 7½*d.* In the same year expenditure per head of population in the following counties, selected at random, are probably all too typical: Cavan 1*s.* 1*d.*, Donegal less than 7*d.*, Leitrim 10½*d.*, Mayo a trifle over 5*d.*, Tipperary 10*d.*, and Wexford 9*d.*

It would seem that nowhere is there a library service which could be described as reasonably adequate, which is doubly unfortunate in a country where the influence of good libraries could be most valuable, or, to put the matter in other words, where there are things to be done which only good libraries can do. Mr Dermot Foley states this case as follows:

'More reading is done now than, say, fifteen years ago, and undoubtedly the library is much oftener used by people wanting information on subjects they are studying as a pastime or in connection with a guided course for examination. Any variation in taste amongst readers in general, however, is hardly noticeable outside the few larger towns; indeed, it is hard to see how public taste can be affected to any extent without a change of attitude and methods by the libraries. There is little or no review literature circulating in Ireland, and for all practical purposes the reader is out of touch with criticism of current literature, if one excepts the necessarily small number of notices appearing in the family's favourite newspaper. The town reader is scarcely better off

than the countryman, who rarely looks at a review unless the heading is startling and explodes his emotions about politics or patriotism. The public library, therefore, stands as the sole guide, philosopher, and friend to the ordinary reader of the country. And what a grave responsibility that is. It is a challenge of the highest order, and I personally find it difficult to be satisfied that our response to it can be adequate until the day when libraries can be flooded with fully informative bulletins of their own making, which will tell readers what books are being bought for them, what they are about, and who wrote them'.

In 1947 an Act was passed 'to establish a Body to be called "an Chomhairlie Leabharlanna" [the Library Council] for the purposes of accepting from the Carnegie Trust the gift of the Irish Central Library for Students, of operating a Central Library, and of assisting Local Authorities to improve their Library Services'. The Library Council consist of representatives of the university colleges, local authorities, and the Library Association of Ireland.

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The public library services of Great Britain have been described in greater detail than can be done for other countries because we must at the outset have some basis for comparison, some idea of how *one* system works so that we can appreciate differences, some conception of what one system has achieved so that we can ask whether other systems do achieve, or are capable of achieving, either more or less.

The quality and extent of a nation's public library depend upon many circumstances—educational, cultural, and social standards, the extent of literacy and of the habit of using books, the prevalence of other sources of supply and of personal book buying, upon geographical factors, upon the attitudes of the ruling classes and the ruled masses, upon the strength of political and religious influences, and so on. Some of these various factors we believe may be capable of influence from the wide use of good public libraries but that is for a later stage in our discussion. What we have to ask ourselves first—and it is a primary purpose of this book—is whether there is a system of providing public libraries which, given reasonable human conditions in which to operate, will produce better results than any other systems. Alternatively we have to ask whether, given certain human circumstances, some systems

are more appropriate than others, whether the advantages of some system or systems can be, as it were, grafted on to another, and whether such a process may, having regard to traditions and existing services, be necessary, at least as a first stage.

So let us summarize what we have learned of this one system—*our* system.

Freedom. British public libraries are free in two important senses of the word:

No one has to pay anything to use them—the cost is borne by the whole community.

They offer a full, free opportunity to readers because they admit freely all ideas, all opinions, all sides of controversial matters.

These two aspects are fundamentally important.

Availability. Everyone can use them on exactly the same terms, with the same freedom as anyone else.

Coverage. There are libraries for practically all the people everywhere.

Standards of service. These vary very considerably and are generally far too low, but the better of our libraries do at least suggest that there are assessable limits below which it may safely be said that adequate library provision is not possible. In other words, having regard to what is being done and not being done here, it is reasonably safe to say that where the average expenditure per head of population is less than 10*s.*–12*s.* there cannot be a reasonably useful library service. I am not for one moment saying that 10*s.* is enough; I merely say that less than 10*s.* is not enough.

Responsibility. Local authorities are solely responsible for the establishment, maintenance, financing, and government of our public libraries.

We have already suggested that better results would accrue were there state supervision and assistance. We have not yet discussed whether it is best for libraries to *be* the prime responsibility of appropriate local authorities rather than of state or regional authorities. We shall do so later; we shall see that in certain circumstances it may be necessary to have some measure of state or regional responsibility. But, without entering into details, we believe, at least, that in this country local responsibility, for local services, is the right pattern.

And we do also believe that *everywhere* responsibility must be that of the government—state or local—and not that of any sectional agency.

Staffing. The employment of trained, qualified, professional staff is general—though still insufficient. There are good facilities for education in librarianship, and a Register of Chartered (Qualified) Librarians is maintained by the Library Association.

Professional Organization. There is an active association uniting both practitioners and representatives of library authorities, and embracing all types of library provision—public, national, university, special, etc.

Co-operation and Inter-Availability. There is a nation-wide system of inter-library lending, embracing practically all the public libraries and a great many non-public libraries of specialization and learning. This means that the users of public libraries are able to draw upon not only the resources of other public libraries but also those of more specialized institutions.

It is certainly not suggested that the British public library system, as a whole, is a fully fledged, fully effective system. Standards of provision are too varied and usually far too low. It is far from my intention to set up the British public library service as a model. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently well established, sufficiently developed, to disclose certain vital characteristics, some of the most significant of which have been noted in this summary. They provide, at least, criteria by which all services may be judged:

Are they free for all to use? Are they impartial and comprehensive? Are they fully available, to all people, everywhere? Are they the responsibility of the community? Are they properly staffed? Are they united in a national co-operative system which makes the full resources of the nation available to all serious readers? Is there an adequate agency for uniting those concerned with the promotion of library provision? Are standards of service such as to make good library provision a reality and not just a fond hope or an illusion?

I use that last word deliberately, because I believe that one of the main reasons why there are not more good libraries is this: too often those who are responsible for libraries which are less than good, honestly imagine that they are much more effective than they really are.

[2]

United States of America

I DO NOT PROPOSE to deal with the American public library as fully as its importance deserves. I try to tell myself that my reason for this decision is that a great many books have already been written about it and that it is, therefore, very easy for all seeking information to find it. I know, however, that my real reason is that it is utterly impossible to give an adequate survey of this virile and complex movement in any space I could make available. Therefore, though one may learn from a study of the objectives, achievements, methods, and ideals of the American public library more than from a detailed consideration of any other several systems, I will content myself with a brief summary of its history and present position and some attention to certain aspects of special significance in relation to the purposes of this book.

There is another reason why some aspects may be neglected, which is that there is an essential, fundamental similarity between the American public libraries and our own. They are, with certain exceptions, provided, governed, and financed by local government authorities; they are free; they are provided for the whole of the communities and in relation to the generality of materials; they are pursuing almost precisely the same objectives; they supply the same kinds of materials and have much the same kinds of premises, departments, methods, and staffing. In most respects that matter a description of a typical American public library would apply equally well to a similar typical British library. The forerunners of these two public library services were much the same; they were born at much the same time and have developed side by side, usually, it must be admitted, with America a step or two ahead, but sometimes with Great Britain leading, always with the closest, most friendly, and fruitful exchange of experience and ideals.

The forerunners were the social libraries which sprang up in the eighteenth century, the proprietary and subscription libraries, the 'mercantile' libraries established by firms of merchant or business houses to furnish reading to their employees, and certain endowed and semi-private institutions.

The first free, tax-supported public library was established in Peterborough, New Hampshire, in 1833. In 1848 the Massachusetts legislature passed an Act, the first ever passed, authorizing the City of Boston to establish and maintain a public library; this was opened in March 1854. From the outset it adopted a conception of what a public library should be which has doubtless exercised an effect upon future policy throughout the country comparable only with the influence which Manchester (opened two years earlier) had in helping to determine the shape of the British public library service.

Previous to this, however, some states had authorized the provision of libraries by school districts—libraries not always only for schoolchildren but also for the adult population. New York State was the first, in 1834, 9 others followed before 1850, and 10 more by 1876. Generally the 'school district' plan has given way to other systems but is still generally preferred in Ohio and Delaware, and examples of school district libraries are still to be found in other states. Another pioneer effort was even earlier; in 1816, Indiana, then still a frontier state, made an attempt to set up county libraries but conditions were too unfavourable.

In 1849 the New Hampshire legislature passed a general law permitting towns to raise taxes for the support of libraries. Massachusetts passed a similar law in 1851, which, however, fixed a tax limit; Maine (1854), Vermont (1865), Rhode Island (1867), and Connecticut (1867) followed suit. Elsewhere progress was slow. By 1876, when the American Library Association was founded and began its vital work, there were 257 public libraries, but nearly all of them were in New England; 144 were in Massachusetts alone.

In 1875 Rhode Island became the first state to give financial assistance to the local libraries, the Board of Education being empowered to make grants not exceeding 500 dollars to existing institutions. In 1890 Massachusetts and in 1891 New Hampshire set up commissions, and gifts of books were made to any library meeting certain standards of support.

Gradually the movement made headway. By 1887 twenty states had public library laws and in them there were 649 public libraries—libraries which were *true* public libraries, which were, in the words of W. F. Poole, 'municipal institutions, established and regulated by state law, supported by local taxation, and administered for the benefit of all the residents of the municipality which supports them'. Soon progress was greatly and swiftly accelerated by the gifts of Andrew Carnegie,

who between 1898 and 1917 gave over 41 million dollars for the building of 1,679 libraries.

Attempts to bring library services to the rural districts began in Wyoming in 1886; Ohio started the first county library in 1898. Other states followed, but the county library system made most progress in California, where by 1916 37 of its 59 counties had established library services.

What is the present position in general terms? *Public Library Statistics, 1950*,[1] published by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, gives the following picture:

There are 7,477 public libraries operating in the United States (i.e. counting a library system with branches only as *one* library). The 6,028 of these which submitted data possessed 143 million books, an increase of 14·6% since 1945. Of these, 23 million were books for children. The total is equivalent to 1·24 volumes per head of population served. Issues in the year exceeded 384 million, equivalent to 3·37 volumes per head of population served. Of expenditure, amounting in all to nearly 110 million dollars,[2] 87·4% came from local public funds, 1·7% from state funds, and 4·8% from endowments and investments. Expenditure on salaries represented 59·6% of the total, with 15·6% on books and periodicals. The expenditure per head of population served was $0·96. Of all these libraries 57·6% served populations of fewer than 5,000 and 29·3% spent less than $1,000 a year.

When one comes to study this vast service in more detail the first difficulty arises from the different forms of government and of library areas that are encountered. The system in Great Britain is simplicity itself—all public libraries are provided, under the same series of Acts of Parliament, by either municipal (borough or urban district) or county councils and managed by committees appointed by and responsible to those councils. In the United States it is far from the invariable practice. The variations arise mainly from two factors:

First, libraries are established under state laws which differ from state to state, and even within the state often offer wide choice of legal basis.

[1] I quote these because though later statistics are available in relation to various aspects of the service, I find these confusing and difficult to compare. For example, though R. D. Leigh, in *The Public Library in the United States* (Columbia University Press, 1950), says 'about one-fourth of the 3,069 counties have established a county library of some sort', a more recent (1952) publication of the American Library Association states that '464 counties are *without* public library service'.

[2] I refrain from converting dollars into pounds, though I have tried elsewhere to convert other currencies, because I feel that any 'rate of exchange' conversion would give a false impression in this case.

Secondly, the 'non-local-authority' libraries—the association, endowed, and similar libraries—have been very much more closely concerned with public library development than in our country. Whereas over here the subscription library was independent and separate, for a long time in America the association library served *as* the public library often *changing into* the public library. Consequently, as Ernestine Rose says, in *The Public Library in American Life* (Columbia University Press, 1954), 'The conception of the public library as an institution with civic responsibilities and subject to public control is a modern one, and only within comparatively recent years has it been generally accepted and understood. The idea has evolved slowly because of the dependence of library development on local initiative and private benefaction. . . . There exists, therefore, no pattern of civic relationship common to all libraries.'

She then gives the following account (which I have abridged):

'A study of public libraries throughout the country reveals the fact that they may be divided roughly into groups according to their government status, which includes the legal basis of their control and support. The principal groups may be described thus:

'(1) Corporation and association libraries.
'(2) School district libraries, or, more accurately, those which are agencies of school districts.
'(3) Libraries as agencies of municipalities.
'(4) County libraries.
'(5) Libraries as agencies of regions larger than counties.

'Each of the three groups—school district libraries, municipal libraries, and county libraries—may again be divided into those that are administered by their own library boards and those without boards, an important distinction. It is desirable that the term "library board" should be understood. . . . Board members, or trustees as they are often called, are lay, non-professional persons who act in a supervisory capacity with responsibility for policies and custodianship of funds. To them the chief library executive is responsible, and they always have a connection, more or less direct, with the local government. . . .

'Considering more in detail the groups listed above, the first class is distinguished by the fact that control is vested in a corporation or association which is not a part of government, in spite of which free library service is given to all citizens in the municipal unit concerned. Sometimes these libraries are endowed; often they operate with funds

provided both by the city and through endowment; sometimes practically all their funds come from the public treasury in accordance with a contract arranged between city and corporation or with a clause in the city charter.'

For example, Dallas, Texas, 'possesses an association library, where the library board is not identical with the association, but is elected by it, the corporate powers of the association being vested in this smaller body. . . . The association has power only to nominate board members, who then must be confirmed by the city council. The library draws its support from city funds according to a tax rate fixed by the city charter. The New York Public Library, which serves three of the five boroughs of New York City, is a corporation library, controlled throughout its two great divisions, the Reference Department and the Circulation (or branch) Department, by the Corporate Board, which is self-perpetuating and which, legally, has complete authority over the whole library system. However, the facts of the case are apparent from the terms of support. While the Reference Department, situated in the great central building, is supported by endowment, the Circulation Department, with its more than fifty branches and sub-branches, is dependent on funds appropriated by the city, according to the terms of a contract made originally by the corporation, the city officials, and Andrew Carnegie, whose wealth underwrote the cost of many of the branch buildings. As extreme differences will be found to exist in most of the other classes to be described.

'The second group mentioned, namely, the libraries which are agencies of school districts, are not, of course, school libraries. They are public libraries legally connected with the system of education. Historically these libraries go back to a time when in a number of states the school district rather than the town or municipality was used as the civic unit in the statutory development of libraries. Some of the institutions now operating under this system are controlled directly by the Board of Education, while others have their own separate boards. . . .

'The third class, that of public libraries as agencies of municipalities, is by far the largest of all, and of these the majority are managed by their own boards. There are many of these libraries in all parts of the country, and it is from these, undoubtedly, that the reading public has gained its conception of what a public library is. Even in this group, however, there is considerable variation, depending on the type of municipal government, on the manner in which board members are

chosen, and on their relationship to the governing body. For instance, in Rochester, New York, which has a city-manager type of government, the library board is appointed by that official. In the majority of cases, library boards form a unit of government or are appointed by it. Sometimes, particularly in the case of older libraries, the boards are self-perpetuating.

'The municipal libraries which function directly under the government unit, without benefit of a special board, are comparatively few in number at present and are more likely to be found in the newer commission or city-manager type of local government than in the older mayor-council form. . . .

'County libraries, our fourth group, show considerable variation in government status as well as in scope of service. Some of these libraries form a part of the county government, while others are connected with city as well as county, as in the case of the Cincinnati, Ohio, library, which is legally under the county government and serves the whole county as well as the city of Cincinnati. Moreover, some municipal libraries give service to their county through contract, an outstanding example being the Library Association of Portland, Oregon.

'In a majority of the states where county library service is provided, the county laws stipulate that these libraries shall be administered by their own boards.'

To the last class—regional libraries—I shall refer later.

Discussing the virtues and limitations of these varying systems she says 'one of the conclusions which we are justified in drawing [is] that the best library coverage exists in sections where there is some uniformity in legal status and government relationship', and she suggests that the 'lack of serious consideration on the part of supporting government units, a lack of general public recognition, and a consistently low level of public support' might well be ameliorated were the library to become more generally and more definitely an intrinsic part of the local government and state government operations.

The above is, of course, a subdivision according to only one characteristic—that of governmental status. Libraries of each category will be found in areas as different as can be from one another in every respect.

There were in 1950, for example, 784 libraries serving areas of less than 5 square miles and 228 serving areas of over 1,000; there were 1,079 (out of 6,028 reporting) serving fewer than 1,000 people and 179 with over 100,000; 706 open less than six hours a week and 199 open more than 72; 1,690 spending less than $1,000 and 30 spending over

$500,000. Doubtless similar variations may be found in other countries but it is certain that nowhere are they present to the same extent. And, as elsewhere, there are variations in standards of service. However, since so much of this chapter (as probably of other chapters, I hope) may sound critical—a discovery of deficiencies and a search for causes and remedies—let it be said that though the United States of America may have its share of the worst libraries, of all sizes, it has more than its share of the best. And I would not have my readers forget this. Nowhere in the world could one find more effective, well-organized, well-provided, progressive libraries than, say, Cleveland or Los Angeles County, or more beautiful libraries than Santa Barbara or Pasadena, or more comprehensive than New York: and as I write these names I have dozens of others (among those I have seen) clamouring for inclusion, for one reason or another, be it efficiency, coverage, attractiveness, the true spirit of service—Queensborough, Oakland, St Paul, Denver, Rochester, Los Angeles City, Baltimore—yes, there are hundreds of good libraries in the United States.

What are the characteristics of the good American library compared, say, with the British?

First I would say from my own observations that the American public librarian is more purposive, more conscious of a mission to educate, more eager to take part in the social life of the community and to co-operate with its organizations of all kinds. Whereas the majority of British librarians are content to provide a service and let it take whatever place it can earn in the life of its community, the tendency of American librarians is to 'reach out' and 'bring in', and many of them therefore devote much attention to what can best be called adult-educational activities—'forums, discussion groups, lecture courses, classes in all sorts of subjects; art, music, and theatre groups [which] in many cases have settled into a regular schedule of activities'—I quote again from Miss Rose—'In some cases, the library simply permits its rooms to be used by various autonomous groups. . . . In many other cases the library itself is active in stimulating, promoting, and participating in these social programs and projects.' It is true that 'no such activity is conceived by the librarian as a social program simply, but as a library program'—a means to bring people to the library and encourage them to make better use of its resources. Some British librarians do in fact engage, though usually to a much more limited extent, in similar work, but the general attitude (which is also held by many American librarians) is that it is the primary function of

the public library to make materials available, to encourage their use by direct methods, believing that the first duty of the library is to the individual, and that adult education, vocational education, social, political, and religious promotion are the tasks of other agencies which, of course, are nevertheless entitled and welcome to receive every assistance they require, exactly as are all other groups and individuals.

To mention this difference is not to assume any attitude towards it or to suggest which conception is right. It depends partly upon historical causes—and we must remember that for some decades the library was, probably very rightly, an instrument for the Americanization of immigrants from many other countries. It is partly due to social habits and circumstances; it is partly the manifestation of a sincere philosophy. Moreover, the extent of this reaching out to the community is related to the resources of the librarian in two quite opposite ways. On the one hand the librarian with inadequate resources may feel that he must use what he has for those who already need his services and not seek to make his inadequacy more inadequate by increasing the scope of his activities. On the other hand the librarian with limited resources may believe that he will best secure greater support by a closer alliance with the purposive groups in his community. Much, however, depends also upon the attitude of the individual. The average Englishman is at once little interested in group activities—he is an individualist; and he is suspicious of all whom he suspects to be trying to 'improve' him. Though I know American libraries fairly well, from several months spent studying them in 1936 and in 1947, I would not pretend that I know American people sufficiently to assess their attitudes towards library service. Yet I wonder whether—and I may be wrong—one of the reasons why less than half as many books per head of population are borrowed from American libraries, compared with British, is not, in part, because too many Americans regard the public library as a purposive, improving institution.

Another difference is that a higher percentage of the work of American libraries is with children. Many more of the borrowers are children and many more of the issues are of children's books. 'In the case of the circulation from the main library, branches, and sub-branches [of all libraries reporting]', it is noted in *Public Library Statistics, 1950*, 'adult books accounted for 52·5 per cent of the total, juvenile for 41·2 per cent, and undistributed (i.e. not broken down into these two categories) for 6·34 per cent. In the case of book mobile circulation, the corresponding figures are: adult, 23·5 per cent;

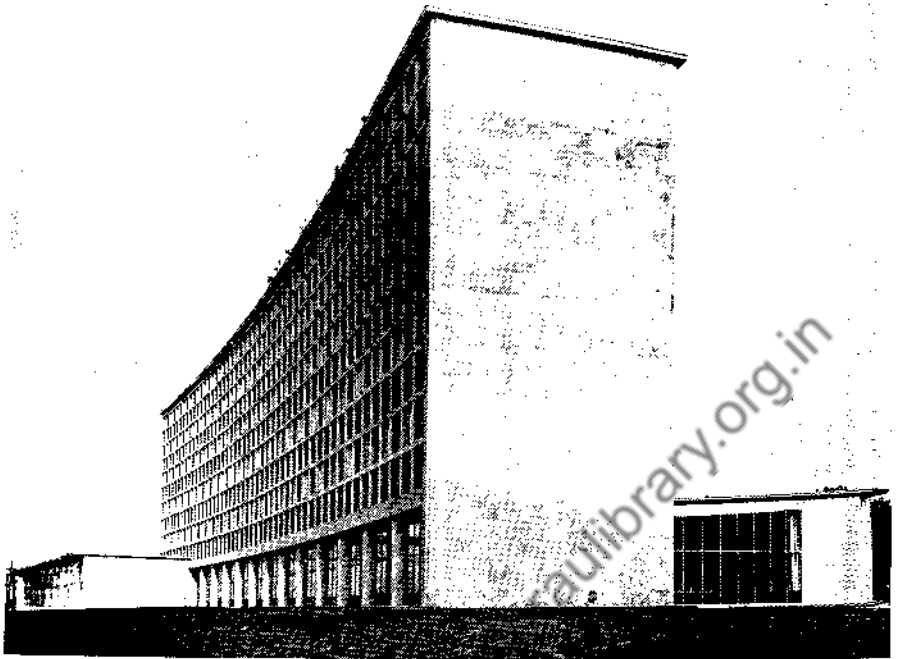
juvenile, 68·3 per cent; and undistributed, 8·22 per cent.' Of the 25,361,147 registered borrowers from 5,162 United States library systems, 6,735,842 were children—i.e. 26·5%. On the other hand, of the total issues from the libraries of Great Britain in 1954–5 only 19·8% were of children's books, although 27·8% of the registered borrowers were children. Strangely enough in both countries books for children represent almost the same percentage of total stock—16% in the United States of America and 16·6% in Great Britain.

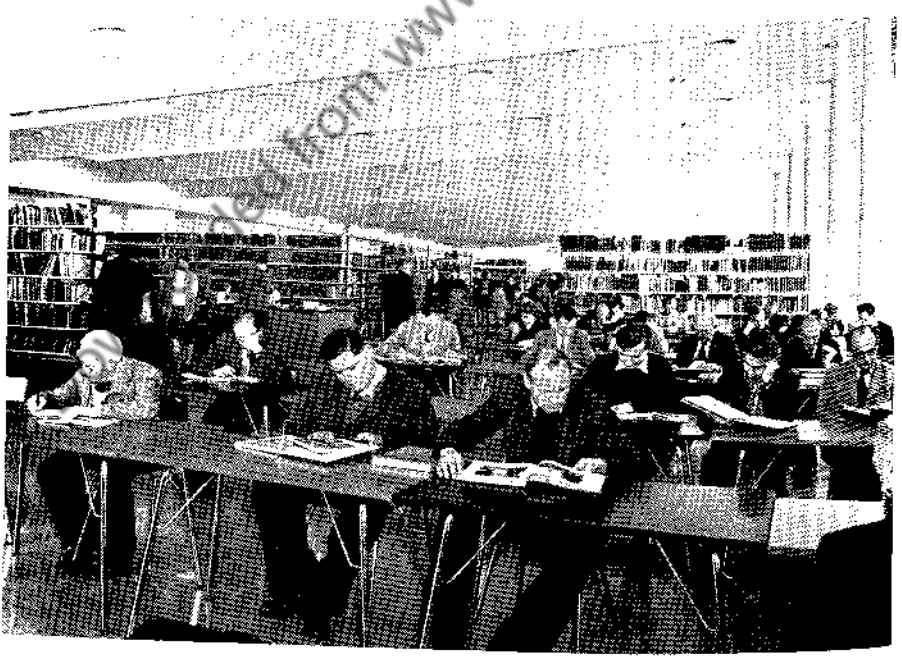
When it is remembered, also, that on an average British libraries lent 7·6 books per annum to each member of the population served whereas United States libraries lent only 3·37 one is forced to the conclusion that the average adult American makes much less use of the public library than does the average Englishman. And this in turn raises a question of fundamental importance. This question is simply whether library work with children as we now practise it does in truth create genuine adult book users. If it did, the more effective the work with children the less would the proportion of children's books to the total become—unless, of course, there was then a marked increase in the adult purchase of books and the use of non-public libraries, a trend of which there is no evidence either here or in the United States. Surely the natural process would be for the *proportion* of adult use to increase and that of child use to decline. I confess to some bewilderment. I feel that here is a problem that requires serious examination. I should have been tempted to believe—until I reached this stage in my studies—that issues per child would be greater than issues per adult because children are more voracious readers and children's books are relatively less substantial. Yet I find that British children read on an average fewer books than British adults. Are we in Great Britain not doing as much for our children as we should? Or has our work for children been in the past more successful? I can't believe the latter to be true—so I must leave the enigma for the further consideration which it surely deserves.

It is far from my purpose to make invidious comparisons because I have the greatest admiration for most that I have seen of American librarianship—and contempt for much that I know of British library provision. Nevertheless there is another matter which I find difficult to explain. Why is it that, whereas public use of British libraries has steadily increased, in America it has remained static? The University of Illinois Library School compiles an 'Index of American Library Circulation' 'based on monthly circulation reports from 40 public

Remington Rand Inc., Library Bureau, New York

Topeka Public Library, Kansas, U.S.A.





The American Memorial Library, Berlin. *Above:* exterior. *Below:* reading-room and circulation department.

libraries which are known to constitute a representative sample of all United States public libraries in cities of over 25,000 population'. This shows that issues in April–June 1954 were only 4% more than in 1939, exactly the same as in 1939 during the following quarter, 4% more the next, 2% less the next, and 7% more in April–June 1955. In 1954–5 in this country total issues per head were 56% more than in 1939 but this is partly due to the rapid expansion of county library services. Our town libraries (comparable with the American sample), however, have increased their issues by some 26%. How can this be explained?

Another difference is that more American libraries—particularly the wealthier and better equipped—handle much more extensively what are, in *Public Library Statistics*, called 'Miscellaneous stock', i.e. photos, pictures, prints, maps, film strips, microfilms, film, and sound recordings. In this country it is unusual for libraries to house and distribute such materials, excepting gramophone records (and only some 30–40 have these in effective quantities). Here I believe American librarians to be leading in the right direction. It is the purpose of the public library to make available the widest possible variety of information, ideas, and the fruits of the creative imagination. So long as these things were recorded almost entirely in books and periodicals the public library could limit itself to these last materials, but as other media for the dissemination of information have been developed, the library must give them suitable hospitality or it will lose in comprehensiveness and in opportunity. One must remember, of course, that it is one of the most important functions of a library to help maintain the full use of books for all those purposes, which are many and permanent, for which no other media will serve, but there is no danger that this function will be weakened by the circulation of this 'miscellaneous stock'. The danger comes from without rather than from within.

Other impressions are that the better libraries, at least, are more amply staffed than comparable British libraries. The assistants, having more time to do the various routines, do them more thoroughly—indeed one sometimes feels that American assistants pay too much attention to the mechanical processes and spend more time on the means than the ends always justify. But, as better staffing permits greater attention to the individual reader, it is all to the good. Incidentally, this more adequate staffing arises not from better support but from less use. Disregarding part-time assistants (who are much more numerous in America) there are actually *fewer* assistants in relation to population served, but the average American assistant has to deal with

half as many issues as her British counterpart. Women are much more predominant than in this country. At the risk of being accused of anti-feminism I must say that I doubt whether this has been an unmixed blessing. It may be foolish but some people do underrate an institution that is run by women; and on the whole it is doubtful whether women hold their own so successfully in the rough and tumble of local politics, which is dominantly a man's game. Nevertheless, many of the most successful of American librarians have been and are women; and it is probable that, by and large but especially in the smaller places, the service has found a better type of woman than it would have found of man.

The main differences between our two services is, however, that whereas all but a few hundred people in the British Isles have library services available locally, there are approximately 30 million people in the United States of America, out of a total population of 151 million, who have none. Let us not take undue credit for this difference. It is a very different and infinitely more difficult thing to secure nation-wide coverage in America, with its vast regions of sparse population, its innumerable tiny townships, often widely separated, its economic and racial problems. For many years strenuous efforts—ably led by the American Library Association—have been made to bring libraries to all the people, and everywhere to improve services and to remove the serious variations in standards which exist no less than in our own country.

The unprovided 30 million live almost entirely in the smaller communities. As R. D. Leigh in *The Public Library in the United States* says, 'Whereas all the cities of 40,000 or more have libraries, 96 per cent of the municipalities with a population from 10,000 to 40,000 and 95 per cent of the towns with a population of 4,000 to 10,000 have direct public library service, only about one-third of the 14,500 villages in the United States with populations less than 5,000 have, as yet, organized and maintained independent public libraries. This means that the principle of locally created, autonomous municipal library units has led to the provision of libraries in less than half the municipalities of the country. Furthermore, public library service defined as a function of incorporated municipal units fails to reach more than one-third of the nation's population (approximately 48 million according to the 1940 census) who live outside cities, towns, and villages, in unincorporated rural territory.

'These two inherent deficiencies in the coverage of the municipal library system, that is, its inability to include either the smallest

municipalities or the un-incorporated rural areas, began to be appreciated by library leaders nearly half a century ago. They initiated the so-called library extension movement, which took the form of establishing public libraries under county support and control. In some states, where very few local libraries existed previously, a single public library at the county seat has been instituted. In others, a central headquarters for the county library has been established, with branches and stations in villages, hamlets, schools, or crossroads centers within the county or with bookmobile service to such places.

'The library extension pioneers who counted on total county populations and tax resources as the basis on which to build the county libraries, however, have been disappointed. State legislators were willing to empower county boards or the county electorate to establish public libraries if they wished to, but they were not willing to have the county absorb village, town, or city libraries within the county unless these units decided by formal action to be absorbed. In a few instances existing city and town libraries have been completely incorporated voluntarily as units of the county library. In a number of counties, municipal libraries within the county have been tied in by contract to render part of or all the county's library service. But in most cases the municipal libraries, particularly the larger ones, have chosen to remain outside the county system as independent library enclaves surrounded by county library service. . . .

'County libraries vary greatly in size and population. The distribution of county library populations [and of expenditure and stock] can be seen from the following figures:

COUNTY LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Size of Population Served	*Percentage of County Libraries*
100,000 and over	3
25,000–100,000	44
5,000–25,000	43
Under 5,000	10

Total Expenditures	*Percentage of County Libraries*	*Total Volumes in Book Stock*	*Percentage of County Libraries*
$100,000 and over	1·5	100,000 and over	4
$25,000–$100,000	6·5	25,000–100,000	16
$5,000–$25,000	41	5,000–25,000	54
Under $5,000	51	Under 5,000	26

'The major result, then, of the county library movement has been to increase the number of small public libraries serving small populations with small stocks of books. The vast majority of counties in the United States, like the majority of municipal corporations, are too small in population and resources to provide modern public libraries.'

The solution of this grave problem must be a twofold one. Larger areas of library service must be created, but though the total financial resources of the larger area will be greater so will be the demands. In other words, by amalgamating a number of small poor districts one does not create a large rich one. Consequently these new regions must have some support from outside, i.e. from the state. That, again, is not the complete answer.

'The greatest obstacle to full extention of library services throughout the nation', says Miss Rose, 'is the poverty of some of the states, resulting from low industrial productivity, meagre educational opportunities, and a countryside too sparsely settled to sustain adequate tax load.'

There must, therefore, be assistance to the poorer states, and this can only come from the Federal Government. Already most of the states are doing something to help development, but so far the Federal Government has not responded to the urgent representations that have been made—though there is no real reason (excepting the universal reluctance of governments to support public libraries). The nation *as a whole* is well able to support adequate services.

The 1950 *Public Library Statistics* reported 48 regional schemes, most of them comprising 2 counties, some 3 or more. Some cover *ad hoc* areas. Ten states have supported demonstration schemes—Louisiana being the first, twenty-seven years ago.

Many of these regions still cover far too small a population and have too little to expend. What *is* the right size and income of an adequate region? As one who has advocated (without any acceptance of my arguments, it is true) the creation of units of library service for Great Britain embracing populations of from 250,000 upwards, I am interested to note that American planners also have no illusions that good library service can be given by units, such as have long been advocated both in America and Great Britain, serving only 25–30,000 people. As Garceau [1] says, 'The profession has variously estimated the minimum workable unit at 25,000 population, 40,000 population, and in the

[1] Oliver Garceau, *The Public Library in the Political Process* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1949).

recent New York state plan, regional service centres are to serve an average of 200,000 people. Impressions gathered by the field workers of the Public Library Inquiry indicate that an isolated library unit cannot in fact provide intelligent and well-rounded adult service with the staff and resources that go with an income of much less than $100,000 a year. Many smaller libraries, with $40,000 and even $25,000 a year, are able to build very interesting collections in a few fields or can spread themselves intelligently over quite a range. But in either case the coverage is too thin for the serious objectives of public library service. They do not have the knowledge to diffuse that would entitle them to be seriously considered as educational institutions. . . .

'The break-even point seems marked, and it should be noted that it is better stated in terms of income, not of population, though no single measure tells the meaningful story. Much smaller communities with larger income have enjoyed excellent service. Conversely . . . it may well be that a large book collection, appropriate to a well-balanced library with $100,000 income, may be able to serve indirectly a population very much larger than 100,000, if it is used to supplement and co-ordinate the individual small collections of local libraries. . . . At $40,000 the staff may be functionally specialized. . . . At $100,000 the book stock can begin to serve adult needs for the serious pursuit of knowledge. But there is no stopping point, and the public library should never be administered, no matter how large, as an isolated unit. It must be progressively more actively integrated into the total resources of the ever-widening concept of community.

'The basic public library system seems, nevertheless, to require a book stock of 150,000 to 200,000 volumes, which can normally be expected with an income of $100,000 a year.'

Not only are most of these two-or-three county regions quite unable to provide such funds; they are unreal as social units (as anyone who looks at a map can perceive). Garceau does not regard the movement as a success, and, in my view, very rightly prefers more direct state participation. He cites the case of Delaware which is, in a very small state, giving direct service from a central office. In Vermont and Massachusetts there is being developed 'a network of field offices of the state agency, staffed and supplied entirely by the state, serving all existing library units in the regions and directly all otherwise unserved territories. The regional office is equipped with a bookmobile, a stock of books owned by the state, purchased and processed at the state headquarters, sent to the field office ready for circulation, and a professional

field office staff. . . . In both states the regional office is housed in an existing library. . . .

'Working directly with public and school libraries in the region, the professional staff can build a constructive relationship with a large number of local libraries and bring advice and guidance, not as a stranger from the state capitol, but as a familiar co-worker fully acquainted with all the aspects of local situations. In fact, this relationship has not always been well developed, and some libraries within such regions are still almost entirely isolated from the state service. The weaker units, however, can be helped more effectively. . . .

'California, with its union catalogue, its large state book stock actively circulated to the counties, and its close personnel relations with county libraries comes very close to the same objectives. The very rapidly expanding Missouri State Library already has state-owned bookmobiles for demonstrations and is pointing toward more permanent state service through field offices. . . . New York has established a single regional demonstration office. A population of one hundred thousand in an area within a fifty-mile radius is to be served with a state book stock, a regional union catalogue, and a professional staff. These services are to be free to all libraries and government jurisdictions within the region. On a contract basis the regional office will supply a bookmobile, cataloguing, book-mending and binding facilities, publicity, and the professional guidance of specialists in adult reading and children's service. The plan contemplates that county boards of supervisors shall appoint advisory and planning bodies to be called County Boards for Library Development. These boards are to generate local co-operation and to serve as nuclei for still larger advisory bodies to be called Regional Library Development Boards. County libraries for unserved areas may or may not emerge from this state activity, but the validity of the program does not depend upon such a multiplication of local libraries.'

Though some lag behind, all states provide some assistance to the public and to the local libraries through the state library agencies. Forty-two states lend collections of books either to existing libraries, to schools, or to individuals; 33 answer reference questions and offer books on inter-library loan; 37 give advisory service to librarians, trustees, and others interested in establishing libraries; 7 operate bookmobiles to give public library service to local people; 7 have bookmobiles available for loan, usually for demonstration purposes; 10 are promoting regional demonstrations (as already noted); and 5 have staff

placement bureaux in an effort to improve standards of staffing. Twenty states give monetary assistance. Seven of these make small annual grants (of $100–$600) to county libraries which meet required standards; the other 13 make grants for specific purposes, such as the establishment of new libraries, the formation of larger units of service and participation of inter-library loan projects. Two of them make 'equalization' grants to help raise the standards of service of poor local tax-supported libraries. On the whole, however, state aid has been on very modest lines.

As yet the Federal Government has played little part in public library development, though for twenty years the American Library Association has been vigorously campaigning for Federal participation—to strengthen state library agencies, to enrich 'public library service in the field of central cataloguing, union catalogues, co-operative purchasing agreements, central storage, and bibliographical centres' (Leigh), to provide leadership and stimulation, and to strengthen the existing Library Service Division of the Office of Education.

With only two further aspects of American public librarianship would I deal. One is the firm, enlightened attitude of the profession in face of the threat of censorship, which led to the formulation and nation-wide acceptance of the Library Bill of Rights (adopted by the Council of the American Library Association in 1948). This is so important a document—and so clear a statement of fundamental responsibilities—that it deserves reprinting in full:

'The Council of the American Library Association reaffirms its belief in the following basic policies which should govern the services of all libraries:

'1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other reading matter selected should be chosen for values of interest, information, and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer.

'2. There should be the fullest practicable provision of material presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times, international, national, and local; and books or other reading matter of sound factual authority should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

'3. Censorship of books, urged or practised by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion, or by organizations that would establish a coercive concept of Americanism, must be challenged by libraries in

maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information ... enlightenment through the printed word.

'4. Libraries should enlist the co-operation of allied groups in ... fields of science, of education, and of book publishing in resisting ... abridgment of the free access to ideas and full freedom of expression ... that are the tradition and heritage of Americans.

'5. As an institution of education for democratic living, the li... should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful ... cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such ... meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in ... community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their mem...

Finally I will quote an illuminating passage from *Public Use of the Library and of Other Sources of Information*, by Angus Campbell ... Charles A. Metzner (University of Michigan, Institute for S... Research, rev. ed., 1952), the report of a study carried out by ... Institute in 1947.

'Adult use of the public library is restricted almost entirely ... selected ten per cent of the public. While approximately one pers... five visits a library during the course of a year, 95 per cent of all ... visits are made by the tenth of the population who make the most visits, and 98 per cent of all the library books read are read by the tenth who read the greatest numbers of books.

'The small fraction of the adult population who use the public library come from the informed *élite*. People who do not read newspapers do not go to the library. Relatively few people who do not read magazines ever go to a library. By no means all book readers are library users but nine-tenths of all library users are people who read books. The library serves that segment of the population which is most likely to have received information through other sources, and those who use the library most are also in most frequent contact with the other sources.

'Library users as a group have much more formal education than people who do not use the library. They also tend to come from the higher income brackets, although education seems to be a more discriminating factor. They are younger than non-library-users adults. They are found disproportionately often in the professional and clerical occupational groups. The library's clientele is clearly not representative of the population as a whole.'

Probably a similar survey conducted in any other well-developed country would produce similar findings, and indeed I quote from it ...

because it is part of this summary of American conditions but because it has universal application and universal implications. What are these implications? Simply that if we accept the fact that we appeal chiefly to an *élite* minority we must so order our activities that we can truly and adequately cater for these people. By so doing we are best able to make a genuine contribution to human well-being, and securing more economical and more effective results from our labours and resources.

[3]

The Public Library in Scandinavia

I

THE AUTHOR OF A recent book on the American public library service described it as the finest in the world. On what criteria can such a statement be justified? By the achievement of the best provided libraries? By overall, average standards? By the extent of coverage by libraries of reasonable quality? By the efficiency of organization? By consideration of the ideals and purposes behind the service?

It is invidious to make comparisons, but in my opinion the finest public library system in the world today is to be found neither in the United States nor in Great Britain but in Denmark and Sweden because, I think, one must take *all* these criteria into consideration. Nowhere else in the world can one find finer great city systems than in some cities in the U.S.A., such as Cleveland, because nowhere else, in those countries where public libraries have been well developed, will one find cities of comparable size and wealth. Manchester is outstanding in Great Britain; London, of course, has not one but many public libraries and cannot be compared with the three-authority provision made by New York City, Brooklyn, and Queensborough. Outside America the best large city service is probably that of Stockholm. And when one considers provision in somewhat smaller towns, how many can compare with Malmö in Sweden or Aarhus and Frederiksberg in Denmark? In Denmark and Sweden, too, average standards are no less good, if indeed not better, than in the U.S.A. or Great Britain. The U.S.A. is little more than two-thirds way to nation-wide coverage; in Denmark and Sweden as in Great Britain all but a very few people have some kind of local library available. In Denmark and Sweden less is attempted that could be regarded as little worth while than perhaps in either Great Britain or the U.S.A. And in Denmark and Sweden the service is undoubtedly far better organized.

We must, of course, take into consideration those geographical factors which may make good nation-wide coverage easy or difficult. The U.S.A., as we have seen, has parts that are easy to serve and large

territories that are not. Denmark is fortunate, with a relatively small area and a population of about 4¼ million which is on the whole evenly distributed; it has few large towns—only five outside the capital with more than 40,000 inhabitants—but few parts of the country are far from suitable urban centres. In Sweden, on the other hand, there are vast, very sparsely populated regions affording difficulties not unlike those to be found in the large, lonely parts of the United States, and, it may be said, even in these some coverage has been achieved. So, taking all criteria together, I adhere to my opinion that those two countries deserve the credit for leading the world, and it will be interesting and instructive to discover why this is so.

II

The Danish public library movement owes much to the example of the United States and Great Britain, though its two main features—central libraries and state aid—are to be found generally in neither. Development on modern lines dates from 1920, but public libraries of a kind started in the late eighteenth century. These were small collections of books for the general public, often installed in schools and maintained precariously by gifts and borrowing fees with very occasional help from public funds, though from 1882 very small allowances were distributed by the state. By the end of the nineteenth century there were approximately 1,100 libraries in the 1,697 communities of the country; 26 of the 75 provincial towns had libraries and there were 8 in Copenhagen, later incorporated in the city system when this was established in 1913.

Though most of these were little more than poor, ill-supported collections of light literature many were to play a part in later schemes for provision. These were first formulated by H. O. Lange, of the Royal Library, who in 1909 proposed that 'the library system in a country like Denmark should form an organically connected whole, which begins with the school libraries and comprises local reading-rooms with reference libraries, travelling libraries, as well as larger libraries centrally located for the larger districts, but also in a close connection with these libraries for research work'. He suggested that in each county a central library should be established which should both serve the needs of the county capital in which it was situated and act in close co-operation both with the small libraries in the area and with the specialized libraries of research. They should have stocks of about 50,000 volumes each, available both for individual readers and to be

sent in batches to the parish libraries to strengthen their own provisions. They would remain local institutions but would have government grants to help cover the cost of services outside the city.

There was much opposition at first from the parish libraries, which feared loss of independence, but in 1914 the first two county libraries were established at Holbaek and Vejle, with a state grant of 2,500 kroner, later increased to 15,000 kr., each, in return for which non-fiction was to be lent free of charge and postage-paid direct to any individual borrower or through the parish libraries.

Meanwhile the state had steadily taken more interest in library development. A 'State Committee for the Support of Popular Libraries' was set up in 1897, with 14,000 kr. to disburse in proportion to the local budgets, and travelling libraries (i.e. boxes of books—*not* the 'libraries on wheels' to which the term is now generally applied) of 50 volumes lent to parish libraries. In 1902 Aarhus State Library was founded to serve as a central library from which provincial libraries might borrow non-fiction they did not themselves possess and to which individuals might send direct orders for postal service. In 1909 the State Library Commission became an independent institution, in place of the former committee, and much was done to encourage development and introduce common methods. In 1918 a State Library school was established; by that year local support amounted to 200,000 kr. and state subsidies to half that amount. In 1920 the first Libraries Act was passed, determining the future basis of the service; and the Library Commission was replaced by the present Library Inspectorate, under the direction first of Th. Døssing and since 1945 of Robert L. Hansen.

Before describing the provisions of the Act (as later amended) and the operations of the Library Inspectorate, let it be noted that in no more than twenty years remarkable progress, which has been maintained, was made, as the following table shows:

	1919–20	*1940*
Town libraries	68	88
Parish libraries	602	879
No. of volumes	782,677	3,034,203
No. of volumes lent	2,876,970	11,992,018
Local grants	392,386 kr.	3,247,680 kr.
Government grants	105,000 kr.	1,503,678 kr.
County libraries	7	30

(The county libraries are, of course, also 'town' libraries and included in the first line.)

By 1951–2 service was being given by 1,320 separate and independent libraries, i.e. Copenhagen, Frederiksberg, 86 provincial towns (33 of them acting as county libraries), and 1,232 parish libraries, in addition to which there were some 300 libraries in primary and secondary schools and other independent children's libraries. Excluding the last mentioned school and children's libraries, stocks totalled over 6,200,000; there were 783,000 borrowers and loans amounted to 18,220,000. Of a total expenditure of over £930,000, the local authorities concerned contributed £595,000, £17,000 came from county authorities (see later) [1] and £292,000 (i.e. about one-third) from the state. The rest came from other local sources—gifts, subscriptions, the annual value of property used for library purposes, and so on.

First let us note that, unlike the public libraries of Great Britain, by no means all Danish libraries are provided and managed by the local authorities (the town and parish councils). On the contrary, most of the parish libraries are self-governing or, in a few cases, owned by a local library association, but practically all receive the bulk of their local funds from the local authority. Those receiving state grant—and few do not and such are not included in the statistics already cited—must give full use free of charge to all inhabitants. Even several of the larger city libraries are self-governing, as, for example, was Kolding until recently, when it was transferred to the municipality. This 'private' ownership is the result of historical factors. Its best feature is that it often brings much local interest to bear upon the service. On the other hand it militates against the fullest possible local authority support, as local councils are less willing to spend money which they do not control, and it may make more difficult the ultimate integration of the many very small units into large and more efficient systems. The tendency is towards transfer to local council responsibility, though the process is likely to be slow.

The significant feature, however, is not that of ownership but the fact that service outside the larger towns is given by a great many small, independent parish libraries—1,232 of them. It is as though in England all the villages and small towns which form part of the county library systems were independent, with their own funds, committee, stock, and staff. It would be a very bad system were it not for the work of the county or central libraries already mentioned.

These Danish county libraries are not the same as the British county systems. They are better, in that they afford a closer relationship

[1] Page 94.

between town and country; they are inferior because more could be achieved were the parish libraries fully integrated into county systems.

The Danish county library is in fact a municipal library which gives certain services to the parish libraries and individual readers within its area, in addition to the primary function of serving its own inhabitants. The term 'county library' is not strictly accurate. For certain local government purposes Denmark is, like Great Britain, divided into 'counties', but the areas of operation of the 'county' libraries are not necessarily those of the administrative counties. These areas have been decided for reasons of geography and communication; therefore some serve a whole county while others serve part of a county or parts of more than one county. The county councils do not themselves provide libraries but are required to make some financial contribution to the 'county' library but, as no specific amount is fixed by law, it is too often far from generous.

The state makes a special grant to each county library, in return for which it must render certain services to the inhabitants of the area outside its own boundary. It must help the parish libraries and the smaller town libraries in various ways. It has the duty of supplying books to supplement local stocks and meet specific requests; it does so either from its own resources or by obtaining required items from another large or specialized library, including the Royal Library, the Universities, and the State Library at Aarhus. Thus it is as true to say, as it is of Great Britain, that the serious reader wherever he lives can obtain practically any book he really needs. The county library also lends small deposit collections of from a few dozen to a hundred or more volumes, changed about four times a year. Often the parish librarians make their selection when visited by the county library van, or the collections are made up in accordance with their requirements. Nearly all the county libraries use a van, though sometimes they share it with other counties so as to keep it in constant use. One county has a library boat—for one must not forget that Danish territory embraces five hundred islands. To maintain these deposit collections the county library builds up a special stock (additional to its own normal stock) and receives a state grant, varying according to the size of the local contribution to the county library, but not exceeding £1,000 a year (plus half the cost of running the bookmobile). To supplement this in some cases parish libraries make a contribution towards the cost of the deposit pool-stock and its distribution. Elsewhere the parish libraries

have established joint loan collections, which are the property of the participating parish libraries.

The county librarian has no direct responsibility for the parish libraries and does not (as in Sweden) act as inspector on behalf of the State Inspection for Public Libraries, but he does help the parish librarian in many ways. He will assist in book selection and look after the buying, binding, and cataloguing of the parish library stock. Most county libraries keep a union list of the parish book stocks.

The county library must also serve individuals. Those who so wish can use it personally; others may have a direct postal service. It has a special responsibility towards those who live in parishes which have no local library, and about 20–25% are without. A new Library Act passed in 1950 provides that, after 1960, parish libraries *must* be provided on the demand of 10% or more of the electors and, furthermore, that these shall accord with standards laid down by the Minister of Education, one of which is that the total income shall amount to not less than 2*s*. per head of population. This is a modest figure admittedly but it is far better than the minimum achieved, even partially, anywhere else in the world.

Many parish libraries of course already spend much more than this. Take, for example, one in the area of the Vejle County Library, which serves a population of just under 2,000. Local support provided (in 1952) £225, and the state grant was £166, representing a *per capita* expenditure of 4*s*. 5*d*. The library was housed in a school, with its own room, and had 540 borrowers to whom 16,500 volumes were issued in a year. During the year the county library supplied 363 volumes specially requested by readers, and provided a deposit collection of 120 volumes. This was one of the 38 parishes, with a total population of 60,000, served by this county library. This is the average extent of county library operation though some serve more—Aarhus, for example, has over 70 small towns and parishes in its area; to these and to individual readers it lends more than 40,000 volumes a year to meet special requests. The book stocks of these county libraries are on the whole excellent—probably on the whole better (in relation to population served) than in this country. Vejle, for example, has (quite apart from its 'county stock' for deposits to parish libraries) over two adult books per head of *total* population and nearly 30,000 volumes for children, although that *total* population is only 29,000. And Aarhus, with a population of 116,000, has a stock of 214,000 volumes. These are all available for loan to the smaller units.

Undoubtedly the success of the county library system rests upon the fact that the county libraries are themselves well equipped and efficient, and these in turn owe much to state assistance. Aarhus, which spends an average of 11*s.* per head of population, received (1951–52) £14,400 from the state and provided £40,700 itself. Frederiksberg, which is not a county library, gets some £12,000 from the state—and so on.

Grant aid from the state has been deliberately weighted in favour of the smaller libraries but is nevertheless of importance to the larger ones too—a respect in which it differs from the Swedish system, to be discussed later. It is made on the basis of 80% of the first £1,250 of all local income, 40% of the next £1,250, and 25% of the remainder. In addition, libraries raising locally more than £2,500 may receive an extra grant equivalent to 15% of that part of the book vote which is derived from local sources. On the other hand, 2½% of the grant is retained by the state department to help pay for work of value to all libraries. Two examples will show how grant is assessed. Library A raises £2,000 locally and receives £1,268 from the state, making a total of £3,268. Library B—a county library—has a local revenue of £32,100. On the first £1,250 it got 80%, i.e. £1,000; on the second £1,250 it got 40%, i.e. £500; and on the remainder it got 25%, i.e. £7,400. Add to this 15% of the local book vote of £8,250, i.e. £1,237, and deduct 2½% for central services, i.e. £253. Thus the total state grant for city services amounts to £9,884—a very valuable addition in itself which is still more valuable as it encourages adequate local expenditure, because local authorities are always more ready to incur expenditure which attracts state grants. Because this library is also a county library it gets £1,000 for this work plus £50 towards the upkeep of the bookmobile. As here the children's library service is 'independent' and attracts separate grant, the total local expenditure (for adults and children) in 1951–2 of £40,700 attracted state grant in 1952–3 of £14,000—for the latter is always calculated on expenditure during the previous financial year, which is an added encouragement to progress.

Despite the importance of state grants they do not involve any loss of local independence and responsibility. The state takes no part in the administration or policy of the libraries it assists, so long as these conform to certain basic conditions the observance of which allows great variety of standards, methods, and policies, which permits individuality, and encourages progressive development. These conditions are nevertheless vital. Only one library (other than children's libraries) in each town or parish can receive grant, although occasionally

exceptions are made with the consent of the Minister if local conditions make this desirable. The full significance, the true wisdom, of this proviso will become more evident when later we consider conditions in other countries where grant is made to more than one. Moreover, libraries receiving grant must be available *free of charge* to all inhabitants—another instance of true wisdom as we shall see. Again, these libraries are expected to 'work for the *general* diffusion of knowledge and information'—and I emphasize the word 'general'. And there must be a responsible governing body, board, or committee. As already seen, grants are strictly related to the amounts raised locally.

Libraries have to apply for grant annually, giving full details of their expenditure and, in the case of parish libraries, a list of books bought during the year. Actual 'inspection' is limited to the smaller libraries, and consists of a visit from one of the inspectors, usually accompanied by the county librarian, about once every four years. No one could suggest that this amounts to interference.

The head of the Library Inspectorate is the Library Director, who is also head of a Library Council formed to advise the Minister of Education on matters of general policy, and comprising 1 member representing the Ministry, 2 representing state libraries, and 1 each representing the urban, rural, and county municipalities, and the municipality of Copenhagen, with 5 representatives of the Library Association, and 1 of the School Library Association.

In addition to administering state grants and inspection, the Library Inspectorate has, *inter alia*, three important activities. It maintains an Information Office primarily intended to help libraries to obtain books in foreign languages, for which purpose it maintains a union catalogue of the holdings of technical and research libraries and the larger public libraries. It issues publications and bibliographies, though most of this work is now carried out by the Bibliographical Office. And it maintains a library school.

The Bibliographical Office is an independent, non-profit-making, and largely self-supporting organization, established in 1939, and is governed by a board appointed by the Library Association and the Minister of Education, with the Library Directors, the Librarian of the Royal Library, and the Library Inspector as *ex-officio* members. It undertakes a variety of important bibliographical work, including the union cataloguing and classification of all Danish publications, for which printed slips and cards are published for use in libraries. These are thus saved the considerable and uneconomical task of cataloguing

these books many times over for their own use. The office is also responsible for the National Bibliography, which appears in weekly lists in the publishers' weekly journal and separately each month, with annual and five-yearly volumes. It issues also a series of standard catalogues, for large and small libraries, catalogues of books for children and young people between 14 and 18 years of age, of reference books and of periodicals, an index of newspaper articles, book lists for distribution, and periodicals for the general reader and for teachers and school librarians. Other publications include handbooks for readers telling them how to use their libraries, manuals of library economy, the Danish version of the Decimal classification, and so on. Moreover, it can provide libraries with the various forms, tickets, and other stationery they need, and it has made arrangements with a firm of bookbinders which can supply them at advantageous terms with suitably and attractively bound copies of new books—most of which are issued by the publishers only in paper covers. Until 1954 the Office was concerned chiefly with the work of the public libraries, but in that year its scope was widened and it is now seeking to serve in every way possible the needs of libraries in general.

The Library School run by the Library Inspectorate accepts students who have at least passed an examination equivalent to our matriculation, and who have had three years' training (one year for a graduate) in a library approved by the Library Inspectorate, where they have received not only practical training and experience but also some theoretical teaching. The course lasts an academic year.

The Library Association of Denmark, like our own Library Association, unites both practising librarians and representatives of library authorities; and it also, as does ours, comprises all types of library—public, special, learned, etc.—and their staffs. It has five sections: Group A, the larger public libraries; Group B, the smaller public libraries; Group C, the staffs of public libraries; Group D, the technical and research libraries; and Group E, the staffs of the last mentioned. It issues a monthly periodical and a detailed annual statistical survey of Danish library services, the latter being published for it by the Bibliographical Office.

III

The public library systems of Sweden and Norway are very similar. Full development in Sweden came a little later than in Denmark and owes much to the example of its neighbour. The first library in the

country lending books to the general public was founded in about 1800, but little was done to follow this example until the Elementary School Act was passed in 1842, after which many libraries were established, at first in the cities and later in rural districts. State aid has been given on an increasing scale since 1905. The first county library was established in 1930.

Sweden, with a population of less than 7 million inhabitants (compared with 4¼ million in Denmark), is nearly eleven times its size; much of it is very sparsely populated and large towns are few and, especially in the north, far between. It is divided into 25 counties but these, as in Denmark, are not responsible for library services, which are provided by the communes. Until recently there were 2,500 of these, many of them very small and very poor; nevertheless 1,600 of them maintained libraries. In 1952 a nation-wide reform of local government areas reduced the number of communes, by amalgamation, to about 1,000, and now most of these have a public library service, ranging from that of Stockholm with its 760,000 volumes to tiny rural communities with only two or three hundred. In Sweden as a whole there are about 130 books for every 100 of population.

The first difference to note is that as a rule the libraries are owned by the communes—not, as more often in Denmark, by private associations.

Of the 919 commune libraries in Sweden about 100 employ full-time professional staff, 13 of these being located outside cities. It is considered financially possible for communes with a population of about 8,000 to employ a full-time librarian; elsewhere there are part-time or voluntary librarians. Library services to children are offered partly by school libraries and partly by children's departments in the public libraries. Most cities of over 25,000 population have branch libraries, and some also employ bookmobiles to reach outlying areas.

Sweden offers some of the finest examples of public library architecture to be seen anywhere—even in Denmark (indeed the famous Frederiksberg Library has been adopted as the model in several places). There has, however, been more recent construction in Sweden and much of it has been on a generous scale with fine regard for spaciousness and beautiful decoration—as in Malmö (especially its branches), Halmstad, Uppsala, and elsewhere. *All* libraries offer open access to the shelves (as in Denmark and Great Britain) and are classified by a Swedish national system.

As in Denmark all rural and small town libraries are allied to county libraries. These are of two types—(*a*) the *centralbiblioteks*, city libraries serving also as county libraries, of which there are 20, and (*b*) the *landsbiblioteks*, 4 in number, which are maintained by the central government with grants from the city and county. Both perform the same duties as the Danish counties—providing books to individuals and libraries within their areas, sending out deposit collections, and giving advice and help in book selection to the local librarians. The only notable difference is that the county librarians inspect the local libraries on behalf of the state library department. In return for their services to the local libraries they receive additional government grant up to 30,000 Sw. kr. (£2,070) and also some assistance from the county authorities.

Grants are made to communal libraries which conform to certain basic conditions. Only one system of public and one of school libraries in each commune may receive a government grant. Each library must have a local committee and be housed in suitable premises approved by the Board of Education; it must be accessible to the public at regular hours and lend books free of charge.

If these and certain other requirements are met the government will give a sum equal to the amount raised locally, but the maximum grant to any commune is 10,000 Sw. kr. (£690). This may not, moreover, all go to the public library, as the government makes small grants to study circles, and if there are any of these in the commune the amount so given is deducted from the maximum. In 1951–2, a sum of 2,828,000 Sw. kr. (£196,000) was granted to 919 commune (and county) libraries and 491,500 Sw. kr. (£34,000) to 2,950 study circle libraries. Doubtless there are strong historical and political reasons for these study circle grants, for the government of Sweden is keenly interested in adult education; but from the librarian's point of view it may be questioned whether the division is wise and economical, that is to say, whether it would not be better for all concerned if the public library got the grant and gave direct service to the adult education groups. Our main criticism of the system is, however, the imposition of the maximum, which prejudices the larger authorities. Thus, though Copenhagen raises 2,424,000 Danish kr (£121,200) and gets 645,984 kr. (£32,299) from the state, Stockholm raises locally over 4 million Swedish kr. (£277,200) and gets a grant of only 8,000 Sw. kr. (£554). There are some 30 town councils in Sweden which themselves provide more than ten times as much as the maximum permissible grant.

The state also makes grants to 176 hospital libraries, to 83 armed forces libraries, 1,610 school library systems, the Merchant Marine Library, and to Swedish libraries abroad.

Since 1951 $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ of all grants to public and study circle libraries has been deducted, as in Denmark, to finance a bibliographical institute and other undertakings of common benefit.

The government exercises its controlling and advisory powers over grant-supported libraries through the Library Section of the Board of Education. The chief of this section is the First Library Adviser who, with his two Library Advisers, allots government grants, inspects libraries, undertakes certain publications, and organizes the training of library staff, both professional and part-time.

Training courses for full-time staff have been held since 1926. Most of the students have been graduates and must, before attending the school, have at least six months' practical experience as an apprentice in one of the seven or so approved libraries. The course lasts six months. To date some 550 qualified librarians have been trained. For school librarians and workers in the small libraries, short courses of two weeks are held annually. Since 1948 Stockholm Public Library has had its own training school.

The Swedish Library Association, founded in 1915, is open to librarians from all kinds of libraries and also to committee members. Since 1916 it has published a journal. In 1951 other publishing that it had undertaken for many years was taken over by a non-profit-making corporation, on the lines of the Danish Bibliographical Office, owned by the Association, which also acts as a bibliographical centre and publishes indexes to periodicals and to newspapers, book lists, manuals, etc. Printed catalogue cards of recent books of interest to public and school libraries are issued, and in 1951 a central binding service was established.

The public libraries are able to draw upon the wider resources of the country, since any requests which cannot be met from county library resources are passed on to—and usually satisfied by—the Royal Library, the university libraries, the Royal Science Academy Library, the Technical High School at Stockholm, and other specialized institutions. This inter-lending is helped considerably by excellent bibliographical tools, notably current bibliographies of Swedish publications, a list of all foreign books added to university and research libraries (published by the Royal Library), and a catalogue of foreign accessions to public libraries (published by the Swedish Library Association).

IV

Norway's public libraries suffered a great deal during the Second World War. New books and binding materials were hard to get, so by 1945 most of the books were ragged and worn out—the more so because the people read twice as much as before the war, finding in literature encouragement and stimulation during those difficult years. Thus, though when the war was over an immense task of restocking and overcoming arrears had to be faced, librarians found that they had earned the goodwill of the public and the support of the local and national authorities as never before. In the circumstances one cannot yet expect to find the same standards as in Denmark and Sweden. Moreover, economic, geographical, and climatic conditions are less propitious—the country is poorer and the mountains and fjords offer grave difficulties to hamper the distribution of books and the development of larger units of service. It is no easy matter to provide library services to 3 million people distributed over an area equal to that of Great Britain. Despite these factors great progress has been made and continues.

The pattern of service follows closely that of the other Scandinavian countries but with significant differences.

First, the Library Law of 1947 made public libraries compulsory throughout Norway and stipulated a minimum local contribution of 0·25 N. kr. (3*d.*) per head of population—far, far too little, of course, though supplemented by state aid—but a beginning. Unfortunately, the maximum state grant for any library is only 3,000 kr. (£150), but increase is being sought. As things are, only the smallest libraries receive any real benefit. Altogether, state grants represent only one-fifth of total expenditure.

Norwegian public libraries are almost entirely supported by the state and the municipalities. Indeed, state grants are only given to libraries owned by the municipalities (cf. Denmark). All of them permit open access to the shelves; all which receive grants must lend books free of charge, excepting that (as is not unusual in Great Britain) a small charge may be levied on persons living outside the authority's area. School libraries are also compulsory, and must have a minimum local contribution of 25 N. kr. (25*s.*) and get corresponding state aid with a maximum of 100 N. kr. (£5) a year.

The central ('county') library system has been greatly developed and extended in post-war years. Ultimately there will be at least one

central library in each county; for geographical reasons some need more than a single central library and in one county there are already two. At present there are 18 counties in Norway and 14 central libraries, 8 of them with bookmobiles which serve not only the smaller libraries but also individual readers. This kind of service is very strenuous and difficult but all the more necessary and welcome. The central libraries have a special grant towards their additional expenses with a maximum of 10,000 N. kr. (£500), generally regarded as far from sufficient.

There is much co-operation. The University Library in Oslo—the Norwegian national library—lends extensively to the public libraries, and maintains a union catalogue. Many academic and specialist libraries participate in the scheme, and a recently published handbook of Norwegian libraries, describing their holdings, has done much to facilitate the fuller exploitation of the nation's book resources.

The work of public and school libraries is supervised and co-ordinated by the Norwegian Library Board, which is a branch of the Department for Church and Education. It is responsible for the distribution of grants and for specifying the conditions under which they are made. Librarians are appointed by the local authorities but are subject to approval by the board. There is a Norwegian State Library School, held at the Deichmanske Bibliotek in Oslo, which was established in 1940 but closed during the war years. A one-year course is given to about 25 students, who must have matriculated and had at least two years' practical experience as pupils in approved libraries.

The Norwegian Library Association was founded in 1913 and, like the associations of Great Britain, Denmark, and Sweden, unites the librarians and the library authorities of all types of libraries. It is divided into three sections, for (*a*) the smaller public libraries and their staffs, (*b*) the professional staff of public libraries, and (*c*) the professional staff of scientific and special libraries.

Most of the books in the public libraries are now ordered and bound through a central institution which was recently set up as a shareholding company, with the state and the municipalities as shareholders. In time this agency will undertake central bibliographical services.

Altogether there are 1,137 public libraries and 5,259 school libraries. The former had (in 1950–1) 339,275 borrowers, who borrowed 4,809,894 volumes in the year. Total expenditure on public libraries was 5,922,000 N. kr. (£296,100), of which 970,157 N. kr. (£48,500) came from the state.

V

In the remaining Scandinavian country—Finland—even more remains to be done, although it would seem that nevertheless achievement is greater than in several European countries which enjoy more propitious circumstances.

In Finland, that immense 'lonely' country with only 4,116,000 people living in a territory of 130,127 square miles (more than twice that of England and Wales) there are 35 towns, 30 boroughs, and 485 rural communities. With the exception of two rural communities and one very small borough all these localities have at least one communal library. The majority of these libraries have branches because, although in most communities the population is only 1,000 to 10,000, their areas are vast and the villages lie far apart. Counting these branches there are 3,091 libraries in the country—an average of 1,300 inhabitants to each library. The total book stock is 3,362,000, equivalent to 0·8 per head. In 1951 loans amounted to 6,602,000, borrowed by 420,000 readers, i.e. 10·4% of the people as a whole, though the percentage of borrowers is naturally higher in the towns (16·9%) than in the rural areas (8·2%). The total expenditure in 1951 was 380,000,000 marks (£591,000), or 182 marks (5*s.* 8*d.*) per head in the towns and 30 marks (11*d.*) in the country.

Public libraries are owned by the towns, boroughs, and rural communities, and are open to all local inhabitants, free of charge. Open access is general. Each community has its own independent service; there are no county or regional systems and very little co-operation or inter-library lending, though on occasion certain learned libraries will lend books to public libraries. In 1948 the government appointed a committee to plan a complete revision of existing library legislation and, of course, one of its strongest recommendations was that a central library should be established in each of the ten provinces, but so far this has not been implemented.

State aid is given on the basis of equalling the local contribution, i.e. equivalent to 50% of total expenditure. To poorer communities increased grants may be made, of even as much as 90% of the total expenditure. But the maximum annual grant is only 150,000 marks (£233). Rural communities may get up to 20% of the cost of providing buildings.

To administer state aid there is a library committee the chairman of which is a departmental chief of the state school board, the members

representing cultural organizations. It operates through the State Library Bureau, with a director and seven library inspectors. The country is divided into districts of inspection and five of the inspectors live outside Helsinki within their own districts. The Swedish libraries —for 9% of the population are Swedish-speaking—form a separate area of inspection. The Library Bureau issues a select annotated list of books in Finnish and Swedish published in Finland.

The librarians and professional staff of the town libraries must be qualified, a year's course of training being given at the School of Social Science, entrants to which must be matriculants with six months' practical experience. A less comprehensive examination, which can be taken after summer schools or correspondence courses, is compulsory for part-time librarians in the branches of city libraries and the librarians of boroughs and rural communities. No special qualifications are required of branch librarians in rural communities, 50% of whom are primary school teachers.

The Library Association of Finland, founded in 1910, has about 2,000 members—librarians, representatives of libraries, and other interested persons.

[4]

Some Other European Countries

HOLLAND

'In Holland', wrote R. D. Hilton Smith (*A Survey of Libraries*, Library Association, 1938), 'the predominating factor in the whole political and social structure is the religious question. It determines not only the formation of political parties and the lines of national policies, but makes itself felt in every sphere of social life—education, labour organizations, the co-operative movement, care of the poor, etc. In every activity Catholic and Protestant organizations are found side by side with others, and, in some parts of the country, the Protestant organizations are themselves sub-divided by the difference between sects.' This factor has exercised a profound influence upon the history and present state of the public libraries.

These were late in arriving. There was a movement as early as 1850 to induce municipalities to establish public reading-rooms but nothing came of it, and until the last decade of the century the only institutions to be founded were reading-rooms for the working class supported by organizations interested in the social betterment of the masses. Something more akin to a public library was opened at Utrecht in 1892, but lacking sufficient funds it could afford only very inadequate premises and failed to attract the more serious readers. The next library was set up at Dordrecht in 1898, when a trained woman librarian began development on modern lines. By now, however, propaganda, inspired by the example of the United States of America and Great Britain, and led by Dr E. Schultze, who wrote a book on the free public library, brought the matter considerable public attention, and public libraries were established at Groningen (1903), Leeuwarden (1905), The Hague (1906), and Rotterdam (1907), where an old town library dating from 1604 was converted.

In 1908 the pioneers founded an association to promote the establishment, maintenance, and status of public libraries—the Central Association for Public Libraries—which has been and is an important influence in library development, largely responsible for the fact that today there

are public libraries in practically every town in the country, with expanding services to the country districts.

These libraries are *not*, however, saving exceptionally, provided, as in this country, by local authorities. On the contrary, they are provided and governed by associations of members, which elect library committees, appoint auditors, and generally carry out the duties performed here by borough or county councils. The exceptions are Rotterdam, Schiedam, Haarlem, and Heemstede. These local associations are members of the Central Association, which generally supervises the management and administration of the local libraries on behalf of the government. It is strongly represented on a central committee of inspection, for the state makes grants, subject to certain conditions. One of these is that the county and the municipal governments shall also contribute. Thus the public library has four main sources of income—(*a*) a grant from the state, (*b*) a grant from the provincial government, (*c*) a grant from the municipality, and (*d*) income from members' subscriptions and fees.

Before considering this question further, however, another factor of vital importance is that there are two different types of public library, (*a*) the general library which seeks to provide books for anyone, regardless of class, educational status, religious, or political opinions—to give in fact the same kind of unbiased, impartial, 'general' service as the British or American or Scandinavian public library; and (*b*) the special libraries, which are provided by the Roman Catholics and by the Calvinists and which are, naturally, not obliged to afford impartial provision or to cater excepting for their own adherents. What is significant is that the state gives the special libraries the same support as the general libraries. Grants are calculated according to the population served, and in the case of special libraries there is a formula by which the grant paid to, say, the Catholic library is related to the proportion of the total population who are Catholics.

The result is that in many towns there are two libraries—a general and a special, or two special (a Catholic and a Calvinistic); in some there is no general library but only a special one. Remember that in all such cases the municipalities also make grants to both 'general' and special libraries—and with a few exceptions so does the provincial government. It will thus be obvious that in all places with more than one general library there is a dissipation of resources, a division of interest and support, and undoubtedly a great deal of duplication of stock, premises, and staffing which cannot fail to militate against the

success and economy of the service. And in these places with only a special library the general non-Catholic, or non-Calvinistic, inhabitants are denied any service for *their* benefit. The special libraries have their own national associations—the Union of Roman Catholic Libraries and the Association of Libraries of the Dutch Reformed Church, though, nevertheless, all local associations are also members of the Central Association, and so there is some measure of co-operation.

Another important feature of the libraries, both general and special, is that none of them are free; all require the payment of annual subscriptions or borrowing fees. As I have written elsewhere strongly condemning the levying of any charge upon borrowers, I will not again elaborate the point. These subscriptions may not be large but they undoubtedly reduce the volume of public use and defeat many of the primary objects of the service. To give one example: Amsterdam general library charges a minimum of 4*s.* 7*d.* a year for adults, 2*s.* 10*d.* for young people between 15 and 18 years of age, and 1*s.* 10½*d.* for children between 7 and 15. Taking examples at random from the year book of the Central Association for the year 1953–4 it is seen that income from subscriptions and fees represents the following percentage of the total income: Amsterdam general, 23%; Amsterdam R.C., 19%; Dordrecht general, 29·4%; Dordrecht, Calvinistic, 28%; Haarlem general (which is municipal), 11%; Haarlem R.C., 12%; Groningen general (the only library), 24%; Rotterdam general (which is municipal and the only library), 4·7, and so on.

What proportion of total income is derived from state, provincial, and municipal grants? Amsterdam general library gets 57·5% of its money from the municipality, nearly 8% from the state, and a little less from the province. Amsterdam R.C. gets 51% from the municipality, 14·7% from the state, and 13% from the province. To take two of the smallest authorities by way of contrast: Steenwijk with 9,000 inhabitants gets 38% from the municipality, 30% from the state, and nothing from the province, and Appingedam gets 22% from the municipality, 26% from the state, and 3% from the province. Or to choose a small *municipal* library (which, like the two above, is the only one in the town), Heemstede, with 25,000 inhabitants receives 62·7% from the municipality, 11·7% from the state, and 6·7% from the province. Though these examples fail to disclose any definite pattern it would seem that state grants are generally weighted in favour of the small authorities.

There are three other conditions which must be met before state

grant is made. The public library must have a satisfactory building, it must provide books which are, in the broad sense, educational, and it must employ a trained librarian. Training for librarianship is administered by the Central Committee and involves a three-year course. Undoubtedly this insistence upon qualified librarianship is largely responsible for the high standards which are achieved despite adverse conditions. There are inevitably, as in all countries, varying standards from place to place but the majority of libraries are well run and well kept. There are branches in the larger cities, where also good reference facilities exist, as well as provision for children and for the blind, and commercial and music sections. Open access is not yet general. It is true that most of the libraries are in premises which were not built for, and are not well suited for, library purposes. But it is equally true in my opinion—as I am a confirmed believer in the vital need for open access —that there are very few buildings which will completely defy the efforts of an ingenious librarian determined to effect this essential improvement.

Before passing on from the towns to the rural services two questions should be answered: (*a*) What is the precise standard of expenditure per head of population? and (*b*) What is the extent of public borrowing, measured in terms of loans per head of total population? Again let it be noted that these are random examples which may or may not indicate averages. All figures below relate to the year 1953.

First let us note the *total* annual expenditure per head of population in the town (whether there are one or two libraries). Places marked with an asterisk have a municipal general library.

	Population	*Exp. per head*
Amsterdam	855,000	16·7*d.*
Breda	94,000	16·5*d.*
Dordrecht	74,000	19·9*d.*
Eindhoven	148,000	9·7*d.*
Groningen	139,000	19·9*d.*
* Haarlem	165,000	33·2*d.*
* Heemstede	25,000	34·35*d.*
* Rotterdam	697,000	19*d.*
* Schiedam	75,000	35·48*d.*
Sittard	30,000	23·7*d.*
Utrecht	197,000	17·95*d.*
Vlissingen	25,000	15*d.*
Wassenaar	25,000	17·6*d.*

The median expenditure per head of population in Great Britain was 55·6*d.*

It is, however, illuminating to notice how expenditure is divided where there are two libraries. The population given against the Roman Catholic or Calvinist library is the population upon which grant is calculated. Its expenditure is divided by that population; the expenditure of the general library is divided by the *total* population.

	Population	*Exp. per head*
Amsterdam (general)	855,000	13·9*d.*
Amsterdam (R.C.)	214,000	9·7*d.*
Breda (general)	94,000	4·9*d.*
Breda (R.C.)	94,000	11·7*d.*
Dordrecht (general)	74,000	15·6*d.*
Dordrecht (Calv.)	12,000	26·9*d.*
* Haarlem (general)	165,000	28·9*d.*
Haarlem (R.C.)	78,000	9·5*d.*
* Schiedam (general)	75,000	22·6*d.*
Schiedam (R.C.)	37,000	14·7*d.*
Utrecht (general)	197,000	17·95*d.*
Utrecht (R.C.)	91,000	10·2*d.*

Eindhoven, where there is only a Roman Catholic library, spends 9·7*d.*; Sittard, where there is also only a Roman Catholic library, spends 23·7*d.*

In calculating the loans from the above per head of population one must distinguish between those places with one library only and those with two.

(*a*) Those with one library:

Eindhoven (R.C.)	=	1·5
Groningen	=	2·36
* Heemstede	=	3·8
* Rotterdam	=	1·0
Sittard	=	2·0
Vlissingen	=	1·9
Wassenaar	=	2·6

(*b*) Those with two libraries:

The only fair way is to add together the loans from the two libraries and to divide this total by total population.

Amsterdam	=	1·19
Breda	=	1·8
Dordrecht	=	1·9
* Haarlem	=	1·9
* Schiedam	=	3·6
Utrecht	=	1·75

Compared with the median lending library issues per head of total population in Great Britain of 7·5 per head, it will be seen that the public libraries of Holland are much less used.

This is further evidenced by the following statistics of the percentage of total population registered as borrowers (and, as before, where there are two libraries the borrowers from both are added together):

	Per cent
Amsterdam	4·09
Breda	3·9
Dordrecht	5
Eindhoven	4·5
Groningen	7·8
* Haarlem	6·5
* Heemstede	10·1
* Rotterdam	3·5
* Schiedam	7·4
Sittard	5·4
Utrecht	4·26
Vlissingen	5·3
Wassenaar	6·6

The percentage of total population registered as borrowers in Great Britain is 26. I must point out that, whereas the Dutch borrowers are mostly annual subscribers, the majority of British libraries issue tickets for two or even more years; and allowance must be made for this.

It would appear that (with the exception of Rotterdam) the municipally supported libraries are attracting rather more borrowers and lending more books than the others, but they are too few to provide conclusive evidence. Opinion differs among Dutch librarians as to whether in the present circumstances efforts should be made to bring public libraries under municipal control. The main cause for doubt is that, apparently, the municipalities do not appoint library committees (or boards); the municipal librarian works under the supervision either

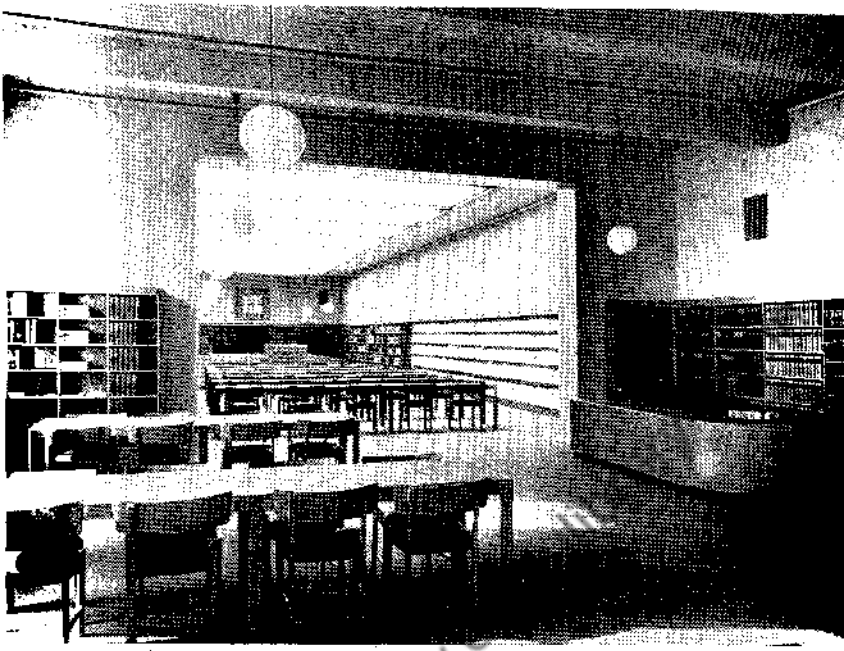
of a senior local government officer or of the city councillor who is in charge of educational affairs.

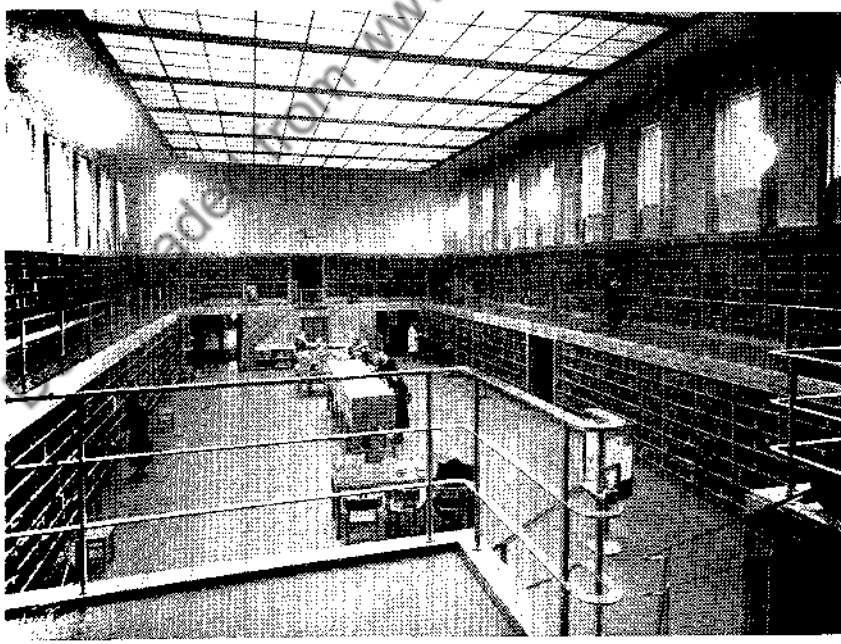
Nevertheless the librarians of association libraries have their own difficulties. Some enjoy great liberty and the support of liberal boards wise enough to leave the technical and professional aspects of library administration to their qualified officers. But most—and especially those in the smaller towns—are less fortunate. As one eminent Dutch librarian told me, 'In some of the little places, and not only in the little ones, the actions of the library board, being an assembly of men and women chosen by the local library association, lead to a very bad influence because the board wants to have far more influence in the managing of the public library than knowledge of management allows them. So we see that the librarians in charge of many little public libraries have little chance to do anything in library politics or library planning, because all decisions must be taken by the library board and they are in many cases people who do not know much about it. In many places in Holland members of the board act as book selectors. They also think that they are responsible for the appointment of new members of the staff and serious mistakes are made here many times.'

Another difficulty arises from the fact that often it is not possible for the librarian to anticipate from year to year what funds will be made available. A new library law is projected which may improve this position, but it is not anticipated that it will make any fundamental alteration in the present basis of library provision. This is a pity, because I am certain that municipal responsibility with management by a library committee appointed by the elected representatives of the whole community would minimize political interference, clarify the relationship between the librarian and his committee, and encourage more active and widespread interest in and use of the service.

So much for the towns. There is as yet little that could be compared with the well-developed county library services of Great Britain to give service to the country folk. Some service is given, however, in the following ways.

First, since 1912 various urban libraries have been extending their services to the surrounding countryside through the media of small groups of 'correspondentschappen'. Books are either sent in small collections for the correspondent to distribute or books required by readers are sent to them via the correspondent. This work has been stimulated by grants made by the provincial confederations which have





Frederiksberg, Denmark. *Above:* reference library. *Below:* lending library.

H[illegible] Branch, Göteborg, Sweden, lending library cosy corner.

Svendborg County Library, Denmark, speedboat library.

been set up in five of the eleven provinces and which themselves get some state and provincial grant.

Secondly, the Central Association of Travelling Libraries, which was founded in 1914 and receives state aid, distributes small collections of books to some 300 centres, where there are over 8,000 readers who used 127,000 books in 1953.

Thirdly, the Central Countrymen's Library distributed books that year to some 4,400 readers throughout the Netherlands.

This is, however, but a beginning. It would not seem that this country presents any insuperable difficulties to the foundation of nation-wide rural services preferably on a regional basis, the town libraries fully participating and also co-operating with one another.

Finally, it should be noted that the Royal Library at The Hague gives generous assistance to libraries and their more serious readers; it lends a large number of books and receives nearly 100,000 requests a year. It maintains a union catalogue of the book holdings of some 50 other libraries and a union list of the periodicals in 166 libraries, and is thus often able to pass requests to libraries able to meet them.

BELGIUM

Belgium is a bilingual country—5 million inhabitants in the north speak Dutch and $3\frac{1}{2}$ million in the south are French-speaking; as in Holland there are sharp religious and political differences. There is an even further cleavage of outlook, for the south was in the past dominantly industrial and the north agrarian. This 'profound dualism', says Leo Schevenhels in the *Library Quarterly*, January 1950, 'has hampered the development of public libraries in Belgium', and led to a 'dissipation of energies and the inefficient utilization of what little money was available'.

As in France, Holland, and Germany there were old-established city libraries long ago. Antwerp, which today has surely much the best library service in the country, had a municipal one as early as 1480. It was later dispersed, but was restarted in 1505, to be destroyed during the destruction of the city, to be resuscitated in 1609, refounded in 1793, and organized on a fresh basis in 1834. Ghent had a library in 1633, Louvain in 1646, Liége in 1732. Then it so happened that for a brief period (1794–1814) Belgium was part of France, and it was at that time that the confiscated treasures of the monasteries and of *émigrés*

were handed over to the communes, Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Liége, etc.

In the nineteenth century as in the other two countries (indeed while Belgium was still part of the Dutch state: 1815–30) the movement began for providing books for the general people, and societies existed in Antwerp, Namur, Brussels, Mons, Liége, and Verviers for the promotion of education and the supply of books for schools. Popular libraries began to spring up throughout the country. 'They were', says Schevenhels, 'considered philanthropic institutions', and the 'majority degenerated more and more into instruments of political power', adding: 'To a certain degree this is the situation even today.'

In 1851 the 'Willemsfonds', a liberal organization, was founded to imbue Flemings with a pride in their language and culture, to support writers, and form popular libraries. But in 1875 the Catholics broke away and founded their own organization, the 'Davidsfonds', to establish libraries for adherents to that faith. Meanwhile a similar organization, the Ligue de l'Enseignement (League for Education), was founded in 1864, and had its libraries all over the country. Later, in 1911, the Labour Party began, with two sections (Flemish and French), to establish, *inter alia*, community centres with libraries. In 1865, 85 libraries existed; in 1884, 571; in 1920, 1,400.

From this recital one can well imagine the conditions which existed when the government began to take a serious interest in library provision. During the world war 1914–18, a renewed demand for books arose far in excess of the supply, and a committee was formed to establish, with funds provided by the Commissions for Relief in Belgium (from U.S.A., Holland, Spain), a system of travelling libraries to serve communes which were without any library. Nearly 1,000 collections of about 100 books each were provided, and the success of the scheme was so great that after the war the government proposed to take it over.

In 1921, at the instigation of the then Minister of Sciences and Arts, Monsieur Jules Destrée, the Act which is always referred to as the Destrée Act was passed. With certain amendments it is still the basic law for popular, so-called 'public' libraries. Destrée sincerely believed in libraries which should, he said, be provided for all citizens of all ages, and offer them reading for 'distraction, instruction, and education in the widest sense'. Time, however, has proved that the methods chosen have not produced the desired results and may, indeed, have helped to defeat his avowed intentions, for the needs of the towns were neglected.

The law, as amended, makes the following provisions:

The state gives subsidies to the so-called 'public' libraries, whether they are provided or adopted by the communes or by religious, political, or other organizations, provided they comply with certain conditions—and there is no limit to the number of recognized libraries in any one community. Among these conditions are (*a*) that they shall be open freely to all and not only to a group, and shall put up a notice outside saying that they are free and giving the hours of opening; (*b*) that communes of less than 1,000 inhabitants shall possess no less than 100 volumes and lend at least 100 volumes a year, those with between 1,000 and 10,000 shall have 300 books and lend the same number, and those with more than 10,000 shall have and lend 800; within five years of recognition these figures have to increase to 300, 800, and 1,500 respectively; (*c*) that though entry shall be free a charge of 1 fr. upwards may be made (and almost invariably it *is* made) for loans for home reading; (*d*) that those with less than 3,000 inhabitants must be open once a week for two hours or twice a week for one, that those with 3,000 to 20,000 must open twice a week for two hours on different days, and others for three similar periods a week; (*e*) that they are subject to state inspection; (*f*) that they are free to choose their own books so long as state grants for books purchase (see later) [1] are not spent on literature that is seditious, valueless educationally, or containing religious or political propaganda; (*g*) that the commune must establish a library on being requested by one-fifth of the electorate, where there is no library fulfilling the terms of the Act; (*h*) that the commune shall provide a sum equivalent to at least 1·50 fr. (about 2½*d.*) per head of population, 75% of which must be spent on books, periodicals, and binding, and the rest on building upkeep, etc.; (*i*) that the librarian shall hold a certificate in librarianship *unless* excused this; and (*j*) that the libraries shall not engage in propaganda work, either political, philosophical, or religious.

This last provision, doubtless, was inserted with the tongue in the cheek, for it is manifestly absurd to imagine that, say, a Catholic or Socialist library, the very purpose of which is to promote Catholic or Marxist ideas, would renounce its basic objectives for the sake of these grants. But we shall study the virtues and defects of the Act in due course.

First let us see what this state aid amounts to and how it is allocated.

First, the state makes a grant on the following scale: for one session of 2 hours a week, 1,500 fr. (about £10 12*s.*) *a year* if the librarian is

[1] See page 116.

certificated and 800 fr. (£5 14*s.*) if he is not; for two sessions, twice those amounts; for three sessions, thrice those amounts.

Please note that this is the *maximum* grant, excepting only that 'bibliothèques de grande importance' may get a further 2,000 fr. (£14) making a *grand* total of £45 10*s.*!—and to be regarded as a 'library of great importance' it must employ at least two certificated librarians, have at least 10,000 volumes, lend at least 30,000 items (though this total may include books consulted on the premises), be open for at least two hours on five different days a week, and have a reading-room 'specially organized and regularly accessible'.

Incidentally, I must confess to being both amused and saddened to find that any government should think it necessary to formulate a regulation regarding 'les séances blanches'. A 'séance blanche' is a two-hour period during which no one enters the library! Communes with less than 3,000 inhabitants may have two 'séances blanches' and those with up to 20,000 may have one, but in large communes they are not admissible. The real reason for this provision is, however, to prevent the librarian, who is usually a teacher or a priest, from closing the library for several weeks while, perhaps, he is on holiday.

To return to state aid. Grants are also made for books. The amount is fixed according to a scale of 'marks'. The librarian can choose books to the amount available and submits a list for checking by an inspector. If it is approved, the librarian orders the items from a bookseller, who sends the bill, less a 10% discount, to the government administration. Further grants are made for special purposes (e.g. to improve or decorate premises, undertake some new project, or provide reference and reading-room services, or for printed catalogues).

In 1953 state aid was on the following scale. The figures are *totals*.

For books	8,015,400 fr. (£57,250)
For staff	6,180,500 fr. (£44,150)
For special purposes	696,342 fr. (£4,975)

—the above being divided between 2,384 libraries (1,093 Flemish and 1,291 Walloon)—a grand total of £106,375, or an average of less than £45 each. Further grants of 978,000 fr. (about £7,000) were paid to full-time libraries. In addition to this the provinces give grants, each according to different principles of allocation and of varying amount. For example, in 1954 the province of Antwerp gave 1,780,000 fr. (£12,460) to 266 libraries.

What was the effect of the Destrée Act? Viewed statistically the

effects may seem good. In 1921 there were 1,404 different libraries, of which 625 had less than 300 volumes, 1,180 had less than 1,000, and only 46 had more than 3,000. In 1948 there were 2,500 libraries, with 8 million books; 15 million volumes were borrowed and 10% of the population were regular readers, though 80% of these used the libraries solely for recreational reading.

Schevenhels, in the article mentioned, voices these criticisms: 'Specialists in the professions cannot, in the majority of libraries, find even the basic essentials for further improvement . . . and students in the fields of technical and secondary school education find the libraries equally inadequate study centres. The libraries are incapable of fulfilling their social and educational functions; theirs is a struggle for survival which precludes the enlargement of their book stocks.' He speaks of the 'great disparity in library service throughout the country. Brussels, for example . . . does not have what could properly be termed a "public library".' And he mentions 'the pervasive influence of political infiltration'. 'The first task', he says, 'must be to organize, in addition to the popular libraries, genuine public libraries in all towns and communities —one library to every commune.' The Destrée Act 'committed the structural error of perpetuating the nineteenth-century type of popular library. . . . The law to begin with was aimed at a minimum far below the needs of a working library'. It did not take into account the varying functions of different libraries, e.g. Liége with 150,000 population gets approximately the same as a community of 5,000. The efforts of enlightened librarians have achieved less than they should because '(*a*) the official authorities are generally apathetic, (*b*) most of the librarians of the scholarly libraries have not lent the necessary support, (*c*) government officials are uninformed of the conditions and organization of public libraries abroad, and (*d*) the various political parties whom the local administrators represent are doing everything in their power to retain the library as a political instrument'.

That this state of affairs has continued is not the fault of the library associations. Indeed, since 1922 the Association of Flemish Librarians has sought a new Act which would permit the development of genuine public libraries. In 1939, in conjunction with the A.S.K.B. (the association of Catholic libraries), it pressed the government for better legislation. During the war the matter was discussed by the High Council for Public Libraries, and in 1945–6 the Minister of Education expressed his intention to proceed with the matter, but nothing was done.

In 1949, basing his statements upon the arguments presented in these

discussions, Monsieur Charles Depasse, then 'Inspecteur principal des Bibliothèques publiques et de l'Éducation populaire, au Ministère de l'Instruction publique', criticizes the system in *Nos Bibliothèques publiques* (Les Éditions universitaires, 1949). He points to the useless multiplication of public libraries recognized by the state. Sometimes there are three public libraries within a distance of one kilometre in a locality with 1,000 to 2,000 inhabitants. The 'tendencies' of many libraries, the excessive subdivision of the subsidy, the disastrous dispersal of forces, the insufficient resources, and inadequate premises all produce a regrettable mediocrity to the detriment of readers. Every commune, he says, *should* have created a service according to its importance, and the idea of a public library should have been officially stated.

Moreover, the training of librarians is inadequate; the certificates are given too easily and the law has permitted 50% of the librarians to remain uncertificated. The status of the librarian is not satisfactory; and the authorities are not required to pay him properly. There has been an absolute lack of consideration for the library and the librarian on the part of authorities and the public. The inspectorate, at first by order and later by custom, has shown such an excessive lenience that the realization has been much inferior to the stipulated minima, already so very insufficient. Above all, the public libraries, with praiseworthy exceptions, are not generally adapted to the demands of new generations of readers, better educated because of compulsory education and secondary education, both general and technical.

However, the struggle does continue. In 1951 the Minister of Education was led by the arguments of the Association of Librarians to receive a far-reaching report from the High Council, but again the high hopes of the profession were doomed to disappointment. In 1954, when a new government came into power, the High Council sought further consideration of its report, and the matter is still being discussed. A new law is sought which will override the inadequate and unsatisfactory bases of the 1921 Act and lead to the provision of adequate full-time public libraries co-operating in a genuine nation-wide system.

Meanwhile, there were, in 1953, 2,384 libraries, with 8,874,000 books, lending 13,178,000 items in the year to 685,920 borrowers. These figures suggest that less than 8% of the population are active borrowers and that issues are equivalent to about 1·5 per head of population. But this is not strictly true because certain libraries, including the important Antwerp system, are not included as they are not 'recog-

nized' by the state because they prefer their independence to inspection and control in return for the merest pittance.

There are not many true and adequate public libraries in Belgium, but they do exist—at Antwerp, Malines, Liége, Ghent, Hasselt (country), and Ostend. Their importance to their own communities represents their importance to the nation as a whole because of the example they set. Malines, for example, with a central library, nine branches and delivery stations, has 6,400 borrowers from a population of 60,000, annual issues of over 250,000, and spends nearly 5*s*. per head of population. Antwerp, with a population of 290,000, has a municipal library, a central library, nine branches, delivery stations, and its own bindery. It had in 1953 nearly 20,000 readers and lent 624,000 volumes. *Excluding* the costs of premises and their upkeep, it spent over £80,000.

FRANCE

There is the following brief account in Alfred Hessel's *A History of Libraries*, translated, with supplementary material, by Reuben Peiss (Scarecrow Press, Washington, D.C., 1950) and written just after the war:

'In both France and Italy popular libraries are still badly underdeveloped by comparison with other countries. While centralized administration resulting from the Revolution worked to the progressive advantage of French scholarly libraries (university libraries having made notable advances in recent times) municipal libraries have languished. France has few noteworthy municipal libraries, but they resemble scholarly German libraries much more than the public library of a good-sized American or British city. There has been neither adequate local initiative nor sufficient encouragement by the central government to provide satisfactory free lending libraries in the majority of French cities and towns. Just when interest was heightening—partly through the example set by the American Library in Paris—the severe economic distress of the 1930's made it impossible to get anything done. In the reconstitution of France after the recent war, organization of flourishing public libraries will present a major challenge and a great opportunity.'

It remains substantially applicable; and the 'challenge' has been only partially accepted. Of the major countries of the world France has still one of the worst public library services—and it is difficult to explain why this is so.

A few municipal public libraries, in each case the result of private benefactions, were established during the eighteenth century, for example at Bordeaux, Carpentras, and Aix-en-Provence. But historians agree that the public library services of France date from 1791, when the libraries of religious foundations and of *émigrés* were confiscated and handed over to the schools. This manifestly absurd arrangement was soon remedied, and the custody of their collections was entrusted to the communes. The national and university libraries received valuable acquisitions and, in theory, a nation-wide system of public libraries was set up. But only in theory, because nothing was done to keep these libraries up to date or to make them available. Guizot, in 1833, said, 'They are very often storehouses of books rather than libraries'. Though rich in bibliographical treasures they had little of use to the ordinary student, or to the ordinary man. This is, indeed, still true. As a French librarian recently told me, 'Most municipal libraries, of which the old collections are often rich in material of interest to a few erudite scholars, offer very limited opportunities to the working population of the cities'. There are a few exceptions but, generally, not only are these libraries ill-supported and little used, they are unsuitably housed, often in old buildings, seldom indeed in premises specially erected for public library purposes.

There are about 530 municipal libraries, ranging from that of Lyon with 600,000 volumes to small-town libraries, some hundred of them, with less than 10,000. Over all of these the Minister of Education, through a department charged with supervision of all types of national and municipal libraries, Services des Bibliothèques de France et de la Lecture Publique, exercises a measure of control, though, in general (the exceptions are noted later), the municipalities are responsible for finance, administration, staff appointments, and the like. All of them are subject to inspection by the Ministry's inspectors, the librarians must submit an annual report to the Ministry, and each municipality must appoint a committee 'of inspection and purchase' nominated by the Prefect of the Department on the recommendation of the Maire and approved by the Ministry—an elaborate process which, however, does not seem to have ensured much efficiency.

As many of these libraries, as already stated, hold materials confiscated in 1791 and for the preservation of which the state holds them still responsible, municipal libraries are divided into three categories:

(*a*) 'classed' libraries, 42 in number, for which the appointment of librarian is made by the state, which pays part of his salary;

(*b*) 35 other old libraries classified as 'controlled'; and
(*c*) all others.

The state makes grants (up to 35%) to certain municipalities for the construction of buildings, and occasionally distributes books, but otherwise gives no assistance.

These municipal libraries are open to all for reference purposes, and where books are lent they are lent to all local inhabitants. Some lend freely but the majority charge fees. Many do not lend at all, though these are becoming less numerous; a few large cities have branches (e.g. Bordeaux, Grenoble, Troyes) and deposits in factories; more children's departments are being provided.

The following random statistics (for 1953) will indicate the status of some of those systems:

Expenditure (of some of the larger systems)

	Population	*Exp. per head*
Marseilles	641,685	*approx.* $3\frac{3}{4}d.$
Lyon	460,748	,, $7\frac{1}{2}d.$
Toulouse	254,955	,, 16*d.*
Bordeaux	253,751	,, 13*d.*
Nancy	108,131	,, 39*d.*
Limôges	107,857	,, 26*d.*
Le Havre	106,934	,, 13*d.*
Reims	106,313	,, 20*d.*
Grenoble	102,161	,, 45*d.*
Mulhouse	101,000	,, 41*d.*
Montpellier	86,517	,, 22*d.*

Loans and Borrowers (from some of the smaller)

	Population	*Loans per head of pop. p.a.*	*Percentage of total population borrowing*
Beauvais	21,216	1·3	5·8
Armentières	20,143	2	6
Alençon	19,691	1	8·5
Abbeville	19,336	1	2·7
Compiègne	18,218	1·4	2·9
Laon	17,406	1·9	7
Sens	17,329	2·2	5·2
Soissons	17,247	3·6	9·9
Chaumont	16,851	·8	2·6
Bar-le-Duc	15,460	·8	3·6

Recent overall figures are not available, but Eric de Grolier, secretary-general of the Bureau Bibliographique de France, gave these statistics in *Livre et Document*, 1948 (for an earlier period), and though there is some improvement it is not on the whole substantial. They relate to municipal libraries excepting those in the department of Seine. Of 307 libraries, 83 had less than 1 volume per inhabitant (40 had less than 40 volumes per hundred); of 230 libraries, 158 spent less than *1 franc 50 centimes* per head; of 236 libraries, 188 lent fewer than 1 book per annum per head of population, and the *average* was ·4 volumes.

It is difficult to find the root causes of this state of affairs. There are, let it be noted, many libraries provided by religious or other organizations and by private societies, but so there are in this country, and when comparing the public libraries of different countries it is not reasonable to take these into account, not only because they are operative everywhere (and in *this* country we have also probably more commercial circulating libraries, from the 'twopenny' variety to the Times Book Club, than will be found anywhere else), but also because they do not serve the general public in the same way, or with the same materials, as the genuine public library. There is no evidence that in France has there been, as in Holland and Belgium, the active competition of religious libraries, and these have certainly received no help from the French government or from municipal funds. Allowing for economic difficulties, I believe that the root cause is one of attitude, born of the origin of these libraries as storehouses of 'treasures' and leading to the outlook of the custodian who conserves for the scholar rather than the outlook of the modern public librarian and library authority seeking to make books useful to as many as will use them.

As already noted, the idea of lending books for home reading is relatively recent, and still by no means general. Open access is gaining acceptance but still is not usual. And, as a striking example of this attitude, let us consider hours of opening, for, obviously, if a library is to be generally useful it must be open at times when the generality of people can go there.

The 1950 Unesco *Répertoire des Bibliothèques de France* gives opening hours. And here are the opening hours of some of the municipal libraries which have already been noted:

Lyon	9–12, 2–6 (closed in August)
Toulouse	8.30–12, 2–6 (closed in August)
Bordeaux	9–12, 2–6

Le Havre	Lending dept, Mon., Thurs., and Sat., 1.30–5.30
Abbeville	2–5 (closed 1–15 August)
Alençon	1–5 (closed August)
Bar-le-Duc	1.30–4.30 (Oct.–Mar.), 1.30–5 (April–Sept., except Mondays) (closed 14–31 July)
Beauvais	Sundays 1.30–4, Thurs. 1–4 (closed August)

In plain, blunt English people who can adopt such hours cannot have much conception of the true functions of a public library. Even at Grenoble, which appears to have one of the best provincial services, loans from the Bibliothèque Municipale itself are made only to persons authorized by the Maire by reason of their work, general loans to the public being from the two branches (and I understand that there is now a bookmobile) one of which is only open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., though the other is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Both are closed in August. Payment is required for loan to individuals, but collections are lent free of charge to offices and factories.

Mr R. C. Benge gives an account of the public libraries of Paris as he saw them in 1949 (in the *Library Association Record*, March 1950). Paris is divided into twenty *arrondissements*, or districts, and each has a central public library, usually situated in the *mairie*, or town hall. In each *arrondissement* there are also two or three smaller collections in schools, and open in the evenings. All are controlled from the central administration but there is no inter-lending and no union catalogue.

In addition to these there are:

(*a*) La Bibliothèque Municipale d'Art et Industrie Forney, with 25,000 volumes and 200,000 illustrations, which lends to workers in industry, commerce, and the applied arts.

(*b*) La Bibliothèque de la Préfecture at the Hôtel de Ville—a headquarters library and an administrative collection for official use—with about 112,000 volumes.

(*c*) A small reference library devoted to feminism—La Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand.

(*d*) La Bibliothèque des Arts Graphiques, with 4,000 volumes on printing and the book arts, and

(*e*) The important Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, which does not, however, appear to be part of the municipal system.

The libraries come under the department of Fine Arts and are supervised by an Inspector of Municipal Libraries—an official, *not* a librarian. The first public library dates from 1865; it had 860 books, was open from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. and was only for men. By 1900 there were libraries in all twenty of the *arrondissements* but none developed beyond a rudimentary stage, and though issues amounted to over 2 million in 1901 they had declined to 1,200,000 by 1931. Then they were reorganized and some 55 libraries were improved, classification and modern cataloguing being introduced, though issues did not pass the 2 million mark until 1941. They were 2,300,000 in 1948, and 2,921,000 in 1952, equivalent to 1·07 per head of total population. There are now 77 central and branch libraries.

Despite the centralization basic standards vary considerably, issues ranging from 37,520 a year to 130,865. With one or two exceptions there are no separate buildings, the libraries being part—often not very accessible—of the town hall. All but two give open access. There is little reference service as we know it, but half the libraries make some special provision for children, often excellent. Usually the larger libraries close at 5.30 every evening in the week except one, when they remain open until 9 p.m.

Funds come from a 'credit' which is divided among the libraries according to their annual issues. The total budget in 1949 was 41 million francs, and the population about $2\frac{3}{4}$ million, making an average expenditure of about 15 francs per head (i.e. a little less than 4*d*.). In 1952 only about the sum of 32 million francs was available for books, binding, and periodicals.

Mr L. Carnovsky, in an article in the *Library Quarterly*, July 1952, says that about two-thirds of the circulation consists of fiction. 'Book selection is a function of the individual librarians; however, their choices are subject to review by the inspector-general. . . . Practically no attempt is made to provide books of purely ephemeral quality. . . . This restriction is motivated by a policy, generally agreed to by all the librarians, that high literary standards should be observed.' The proportion of women borrowers, he says, is not large. There is no considerable provision of books on science, technology, and social sciences.

Provision for the country districts is on the whole very poor. Only a very few of the villages have libraries. According to the law there

should be a library in every school, but many schools lack them and those which exist are often old, shabby, and of little use. To some extent the need is met by private and parish libraries and by such organizations as La Ligue de l'Enseignement, which assists school libraries, and La Ligue féminine d'action catholique, which has, since 1934, sent books to villages and readers in 72 of the departments. The S.N.C.F. provides books for railway employees. And so on.

The most significant attempt to provide books to the country people, however, was initiated in 1945 by the Direction générale des bibliothèques de France, which is directly responsible for them. The area of operation chosen for these Bibliothèques Centrales de Prêt is the department. As yet they are intended to serve only those communes with less than 6,000 population. A central library is set up in the principal town and from there collections are sent to local centres, housed in some public place, often the *mairie*, usually a school. They are changed three times a year and looked after by voluntary librarians. The books are sent round by an exhibition van from which the local librarians can make their selection. It is intended to establish such a central lending library in each of the 84 departments of metropolitan France. Seventeen were founded in 1945–6 and an eighteenth in 1951. The *average* department has an area of about 6,000 square miles, and a population of 300,000 living in some 500 localities (the larger of which do not, of course, come within the scope of the service). By 1948, of 8,103 townships in the 17 Departments then operating schemes, 3,200 were being served. By January 1953, out of 9,323 communities to be reached 6,750 were being given collections available from 7,580 centres. Book stocks totalled 651,000.

In addition to these there are also a few departmental systems set up by the department itself (rather than by the state)—e.g. in Meurthe-et-Moselle and Drôme.

There can be no doubt that these department central libraries represent a big step forward along the right lines. It is a great pity that after so promising a start the programme seems to have halted through lack of support.

WESTERN GERMANY

The public library movement in Western Germany is in such a state of transition that it is impossible to give any overall picture, for conditions, standards, objectives, coverage, and systems of support vary

very considerably. As the public library movement in Germany has suffered from practically all the handicaps to which such a service *could* be subjected, it is perhaps fairer to glance at the effect of these handicaps than to criticize the present activities of librarians who are working, largely in the right direction, seeking to overcome the effects of war and post-war, of Nazification and de-Nazification. The tragedy is that their task might have been much lighter had there existed in pre-Hitler days a public library system of the same status as those which were then in being in, say, the U.S.A. and Great Britain. Such was far from the case, which is a matter for great surprise until one delves below the surface, for not only were social, economic, intellectual, and educational conditions no less propitious at the turn of the century, but also because Germany was foremost among nations in the provision of great scholarly and specialized libraries and is even now among the best provided. Why then was the public library so undernourished?

Some of the reasons are historical, as is explained by Heinz Schurer in a pamphlet on *Public Libraries in Germany* (German Educational Reconstruction, 1946).

'After the great reform era which transformed Prussia in the years preceding the victory over Napoleon, the revolutionary impetus of the great reformers became suspect to the reactionaries that came to the fore after 1815. Even a progressive and enlightened Prussian civil servant like President von Massow in Stettin, who was one of the first to be interested in the idea of public libraries, hedged his suggestions round with many limiting clauses. He wanted such public libraries "to be reserved for the educated youth only or, at the most, for specially intelligent people". He realized clearly that a certain standard of living and a certain amount of leisure were necessary to give the common people the chance to benefit by books, and since these conditions did not exist he concluded that as things were, literature was not for the common man. . . . Suspected subversive tendencies might be encouraged by public libraries. Massow thus feared that "bad people" might bring into disrepute the books recommended by the authorities and circulate others instead.

'The demand for books, which was stimulated by compulsory education and general literacy, was supplied by the efforts of the innumerable societies and associations which sprang up all over Germany after the Napoleonic wars. When these first arose they met a great deal of opposition from the authorities for the reasons mentioned.

but they came to stay and have remained a permanent feature within the framework of German cultural institutions. The first public library to be founded in Germany was in the small Saxon town of Grossenhain, in 1828. The founder was a civil servant, K. Preusker, later on author of a book on Public Libraries.'

In 1841 the historian Friedrich von Raumer founded the Association for Scientific Libraries and gave its proceeds to found four popular libraries in Berlin; in the 1890's these libraries were taken over by the city. A large, scholarly central library was created in 1907, and before the war there were some 130 popular libraries and reading-rooms, managed by the administrative districts (the Bezirks) but welded into a single system under the direction of the Berlin Municipal Library. But this was an exception.

'The establishment of the united German Reich', says Schurer, 'ushered in a new era. It coincided with the creation of a vast urban proletariat, and the beginnings of the German socialist movement. Many more organizations, some with a denominational basis, which endeavoured to deal with the problems of bringing "culture" to the "common people", were founded at this time. Among the most powerful were the Protestant and Roman Catholic organizations. The Roman Catholic Borromäus-Verein was and still is the most influential of them all. There were other groups which professed to be non-partisan and undenominational; on the whole they approached the problems from a liberal point of view. Chief of these were the Gesellschaft zur Verbreitung der Volksbildung (Association for the Dissemination of Popular Education), founded in 1871, the Comenius Association, the Society for Ethical Culture. These associations were active in founding numerous libraries, in addition to those maintained by the various local professional, educational, musical, and religious organizations, which were soon joined by those established by the trade unions. A great many of these libraries established by private initiative had a low social status; their librarians, their books, and their users were looked down on by the educated. The odour of charity institutions hung around them, they were very much 'for the poor', literary soup-kitchens for the mentally and economically dispossessed, giving cultural outdoor relief; or, as Jacob Burckhardt called them, institutions to assuage the conscience of the ruling classes.

'On the other hand, some of the libraries founded by wealthy and respected associations of middle-class membership were comparable to the English clubs, and were first class. The great number of such good

"association libraries", which up to recently maintained a vigorous existence, had the disadvantage, however, of forming an obstacle to the establishment of a proper public library system such as existed in the U.S.A. and Great Britain. During the first twenty-five years after the Reich had been founded the German local authorities and the states, with few exceptions, showed an abysmal indifference to the whole problem.

'It was an almost sensational step when one medium-sized state, Saxony, granted a very modest sum in favour of a public library in 1875. This measure remained an exceptional and isolated instance. . . .

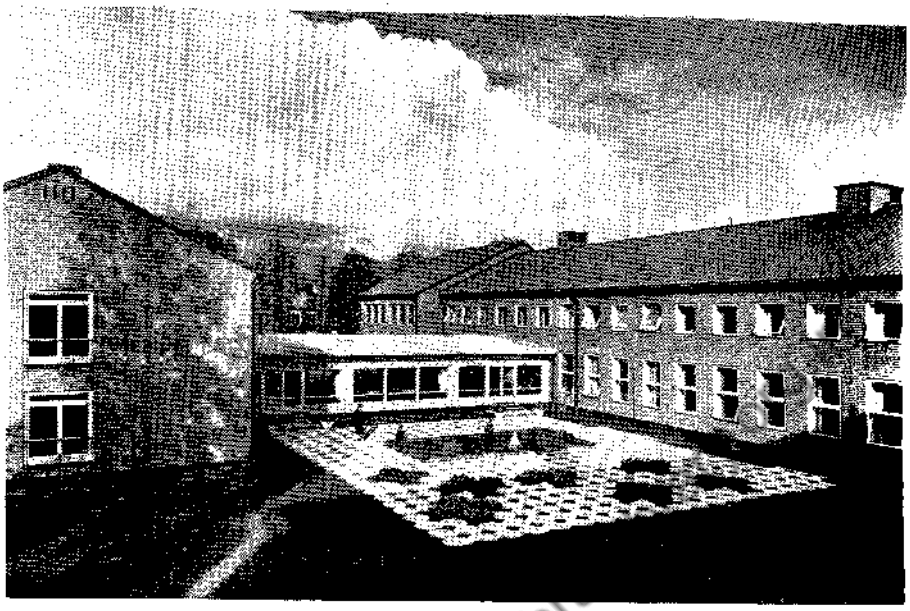
'The great founding period of the public library movement (Bücherhallenbewegung) came at last in 1893. This period of enthusiasm and fervent activity lasted up to about 1905, after which a certain relapse set in. . . .

'Although national and local authorities still showed a remarkable lack of initiative, great success was achieved, and libraries were established in a number of towns. In 1896 the first of these was sponsored by a local authority, and a good number followed. The indifference of the German local authorities finds parallels in other countries . . . but there is no denying the far slower tempo and the far more modest scope of the German development. The principle that a public library should be run and organized by the local authority and not by the state seems to have been generally followed. . . .

'After the revolution of 1918 a new wave of educational enthusiasm swept over Germany. . . . This advance helped the public library movement as well. Many of the new republican state governments established advisory boards, usually in a well-run library, which acted as a sort of guide and conscience for the libraries of the region, although the actual administration was still left in the hands of the local authorities. A great many of these were under the influence of the working-class movement and took a strong interest and pride in their public libraries. Close collaboration with adult education work was frequently established. . . .

'The countryside still remained relatively undeveloped despite all the valiant efforts of the advisory boards. . . . In 1929–30, 0·21 Rm. were spent per head of the entire German population of 64·5 million on public library services. The corresponding figure for Denmark was 0·90 Rm.'

By 1936, though there were libraries in most if not all of the larger towns, only 23% of those between 5,000 and 100,000 population had



Umeå Public Library, Sweden.

Deichmanske Bibliotek, Oslo.

South Melbourne, Victoria. *Above:* children's library. *Below:* adult library—lending, reference, and reading-room.

any popular libraries, and only 4·6% had properly developed systems. Of those who dwelt in smaller places 90% were without libraries at all. About 3% of the people with libraries available actually used them.

Meanwhile, two other influences were at work to prejudice progress. The first was, and largely still is, the separation of the popular libraries and the scholarly libraries. Dr Johannes Beer, Councillor of the Municipal Library of Frankfurt-on-the-Main, said in 1933: 'In general, the free public libraries have in common with all these scholarly institutions only the fact that they are organized for the circulation of books and the fact that, except in certain cases, they follow the same physical and administrative techniques.' Stated quite frankly this does not seem to have been merely an accepted division of function but a division into sheep and goats, leading to the creation in fact of two distinct library professions with different standards of professional education.

Much more important, however, is the fact that this division has deprived the popular library of much of its most valuable and legitimate activity—that of catering for the purposive and often practical needs of the reader who though not a 'scholar' needs information and ideas. Such people form the most important section of the clientele of every good British, American, or Scandinavian public library. The German 'popular' library has not been able to provide for such people at all adequately; it has been condemned to concentrate on the provision of material which being manifestly less 'important' has given them a much less effective case for support—which has consequently largely been denied them. Despite this it is very doubtful whether the scholarly libraries, which have laid claim upon much of the territory normally occupied (equally with them) in Great Britain, have in fact given, or been able to give, this important public service. The library of a university—or a municipal library which assumes the scope and function of scholarship—is not by any means necessarily truly willing to give or capable of giving hospitality to the intelligent, purposeful, general reader. Thus there is a great gap in the dual-service, with the result that some of the most valuable things are not given by any library at all. I remember once in a great city with a fine scholarly library, which was a joint university-town library and a better-than-average public library system, asking at the former how many 'outsiders' actually used the institution which they were in theory fully entitled to use. The number was negligible.

However, though it will be a long time before the scholarly libraries will be persuaded to cede to the better developed public libraries

functions that legitimately belong to the latter, the true function of the public library has been a little better recognized recently. Examples are increasing of a type of library—the Einheitsbücherei—which better combines the functions of the popular library with some attention to more serious readers. This represents an approach to the modern conception of public library service.

The other very important factor is that though German libraries have never favoured open access and have always tended to 'despise' and regiment their readers,[1] early in the century Walter Hofmann, of Leipzig, propounded a theory of public librarianship which, alas, gained wide acceptance. He believed that 'the main reasons for the separation of literature and the people are the lack of cultural tradition in the modern mass society on the one hand, and the huge mass of books produced on the other hand. The true literature in which national character and language find their expression is buried under the mass literature not deserving the name and under the immense book production of the specialists, which again has nothing to do with literature in the true sense. In order to discover the buried treasure a firmly rooted cultural tradition is needed in the people. This essential factor, however, does not exist in modern mass society. The people have neither the chance nor the ability of orientating themselves with regard to their literature'.

Consequently there must be not only the most rigid book selection (according, of course, to the librarian's ideas), but the librarian must earnestly seek to 'size up the reader and do his utmost to help him make the right choice'. Each reader was given a 'reader's book' in which was entered his age, sex, occupation, etc., and details of every book he borrowed. The effect of this unwarranted interference with the free choice and privacy of readers must have been to keep many people out of the library. I have seen these wretched things still in use in 1950. No library using them can begin to do its true work, which is to encourage individual freedom. Apart from anything else this undesirable interest in the reader's salvation leads to an enormous wasteful expenditure of staff time—and of delay in the service. Incidentally this is not the only unnecessary time-wasting device to be found in many German libraries. Excepting in the more enlightened of them the routine methods are generally cumbersome and uneconomic.

[1] This tendency is, fortunately, losing ground. The trend now is definitely towards open access and 116 libraries have now adopted the system, and it will be used in most newly built libraries in future.

And, of course, it must be remembered that open access itself leads to immense savings in staff time and costs.

However, one can imagine how well this 'personal guidance' suited the Nazis when they came into power. Those who are interested will find in Schurer's pamphlet an illuminating account of how the Nazis used libraries for their purposes. I may be quite wrong but I have the impression that the influence of Nazism was more negative than positive—that they purged and despoiled and prostituted these libraries rather than build them up into an effective propaganda machine. Had they exploited the full potentiality of libraries they would hardly have left them in such an impoverished, ill-housed condition as they were still when I saw many, in the British zone and Berlin, in 1950.

Another doctrine of Mr Walter Hofmann was that 'it should not be made too easy to join the library, and therefore a small nominal fee ought to be charged from everyone desiring to become a member. Those averse to paying even the smallest sum in connection with books should stay outside' (I quote Schurer). Apparently even those who disagreed with him about everything else agreed with him here—for *still most* German public libraries charge fees for borrowing. Sometimes children are allowed to borrow free of charge (and, in parentheses, let it be said that generally children are not yet well provided for—often the lowest age limit for admission is 10). With the pernicious, uneconomical effects of fees I deal elsewhere.[1] Sufficient now to say that undoubtedly this is one reason why most German libraries are so little used and so inadequate.

Though I know that there are some good modern libraries, nearly all that I have seen are wretchedly housed—in upstairs rooms in municipal buildings, in schools, even in a prison. I know that some I saw were in temporary premises—and I saw too much of the damage made by warfare to have any illusions as to how difficult it would often be to find *any* accommodation. I refer, chiefly, however, to those libraries still in their original pre-war premises—far too small, dingy, unattractive, and hidden away on top floors and round corners. I am convinced that if a public library is to take its proper place in any community it must be properly housed in its own building—or at least with its own separate entrance on the ground floor of a main street.

To give some idea of standards let me describe some services as I saw them in 1950—and, of course, there will have been much improvement since then.

[1] See pages 168–70, 190.

Hamburg, a pioneer of open access, suffered sadly during the war but had made a good recovery. The city system served some 60 city branches and village centres in the neighbourhood, spending approximately 1*s.* per head of population. About 3% of the inhabitants were enrolled as readers, but, as the branches I saw were very busy indeed, probably this low percentage was due chiefly to the insufficiency of service points, difficult indeed to provide in that stricken city. The city provided 750,000 M. (about £70,000) and subscriptions brought in another 100,000 M. (about £9,400).

At Gottingen, the public library, housed on two upstairs floors and 'closed', had some 7,000 readers from a population of 80,000 and got some 70,000 M. (about £6,000) from the city. The reading-room was free but fees were charged for loans. Admittedly these were very low (just over 1*d.* per book for adults and ½*d.* for children); hours of opening for the lending library were very limited, i.e. 10–1 every day and 3–5 on four days.

At Hanover there was a good, open-access children's library but the branch I saw was closed, and the central library provided an extreme example of the frustration too often inflicted upon readers. This central library houses in a fine modern building a large and excellent stock, but the public borrow only from a very small room with no books on display and no catalogues available. When I was there it was only open four hours a day, but this was then soon to be improved.

The Stadtbücherei in Bonn (100,000 population) had only 12,000 books in stock. Only 700 of these were for children and were not lent for home reading. There were 2,000 borrowers, and annual issues totalled about 45,000.

The City of Köln spent ten times as much in subsidizing its opera-house as it expended on all its public libraries.

The public libraries in the British sector of Berlin came under the general direction of the Magistrat of Greater Berlin, though operated by the Bezirks.[1] Considering the tragic conditions then prevailing and the effects of war, I had the impression that, despite the prevalence of 'closed' libraries, much was being done to offer reasonable facilities. Altogether the Bezirk libraries and their branches had nearly half a million books, 66,000 borrowers, and issues in the neighbourhood of 2 million a year. There was then no central library, but in 1954 Berlin

[1] When three years later I saw some of the public libraries in Vienna, where the whole city is still governed as a unit, I found that all of them, in all zones, formed part of one system under one general direction.

had an outstanding new central library—the American Memorial Library (Amerika-Gedenkbibliothek) erected with a gift from the Americans but to be maintained and administered by the city library authorities. It is planned as an 'Einheitsbibliothek', and will surely prove a vital influence in future library development throughout Western Germany.

Perhaps the most thriving of the other services that I visited were those provided by the city of Flensburg near the Danish border and in the surrounding country (in Schleswig, the one-time Danish province). The municipal library ('closed', with a book store in the next room whence books were conveyed on rollers) had about 5% of the population enrolled, but many others used the attractive (and, if my recollection does not err, open access) Danish library. In Flensburg are the headquarters of the county library service, whence 90% of the villages are provided with exchanged stocks sent to some 75 county branches, usually in schools, whence they are loaned free of charge. This seems to be one of the best country services in Germany, though the movement is making slow progress elsewhere.

The scholarly libraries have developed a very fine nation-wide system of co-operation in which some of the public libraries are participating.

Though the Nazis ordered that all popular libraries should be taken over by the local authorities it is not certain that this was always done. At present most *are* provided by local authorities, but, particularly in catholic parts of the country, parish libraries are to be found which sometimes receive support from public funds. In addition some factories provide libraries which occasionally have almost the character of public libraries (e.g. at the Krupps works at Essen) and there are trade union libraries. In some states no aid is given; in some it amounts to one-third of local support.

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is a federation of 22 cantons (3 of them subdivided into half cantons) which are autonomous states excepting in relation to national defence, foreign policy, transport and communications—railways, post, telegraph, etc. The federal constitution stipulates that the cantons have to provide for an adequate school education for the whole population without distinction of language, race, or religion, but they can do so according to their own ideas and conditions and can do

as much as they like in other educational and cultural fields. The independence of the cantons, combined with the fact that four different cultures—German, French, Italian, and Romanche—meet in the relatively small territory, and the dominance of two principal creeds (with 57·6% Protestants and 40·4% Roman Catholics), have exercised a potent influence upon library development. Indeed, it would be more accurate to say that the independent outlook of the people, who have valued highly the right to order their own lives as they thought fit with a minimum of interference and standardization, has produced a highly varied, complex pattern of library service which almost defies description.

Libraries for the use of the public—adults and children—have long existed. By 1868 there were some 2,000 libraries containing 2½ million volumes, equal to about 94 volumes per 100 inhabitants—a record which was surely not approached anywhere else so early in the history of the movement. By 1911 there were 5,800 libraries of all types with 9½ million volumes. Complete statistics of present-day provision are not available, but it is manifest that the country is well provided with books. Whether these might be used to a greater advantage, with more general distribution and standards, were the libraries less diverse and more closely inter-related, is another matter—and it is probably an academic question, for few factors are more difficult to overcome than well-established traditions and a highly individualistic outlook.

The Association of Swiss Librarians has subdivided the more important libraries which have a public character into four categories—though it must be admitted that there is much overlapping of function:

Category I—*Research libraries*—embraces the National Library in Berne, which lends non-fiction to the whole country, the Library of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, and six university libraries, which besides functioning as such are either state (cantonal) libraries or municipal libraries (Berne) or both (Zürich). In 1953 these spent nearly 4 million Sw. fr. (£328,000) and issued 752,000 volumes.

Category II—*Popular—public libraries*. The exact number of such libraries can only be estimated at about 1,320 active institutions. The statistics published by the Swiss Library Association include only the outstanding—the Freie Städtische Bibliothek in Basle, the Berner Volksbücherei, and three Schweizerische Volksbibliotheken in Berne, the Bibliothèques Municipales in Geneva and in Lausanne, and the Bibliothek der Pestalozzigesellschaft in Zürich.

Category III—*Specialized libraries*—and

Category IV—*Public Libraries*—of which 22 are included in the Swiss Library Association List. These are probably more akin than most others to the public libraries of Great Britain, but they are not the same. They are cantonal and municipal libraries, and are the repositories for all publications concerning the canton or the municipality, enjoying to a considerable extent voluntary deposit from publishers and printers in their areas. Otherwise, they vary considerably in scope and emphasis. Some have valuable collections of manuscripts and early printed books, and house the local archives; they usually serve primarily as research libraries for the use of professional people, teachers, and students, but some cater also for the general reader and do work similar to that of the libraries in Category II.

The authorities providing these libraries are equally varied. Of the 44 libraries mentioned in the Association's statistics, two are provided by the federal state, some by cantonal or municipal authorities (in some cases by both jointly), others are provided by independent bodies, with, as a rule, grants from cantons or municipalities. Use of all the libraries is open to all, but nearly all the libraries in Categories II and IV make a charge for loans, though the Bibliothèques Municipales in Geneva and Lausanne make no charge. These two, and the children's libraries in La Chaux de Fonds, Montreux, and Neuchâtel, are the only libraries giving open access to readers.

How many smaller libraries there are operating in the country districts it is impossible to estimate; 1,740 civil and military libraries and centres in 1953 received loan collections from Bibliothèque pour Tous. This organization, founded in 1920, plays a very important part in the dissemination of books throughout the country. From its central depot in Berne and its 7 regional depots (in Bellinzona, Berne, Coire, Fribourg, Lausanne, Lucerne, and Zürich) boxes of from 10 to 100 books are sent to any library, school, industrial plant, factory, or authority (and to military establishments) which apply for them, either to supplement their own resources or as an independent collection. Loans are also made to groups of readers and (from the central depot) by post to individuals. A small fee is charged but this represents only a small part (about 20%) of the cost of the service. The Confederation makes a grant of 120,000 fr. (£9,800), equal to over 38% of the current income; the cantons contribute some 80,000 fr. (£6,600); certain communes give a total of 9,763 fr.; societies and foundations 18,890 fr.; and

industrial and commercial undertakings, etc., 9,403 fr. The total current income is 313,720 fr. (£25,770).

In 1953 no fewer than 4,847 boxes containing 148,460 volumes were lent to civilians, and 202 boxes containing 9,700 volumes to military stations, a total of 5,049 boxes with 158,160 volumes. As each book was borrowed an average of three times—apart from extensive inter-lending between neighbours—this represents an annual issue of about 474,000 books, but in addition 7,709 volumes were lent by the central depot to 1,157 individual borrowers. Of the books included in the boxes 99,354 were in German, 46,275 in French, and 12,297 in Italian, the remainder being in Romanche and English. The total stock of books available was 216,302, and 105,000 fr. were spent in 1953 on buying books and binding.

There is much co-operation between libraries which lend to one another. At the National Library at Berne a union catalogue is maintained, though the popular libraries do not participate excepting that all the non-fiction holdings of the Bibliothèque pour Tous are included. The last mentioned organization edits an annotated list of recently published books suitable for the smaller popular libraries; this list is published by the Swiss Library Association.

This Association, founded in 1897, is concerned with the development of libraries of all categories, with professional education, and with bibliographical activities and co-operation. It had, in 1954, 320 individual and 54 institutional members.

ITALY

Just as in France the private and monastic libraries confiscated in 1791 became vested in the communes, as we have seen, so in Italy when the dissolution of the monasteries took place less than a century ago these libraries were placed in the hands of the towns where, often, old-established municipal libraries existed. 'Thus', says Mr Robert F. Ashby in *The Library Association Record*, December 1954, 'many a little city has its library with centuries of tradition, containing rare works, including incunabula and manuscripts. Emphasis is naturally on conservation rather than public use, and the student, in the narrower sense of that term, is the reader catered for. Towns without old-founded libraries may have a library of the Athenaeum or Literary Institute type. These inevitably echo the policy of their more fortunate neighbours.'

On the whole Italy is very rich in libraries of learning. The Italian State Library Department itself administers 32 'public libraries', including national and university libraries, though it only expends upon them all, for books, binding, stationery, maintenance, etc., the sum of about £147,000. But none of these cater for the ordinary man.

In an article contributed to *Popular Libraries of the World*, edited by Arthur E. Bostwick, American Library Association, 1933, Carmela Mòllica says: 'The idea of libraries "for all" has no venerable tradition in any nation, much less could it have such a tradition in Italy and in other Latin countries in which "culture" has always meant culture for a favored few. Not only the masses of the population, but also other classes of citizens, were excluded in fact, if not in theory, from the active use of Italy's many, old, and extremely rich libraries. And so when the modern and fruitful idea of bringing all ranks of the people into touch with books began to make progress, it found in Italy an enviable variety of libraries and in them a service already established and free to whosoever desired to use it. These libraries were public—yes—but not made for every "public". They were owned and operated either by the towns, which were of very ancient foundation, or by the state itself, which had inherited them from a group of small Italian states when it emerged free and united in 1870. There was, then, a fertile and well-tilled soil in which to sow the seed of a new plant.'

But it would seem that the seed was not the right kind of seed and the plants were not properly tended and nourished. The state and the municipalities did not accept responsibility, so the task was undertaken by a variety of independent organizations.

'At first', says Mòllica, 'these popular libraries seemed destined to a rather rapid growth; then they became stationary; and, later, save in a few more favored and more cultured centers, they either disappeared or vegetated obscurely, reducing almost to nothing their hoped-for usefulness.'

Details of several of these promoting organizations are given. Most were local or regional in scope—such as the Guild of Popular Libraries of Milan, the Association of Popular Libraries of Bologna, and similar associations in Turin, Genoa, Rome, etc.

'In these active institutions there was an entire lack of that co-ordination and unity of type which would have assured their continued existence', and the funds at their disposal were grossly inadequate. Attempts to co-ordinate their efforts were made from time to time but lapsed for political and other reasons. For example, an Italian

Federation of Public Libraries, which was founded originally in 1908, made much headway in reorganizing the old communal libraries, some 2,500 of which were associated with the Federation in 1920. But the Federation fell upon evil days—and so did many of the libraries. In 1948, however, the famous Societa Umanitaria of Milan, a liberal organization concerned in promoting the general education and cultural status of the people, was instrumental in resuscitating the Federation as the Unione della Bibliotheca Populare. This is now playing an active part in securing interest and helping local libraries, and has gained some help from a department of the Ministry of Education. Library provision is also being urged by the National Union for the Combating of Illiteracy, which maintains community centres in the south of Italy and in Sardinia.

Detailed facts and figures have not been obtainable but the present position seems to be that there are in Italy about 1,000 public libraries of a 'popular' character, of which about 250 only are administered by local authorities, though most of the remainder, which are provided by societies of one sort and another, get some small help from public funds.

In these 1,000 libraries there are about 2,000,000 books; there are only about 100,000 borrowers. In a recent article in *Parola* it is stated that of 7,751 communes and 18,000 hamlets less than 300 have municipal libraries, while the school, popular, and parish libraries are chronically short of funds. There is no efficient system of inter-library loan. State grants to these libraries from the State Library Department amount to a mere £7,000 a year; in addition the Ministry of Education grants £120,000 to provide small collections of 100–150 volumes in schools for adult illiterates. The staffs of these 'popular' libraries are teachers of primary schools, or other part-time, usually unpaid, and seldom even partially trained workers. Open access is most unusual; so is any attempt at systematic classification. Technical methods are primitive and clumsy. Hours of opening are very, very limited. Most libraries charge fees for borrowing.

Hope for the future lies partly in the efforts of Umanitaria and similar organizations, in the building up of the Unione della Bibliotheca Populare into a united progressive society able both itself to appreciate the true character of a genuine public library service and to project that conception into society at large, and in an extension of the work of the better existing city libraries into the field of general library provision. This last process has only just begun but, for example, the trail is being blazed at Cremona, where the State-City library is reaching out

into the countryside with service to village centres and youth clubs, and where a children's library (a *very* exceptional feature in Italy) has been provided and some measure of open access afforded.

The central library, which is equipped with modern fittings, has a reading-room, a reference department, and a popular section open freely and without formality to all citizens on presentation of their identity cards. Books are lent for home reading free of charge, and each year some 50,000 people visit the library and read, consult, or borrow 200,000 volumes.

Much more typical, however, is the system of popular communal libraries in Rome, which is supported by the Commune and the Ministry of Public Education. There are 23 of these libraries in different parts of the city, each with about 4,000 volumes and open only for about two sessions each of two hours each week. There is a full-time librarian in charge of the whole system, with clerical and manual assistance and part-time assistants at the libraries. Only about £500–£600 a year is spent on books.

A British librarian who has recently had the opportunity to study public library provision in Italy and to discuss their problems with many Italian library workers gives me the following general impressions:

He agrees with the writer I have already quoted that there is still a great cleavage between the educated and the uneducated—a sharp distinction between the cultured 'intellectual aristocracy' and the mass of the people. He goes so far as to say that learning tends to be regarded as the monopoly of a relatively limited part of society. On the other hand, probably as the result of this deep-rooted tradition with all the denials of opportunity which it implies, the ordinary man does not appear to be much interested in books and reading. The Italian is gregarious. He prefers to talk rather than to read, to go out rather than stay at home. The word 'leisure' has no exact Italian equivalent; hence such concepts as 'reading as a leisure-time activity' would be incomprehensible to most, and indulgence in it would probably be considered eccentric. Such reading as he does indulge in is mostly of newspapers, which are almost all the organs of political and other propagandist parties.

This cleavage is also represented in the state of library provision. There are many scholarly libraries and they are mostly open to any member of the public who can produce the right credentials. They are on the whole more readily accessible to the serious reader than are

many similar libraries in our own country. But they are not used by the ordinary people, and it is doubtful if they would be welcomed there.

In this cleavage he sees a grave danger. After two disastrous wars and twenty-one years of Fascism, modern Italy is in a social, political, and economic quandary from which she is still seeking a way out. Inevitably the drastic solutions of the extreme Right and the extreme Left recommend themselves to many. Between these two extremes there is nevertheless a strong and active body of liberal, humanitarian opinion. It is those in this group who realize that only by the strenuous promotion of education and through the influence of books and of libraries generally, freely and easily available, can social improvement, a democratic way of life, and economic and political stability be secured. The task is, therefore, one of extreme urgency in which public libraries could, if given support, play a vital part.

YUGOSLAVIA

The forerunners of the public library movement in each of the countries which now form Yugoslavia were the reading-rooms set up by educational and cultural associations during the nineteenth century. In Serbia, for example, the first of these was founded in Beograd in 1846, in Croatia at Zagreb and elsewhere in 1838, in Slovenia at Ljubljana in 1861, in Macedonia at Prilep in 1867. At the turn of the century this movement was intensified. In Serbia, for example, the Cultural League, in the years following 1895, established some 200 libraries in towns and villages, and in Croatia the Croatian Writers' Association formed a special Board for Organization of Public Libraries. But these philanthropic institutions, lacking assured funds, premises, or staffs, soon languished—and wars had their full effect. Thus, by 1941 there were few active libraries. With the liberation of 1945, however, libraries began to develop rapidly. 'They sprang up spontaneously', says the writer of a pamphlet on *Yugoslav Libraries*, published by the Federation of Library Associations of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, 'as a result of the wish for reading and education among the broad masses of people who in new Yugoslavia entered public life. They were founded by people's committees in towns, villages, and counties and by various associations and organizations. . . . It may be said that the increase in public libraries after the war has been too rapid. Frequently they were simply founded, and since then insufficient care

has been taken in respect of their maintenance and proper functioning. There have been cases, especially in the country, where no provisions were made for the necessary accommodation or for sufficient funds, nor was there a staff with qualifications and abilities adequate for maintaining a library. For these reasons many libraries in the villages have ceased to exist.'

Nevertheless there are now 1,626 public libraries and 1,683 trade union libraries in Serbia, 1,237 libraries in Croatia, 664 in Slovenia, 924 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 95 in Macedonia, and 600 in Montenegro, a total of 6,829—which is, of course, far, far too many independent libraries for a country with a total population of only $15\frac{3}{4}$ millions. Amalgamation and co-ordination is manifestly needed and, indeed, a library law permitting and encouraging each state to bring this about is being sought.

Support appears to come mainly from the local authorities, though some are looked after by educational associations which, however, get aid from local funds. I am unable to give any financial data. The trade union libraries are supported by their members, though it appears that often they are open to all. The public libraries are generally available; some make no charge but others levy subscriptions and fees (e.g. in Slovenia the fee is equivalent to 3% of the purchase price of the books borrowed). Open access is seldom given excepting in a few small libraries in Serbia and Slovenia and occasionally in children's departments. There is no organized co-operation, but the librarians of the larger libraries help and advise those in smaller places and sometimes lend books, as do some of the special libraries. Most of the librarians in the smaller libraries are untrained and usually unpaid, but the larger libraries employ trained librarians, and facilities for professional education are being developed. Salaries are fixed by the state and are generally slightly less than those for teachers with similar educational qualifications.

Each republic has its own library association; all are united in a Federation which is displaying keen, realistic interest in the problems of library development. Thus one feels that out of the present widespread but unorganized and inadequately financed provision a sound system may emerge. But before this can happen larger combinations of service points must somehow be secured, modern methods must be accepted, and the activities of the trade unions and associations and of the local authorities must be brought together.

As I make this last remark I have in mind three libraries in Zagreb—

which I always think of as a city of bookshops just as I think of Copenhagen as a city of flowershops. Here I have seen a trade union library where people queued up before a large counter behind which was a good, large, book stock to which readers could just as easily have been given free access; a municipal library with an excellent reading-room-reference library, and an extensive lending department, to which readers were again denied access, having to choose their books from displays and catalogues, and a busy children's library, where the limited opportunity to handle books was eagerly accepted; and a tiny little children's library, run by a society, quite independent from the municipal library—that could have given valuable help—which though only just established had adopted methods that elsewhere had been abandoned fifty years ago. One felt sad that so much effort, such potentially useful resources, and such genuine enthusiasm were going to be wasted because all those who were trying to do the same job could not 'get together'.

U.S.S.R.

I believe that one of the greatest hindrances to East-West understanding is the virtual impossibility of getting any reliable information, in either direction, about conditions and institutions. I have always, both because of my personal inclinations and because I regard it as essential that the public librarian must stand apart from all controversial matters, including religion and politics, viewed the latter with suspicion and something akin to fear. I have found too often that when a man once views any matter in the light of his political convictions he loses his sense of proportion, his powers of judgment, and his desire to treat evidence objectively. When the time comes—as it did long ago in this instance—that everything relating to a nation is by nearly everybody always viewed from the political angle, the truth becomes gravely obscured. When one side is always seeking to demonstrate *how much* it does and the other side desirous of minimizing achievement or imputing motives, the facts of the case become difficult to find, and hard to assess on any comparative basis.

Thus, when I attempt to describe the public library system of Russia, I have to confess that my chapter is based upon incomplete, often partisan, sometimes 'suspect' evidence. I can only apologize, stating that it is gathered from the following sources: an article in *Popular*

Libraries of the World, written in 1933 by Miss Jessica Smith, editor of *The Soviet Union Review*, and an account of his travels in Russia contributed to the Library Association's *A Survey of Libraries . . . made . . . during 1936–37* by Mr H. M. Cashmore, a British librarian whom I know well as a man of undoubted integrity. Both of these surveys are considerably out of date, but disclose the general pattern of provision. For more recent data I have, *inter alia*, studied an article in *The Library Association Record* of July 1953 by Mrs Joan Firth, another account in the Unesco *Bulletin for Libraries*, May–June 1954, and certain extracts from Russian sources provided for me from an authoritative collaborator.

There was little in Russia before the Revolution that could be described as a public library service; there were the large city and private collections, subscription libraries for the more wealthy, and some free public libraries consisting mainly of religious books, 'patriotic histories', and fiction, and subject to rigid censorship and many restrictions. In 1920 the library system was brought under the control of the Commissariats for Education of the various republics, and central library commissions were organized under these. From the outset it is evident that great importance was attached to library development. Lenin's wife, N. Krupskaia, was made responsible for this work. At that time between 80% and 90% of the population were illiterate and, apart from any political objectives, libraries had an essential role in the campaign for literacy and in disseminating the information needed for economic development. The library system had a definite place in the planning programme.

Miss Smith describes the libraries in the U.S.S.R. as coming under one of three main types. 'First, there are the town public libraries which are divided into central regional libraries, district (county) libraries, and city branch libraries, all . . . under the direct supervision of the Commissariats for Education' and financed by the state. 'The central and county public libraries direct the work of the lower library units. Second, the libraries organized by the trade unions in factories and workers' clubs, and special libraries for engineers and technicians', and financed by the trade unions and factories. 'Third, the libraries connected with schools and educational institutions, which in many cases serve the outside population to a certain extent as well.'

The central libraries provided reading-rooms and children's departments, had travelling libraries (i.e. presumably book boxes) to serve readers in factories, communal apartments, villages, and fields; an

information department, and an organization and supply department for directing and supplying the subsidiaries. The central libraries, she says, may be either closed-shelf or open-shelf. Cashmore said that 'open access is very rare', and goes on to remark that 'records of readers and reading are much more elaborate than I have ever seen elsewhere'—a point to which I shall return.

Miss Smith notes that 'while the emphasis is on scientific, technical, and political literature, *belles-lettres* constitute 28·7 per cent of all books'. She notes that in 1930–1 there were 27,312 libraries in the U.S.S.R. with 11,600,000 readers, and that by 1933 the number of libraries had increased to 34,338.

I do not know whether the above figures include the 'thousands of independent library units, which have grown up in all places where numbers of people are gathered together for living or working. Parks, lobbies of motion-picture houses, railroad stations, co-operative restaurants, apartment houses, frequently have regular libraries or reading-rooms', she says. And Cashmore, noting these, adds: 'Many of these are quite separate from the Library Boards' activities'.

Cashmore describes a visit to the 'Base of the Mass Libraries' in Leningrad, which served a centre for 79 'mass' libraries in the Leningrad district, which together had 450 staff who visited the Base regularly for tuition, consultation, and guidance. It gave assistance in book selection, organized specimen exhibitions, and issued book lists. 'From the Base I went to the poor district round the October Railway Station to see a specimen "mass library". . . . It was housed in a big building used for many purposes . . . had a stock of about 25,000 volumes, issued about 11,000 volumes a month. The assistants were emphatic that their chief duty was to encourage "self-instruction", and in helping readers they were helped by careful records (such as are kept in all "mass" libraries) of the "educational state" of the borrower, lists of what books he has read or wishes to read, notes of subjects in which he is specially interested from time to time, and even diaries of his reading. . . . There was no open access to the ordinary stock of books.'

To come to more recent accounts: Mrs Firth, describing the County Library System in the U.S.S.R., says that 'in every city or regional library, the latter being the corresponding term for our county library, a special administration section is provided to deal with postal loans to readers in extremely isolated areas. . . . Boxes containing fifty to two thousand books are distributed to rural areas . . . and the work is handled by the District Libraries. . . . Boxes of books may be requested

almost any group of people who have no access to library facilities reading-room communities, village Soviets, collective farms, stories, and construction sites in new development areas . . . coal and oil fields and timber-felling camps.

'The Kalinovsky district of the Polessyl Region', she continues, 'is a typical European Russian agricultural district, and in 1950 it had fifty-four centres of population, ranging from one to five thousand inhabitants. The library facilities consisted of three village libraries, fourteen collective farm libraries, and thirteen village reading-rooms, leaving seventy-four villages with no provision.'

Bookmobiles are a post-war innovation, first introduced in 1947 in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, which had 65 vehicles in 1950, with an average of 1,650 readers per van and an issue of 16,600 books per year. Apparently the other Republics are not yet using bookmobiles.

The Unesco *Bulletin* summary makes no reference to the central or district or city public libraries, and contents itself with some generalizations about the rural libraries, but notes that in 1949 there were 4,911 trade union libraries with 30 million volumes. Mr Edward Dudley, in an unpublished essay accepted by the Library Association on 'Libraries in the U.S.S.R.' (May 1953), says there are '9,000 of them with a total book stock of over 50,000,000 volumes'. As conditions are unlikely to have changed to that extent one or other of these estimates is seriously inaccurate—which is only too typical of 'information' regarding Russia. Dudley points out that the trade union and factory libraries are not 'mechanics' institutes' but 'properly constituted library services with a planned economy and, in the larger libraries, with professional staff. . . . The extent of the service in some of the largest factory libraries is surprising'. For example, the library service of the large Zis Auto Plant in Moscow comprises '12 branch libraries at various shops, each headed by a full-time paid librarian. In addition there is a separate branch at Kolomenskoye, the auto-workers' town, and also three "perambulating" branches which maintain a regular book distribution service for workers' dormitories and apartment houses'. In addition there are at the plant a branch of the All-Union State Foreign Literature Library, a branch of the Lenin Library, and a children's library with 3,500 registered readers (maintained by the trade union). The management of the plant also maintains a technical library, although much technical literature is also available in the trade union library. Another observer says of trade union libraries that 'in the main

their purpose is to supply the worker with pamphlets and text-books on technical subjects, thereby increasing his all-round efficiency and standard of work'.

What the overall extent of public library services is one can only guess. Dudley, referring to the great destruction of books and libraries during the war and the large-scale post-war reconstruction says, 'It has been estimated that whereas in 1940 there were 250,000 libraries [of all types] with 500,000,000 volumes, in 1950 there were 300,000 with 600,000,000 volumes'. These figures presumably embrace the smallest rural centres as well as the great institutions such as the Lenin Library at Moscow and the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library at Leningrad, which, though more akin to our British Museum than to any other type and do not lend, excepting duplicates, are nevertheless part of the national public library service.

Doubtless these libraries differ considerably not only in size but in physical conditions and equipment. One could hardly expect a high proportion of good modern buildings when one considers that in the early years there was, to quote Cashmore, 'enormous growth in recent years [which] has of necessity been hurried and rather crude'. Then followed the destruction of the war years and again hurried and probably often no less crude reconstruction.

So one must not attach undue importance to such criticisms as that in a *Pravda* leader of 23 November 1953 devoted to the shortcomings in the organization of cultural work in the countryside, as in the Vologda Province, where club premises and reading-rooms are cold and dirty and glass is missing from the windows. And though one may smile at the matter-of-fact Decree of the Committee for the Affairs of Cultural-Educational Institutions (of the R.S.F.S.R.), issued on 6 May 1947, one might find much less well-equipped rural libraries within our own shores:

'The minimum requirements for a District Library are several rows of shelves, an issuing counter, three glass display cases, a notice-board, a catalogue, a file for readers' membership cards, a cupboard for library repair equipment, a desk, tables and chairs, desk and overhead lamps, a clock, and a telephone. It should be housed in not less than three rooms.'

On rural libraries, which are expected to serve more remote communities, the Decree makes the following ruling:

'A Rural Library must be fully equipped from a cultural aspect. Portraits of the Party and Governmental leaders must be prominently

displayed. Pictures of Soviet writers and scientists, atlases, placards, and slogans of the day must also be on show in the library.'

The Decree indicates that a rural library usually consists of a single-roomed cabin (*isba*) or else a room in the village community centre.

An interesting sidelight on the working of these libraries is provided in a similar Decree dated 30 May 1947. This lays down the rules which are to apply in popular libraries, of which the following are the most important:

(1) To borrow books for home reading and for regular use of reading-rooms in City and District Library Centres an internal passport valid for permanent residence in the district must be produced.

(2) Soviet citizens wishing to use a library in a district in which they are not permanently resident are obliged to pay a 30 rouble deposit.

(3) A reader may borrow *three* books—one on the arts, two on the sciences—for a period not exceeding 10 days.

(4) If a reader keeps his books beyond the prescribed period a note is sent to him. If, after this, the books are not returned, a book collector is sent to the reader. The defaulting borrower is then fined 3 roubles.

(5) In case of a book suffering loss or damage the reader responsible is obliged to replace it by an identical copy, or, failing that, to pay a fine up to ten times the cost of the book.

It is the normal practice in Soviet reading-rooms to sign a library card before being allowed to read a newspaper or periodical. An interesting criticism of this system is made in a reader's letter published in the magazine *Bibliotekar* (No. 7, 1954):

'These formalities of form-filling are often the reason why many citizens never go near reading-rooms. For example, even readers who take books home scarcely visit them because they know they will be required to fill in a form and sign a receipt for every copy of a magazine they wish to read. Moreover, because of this system queues are sometimes to be found by the issuing counter and this causes great inconvenience to the reader.'

What one might well criticize, however, is the admitted propagandist objective of the whole service. I do not for one moment believe that most of the people who use these libraries use them chiefly for political 'inspiration', because in my opinion most normal human beings—Russians as well as others—surely sooner or later find political propaganda boring and fruitless in the extreme. I am convinced therefore that, apart from any borrowing which may be desirable in order to maintain a suitable show of interest in such matters, most Russians,

like most Englishmen, prefer to read about practical things that concern them, about the world of the past and the present and the deeds and thoughts of people, and enjoy good stories. Nevertheless this purposive basis persists.

In Volume 5 of the new large edition of the Soviet Encyclopaedia it is said that 'in the U.S.S.R. a library as a cultural foundation assists the reader towards developing a dialectical-materialist outlook and a mastery of scientific knowledge, while contributing to the preparation of cadres for the building of a socialist society'.

Further evidence of the official Soviet attitude towards libraries is contained in the directive issued to librarians at the All-Russian Conference of Library Workers held in March 1949. Librarians were told that their main task was 'the unswerving fulfilment of the historical decisions of the Bolshevik Party on ideological questions. All work in libraries must be subordinated to the problem of Communist education of the toilers'. (*Bibliotekar*, No. 4, 1951.)

In other words the library is intended to serve the dictates of the Party and to assist in the imposing of Communist beliefs and ideology upon the minds of the people.

This doctrine affects all aspects of library provision. For example, though, according to one of the May 1947 public library decrees issued by the R.S.F.S.R., Republic, Oblast, and Krai libraries are expected to 'supply scientific bodies, party organizations, economic organizations, and other specialists with books, reading lists, and scientific information', and though they may buy books from bookshops, literary organizations, and private individuals, and exchange surplus copies with other libraries, they are also compelled to include copies of publications paid for and issued by the R.S.F.S.R. press.

And the Western concept of a catalogue as an index of all the books in a library was long ago denounced by the Soviet authorities as 'narrow-minded formalism'. Instead, the Communist Party has evolved its own peculiar definition of library cataloguing, the general principles of which are contained in an address delivered by S. Ambartsumian on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Moscow State Library Institute in 1951:

'It is necessary to follow certain principles in selecting the publications to be incorporated in the catalogue, if its ideological-political level is to be maintained. By making accessible the most important and valuable material the reading is directed. Systematical arrangement and cataloguing is subordinated to the aim of maximum usefulness and

ideological conformity. It is the duty of the librarian to include in the catalogues only such publications as contribute to a higher ideological level of the workers, serve scholarly research and the vocational interests of the majority of the readers. The overwhelming majority of the readers does not require books that have lost their value as research help or are only historical documents of their times. To include these materials in the catalogue would be contradictory to the aim of book propaganda and of directed reading. . . . It would, however, be purposeless to remove all the publications from the collections whenever they lose their value for the reading majority; they might occasionally serve the highly qualified specialist, for example. . . . It might also be necessary for the librarian to consult such books to answer reference questions. This means that in addition to the main catalogue for the reader, an informative catalogue limited to official reference use in answering special readers' inquiries will be necessary.'

To obtain such ideological conformity in the catalogue Ambartsumian makes the following recommendations:

'Of pre-revolutionary publications, only classical works and books of factual information should be included in the public catalogue. The works of representatives of reactionary tendencies in science and literature shall, however, not be represented. Examples are philosophers Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Berdyaev, mystical and religious writings, or obsolete popular publications. Foreign publications should be represented in Soviet editions.'

The speaker also discloses a widely used method by which approved literature is virtually thrust upon the Soviet reader:

'A method which assists the use of the most valuable library holdings is the repeated inclusion of important works in different sections of the systematic catalogue. . . . Classification for the public catalogue demands a wide duplication of descriptions. Hence the book "J. V. Stalin—a short biography" must be included not only in the section "Stalin—life and activity", but also in "History of the All-Union Communist Party", "Marxism-Leninism", "History of the U.S.S.R.", etc.'

Children's departments are to be found in most major city and town libraries, but a network of semi-independent children's libraries exists throughout the Soviet Union. A pamphlet entitled *On the Work of a School Library*, issued by the Ministry of Education of the R.S.F.S.R., expresses the following opinion on the work of such libraries in the schools:

'Our children want to know as much as possible about the lives and activities of the great leaders Lenin and Stalin. And a school librarian must have in the library all recommended books, pamphlets, sketches, articles, and memoirs dealing with this subject. Great attention should also be paid by the school librarian to popularizing among children works on the Great Fatherland War, the development of a people's economy, the post-war Stalin Five-Year Plan, and all books depicting the vitality and heroism of the Soviet people.'

Dudley describes the position of the Russian librarian in the following passage:

'The purpose of the Public Library in contemporary society is, and has long been, a subject for discussion among librarians. In our time, growing mastery over technique and the tremendous increase in the library-using public, have led many librarians to ask: "What is the library for?" Not unnaturally this is seldom asked by librarians whose function and purpose are clearly defined by the bodies they serve, e.g. an industrial enterprise, a research institution, or a newspaper. But for most public librarians the question recurs. Answers are many and often negative: some are based on the typically English pragmatism of "do the job properly and the purpose will declare itself", whilst others regard the erection of a "philosophy" of librarianship as empty theorizing. Attempts to rationalize on the basis of public library history and present practice have so far proved unsuccessful. But perhaps the clearest statement of the dilemma has been made by a leading American librarian, Jesse H. Shera, who concludes a book on the history of the early public libraries of his country with the following words: "... the objectives of the public library are directly dependent upon the objectives of society itself. The true frame of reference for the library is to be found in its coeval culture. No librarian can see clearly the ends which he should seek when his country is confused about the direction in which it is moving. When a people are certain of the goals toward which they strive, the functions of the public library can be precisely defined". The objective of this brief analysis is to show that such a position does not exist in the U.S.S.R. for, by almost any definition, Soviet society is a "purposive" society and therefore the book and the library are not incidental but organic parts of social life. This must be held true whether we deplore or approve the direction in which Soviet society is moving. One writer has stated that "... ideological and philosophical discussions of the meaning of librarianship are few. The party is assumed to have given full answers to such questions".

'The point is also made by another writer, Nathalie P. Delongaz, thus: "... political conditions are a major factor in the organization and work of libraries in Russia. The fact explains the conspicuous absence of material on the 'philosophy' of librarianship as we understand it in this country, for it is taken for granted that the library, as an institution of learning, is of necessity a strong political instrument".'

[5]

The Dominions

AUSTRALIA

LIBRARY SERVICES WERE established very early in the history of the Australian colonies, and were of two main types. On the one hand in each of the states a state public library was founded (in Victoria in 1856, New South Wales in 1869, Tasmania, 1870, South Australia, 1884, Western Australia, 1887, and Queensland, 1896); these have played and increasingly play a very important part in the cultural and economic life of the Commonwealth. On the other hand the settlers who found a need for books greater surely than they had known in the home country, brought with them not the idea of the public library, which was not then a well-developed institution in Great Britain, but that of the subscription library and of the mechanics' institute. As a result a great number of such libraries were established, and for several decades flourished and proved valuable and effective. But, as in Great Britain and in the United States, as conditions changed public support diminished, income became insufficient to maintain them as anything other than inadequate purveyors of popular material, used by a minority of the residents, incapable of giving real public library service. The official *Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1954, aptly describes them as 'outmoded'. Unfortunately, just as bad currency drives out good, these outmoded institutions delayed—and in some parts of Australia still delay—the development of better library services.

Nevertheless great—if unequal—progress has been made during the last decade or so, largely as the result of recent state library legislation, the work of state library boards, and of the Australian Institute of Libraries (now the Library Association of Australia). In each of the six states the task has been different, the methods of promotion and the rate of progress have varied.

Apart from the parliamentary libraries, the National Library, and university, college, and special libraries, the supply of books for public use is undertaken by four main categories of library:

(*a*) The aforementioned state libraries, in the capital cities, the main

purposes of which are to provide a central reference library—for the use of advanced students and research workers and those concerned with administration, commerce, and industry—and to collect and preserve the records and literature of the state. As will be seen, however, they all, in different ways, provide supplementary services, often extra-mural, such as metropolitan lending libraries, loans in bulk to institutions throughout the state, and to meet individual needs, and the like. On the whole they have tried to do what little was possible to ameliorate the disadvantages arising from the absence of a good local public library system.

(*b*) Free public libraries—administered and provided by local authorities (now usually with state assistance) and giving a free service to the whole of their populations (excepting sometimes for rental collections of fiction).

(*c*) Subscription libraries—mechanics' institutes, 'schools of art', circulating libraries—sometimes receiving aid from local authorities and the state, which charge subscriptions or fees, though they may offer free reading-rooms, loans to children, and the like.

(*d*) Voluntary book distributing agencies.

The Australian library scene is thus of the greatest interest because there we can study a fourfold process—(*a*) the steady improvement of the existing public libraries, a few dating from before the era of state aid, the others of more recent establishment, with the encouragement of the state boards; (*b*) the gradual conversion, or superseding, of subscription into free services; (*c*) the promotion of the pioneer regional libraries, which must in time be developed if the limitations of provision by small and often widely distributed local libraries are to be overcome; and (*d*) the development and adjustment of the services given by the state agencies so that they supplement and do not duplicate the legitimate work of local libraries.

New South Wales

In 1935 Ralph Munn, Director of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburg, and Ernest R. Pitt, Chief Librarian, Public Library of Victoria, after a thorough survey of conditions throughout Australia, issued a report which, disclosing the general backwardness of library provisions, stimulated great interest and a keen desire for improvement, especially in New South Wales, where a band of enthusiasts formed the Free Library Movement, which was successful in inducing Parliament to

pass the Library Act of 1939 under which a State Library Board was set up—though it did not come into being, because of the war, until 1944. At the time of the Munn-Pitt report there were only 2 public libraries in the whole of the state; by mid 1952, 97 local authorities were operating library services and 116 had adopted the Act—17 of them being metropolitan authorities, 54 country municipalities, and 45 county shires. By April 1954 the number of adoptions had increased to 137, with 116 actually providing service to 1,766,000 out of the total population of some 3 million—a very remarkable achievement, especially when one considers that it has taken place in a mere ten years. A majority of these libraries are, of course, in their infancy but by June 1953 they possessed 853,000 volumes—about one book for every two persons in the areas served. In 1952, when the population served was somewhat less, there were 279,000 registered borrowers.

When the Act was first mooted there were many who doubted whether local authorities would be willing to expend money on public libraries, and prophesied that the experiment would be a failure, but time has proved them wrong. That this has been so must be largely attributed to the indefatigable work of members of the Free Library Movement and the senior officers of the Board, who toured the country advocating and interviewing members of local councils, so successfully that by December 1946 there were 60 adoptions. It should be noted that in a great many instances the new public libraries have been based upon the old mechanics' institutes. In 31 cases the trustees of schools of art[1] and mechanics' institutes have transferred their libraries, land, and premises to councils who will hold them on trust for library purposes, and in 14 other cases an arrangement has been made for the amalgamation of an institute with a municipal library.

Originally the Act provided that a minimum of 2*s*. per head of population should be expended. To this the state would contribute a maximum of 1*s*. and a minimum of 6*d*. according to the product of a minimum local rate. Since the year 1951–2, however, state grant has been on a more generous basis. Many authorities spend much more than the required minimum. Thus, according to the report of the Library Board for the year ended 30 June 1952, actual expenditure voted for 1952 totalled £366,699, and of this subsidy amounted to £116,186. Mr E. Seymour Shaw, in the *Australian Library Journal*, April 1954,

[1] The term 'school of art' is commonly used in Australia—why I cannot tell—to mean an institution exactly like a mechanics' institute—and which has nothing whatever to do with art or the teaching of art.

says that in 1953 councils spent out of rate income £263,448, which exceeded by £137,131 the minimum they were required by the Act to expend. He states further that 'the subsidy which councils will receive this year [1954] will amount to . . . £321,450'. Thus, authorities are steadily approaching the standard advocated by the Board of a minimum of 8*s*. per head, of which 4*s*. would be provided by the state.

The Library Board offers certain important central services. Since 1944 a central Book Purchasing Service has bought stock on behalf of those local libraries which wish to avail themselves of this help, i.e. in practice most metropolitan libraries, after establishment, have preferred to do their own buying, but most county libraries purchase at least some of their books through this department. The Board's Technical Officer makes regular inspections, which in reality means that he and his colleagues give local librarians every possible advice and assistance, especially in the organization of new services and the reorganization of old ones.

The Public Library has also, since 1939, maintained a library training school. Without this it is certain that the progress made would have been impossible, as no adequate libraries can be established and continue to operate efficiently without trained personnel. In 1952 two-thirds of the libraries, even in the smaller places, had trained librarians; altogether 159, out of a total staff of 268, were trained.

The Public Library has not—as in the case in other states—provided any metropolitan lending department, because for many years the City of Sydney has maintained a good central lending library, free to all residents and employees, with a stock in 1952 of 122,838, and 27,000 registered borrowers—much the best and largest municipal library in Australia.

For a good many years before the Library Board was founded the Public Library of New South Wales made bulk loans of books to local libraries from its country circulation department and supplied books to meet the needs of individual readers. This work continues, though, rightly, individual loans are, when appropriate, channelled through the reader's local library.

These bulk loans are not, however, so important a factor as those of, say, the New Zealand National Library Service, though in 1952, 586 boxes with some 43,000 volumes were sent to shire and municipal libraries and 'schools of art'. Local libraries depend very largely upon their own stock and resources, which are usually very meagre. The obvious remedy lies in 'regionalization', i.e. the provision of a joint

service, sharing stock and staff, for the municipalities and shires in appropriate areas. Four such schemes have already been started, one of these with the co-operation of the Library Service Board of Victoria, in which state part of the region lies.

Tasmania

Under the Libraries Act of 1943 the Tasmanian Library Board was constituted and the State Library Board of Tasmania was established on 1 January 1944. Again this was almost entirely due to the efforts of a handful of enthusiasts.

Tasmania has a population of about 316,000, living in an area of 26,215 square miles, and, apart from Hobart and Launceston, there is only one town with a population of over 10,000. Here, therefore, is a region in which effective state participation is not only desirable but practicable, and the opportunities are being taken, especially in two respects. First, the State Library Board has assumed responsibility for library service to the city of Hobart, maintaining as one institution the State Library and the municipal library for Hobart—a manifestly sensible arrangement. The city makes a contribution but it is much too small, with the unfair result that the citizens of Hobart are receiving a good public library service largely at the expense of the state as a whole.

Secondly, local authorities adopting the Act, providing free service and attaining specified minimum standards, may receive state grants equal to the amount raised by local rates. Of the 49 local authorities in the state, 34 had adopted the Act by 1954, and 7 other libraries had been provided with the support of the Hydro-electric Commission. What is most noteworthy, however, is that (with the exception of Launceston, which receives its grant in cash) state aid is given in the form of books —to the value of the grant earned—loaned to the local libraries and exchanged at intervals. Thus, the local rate pays for staffing, maintaining premises, and other overheads, and any money then remaining can be spent on books to supplement this state loan, and they stay at the library as static stock.

Undoubtedly, especially as all the libraries concerned are small, the readers get an immeasurably wider selection than would be the case if grant were paid in money spent on books which would soon cease to be useful, having been read by all who wanted to read them. Incidentally, this idea is being still further developed in Western Australia—see

later.[1] On 30 June 1953 over 41,000 books were on loan to municipalities (i.e. excluding Launceston and Hobart), and the total lending library issues (excluding those of books belonging to country municipalities but including Launceston and Hobart) are well over a million per annum. In addition books to meet special requests are lent from the State Library to over 1,000 individual borrowers, as well as films and gramophone records. There is a special service for children provided by the Lady Clark Fund, supplemented by state grants, which has branches in every municipality in the state.

Though many of the local libraries still lack adequate local support and are, to quote from the Board's report 'poor and weak and little credit to any library system' the overall picture is one of steady progress on sensible lines.

Victoria

A Library Service Board was appointed in 1940, and for some years small grants (totalling some £5,400 in 1944–5) were made to some 200 country institutes, and the State Library sent them boxes of books. It was not, however, until a new Act was passed and the Free Library Service Board came into existence that the development of genuine public library services began. This was not for want of example because, just as in Sydney the City of Sydney Public Library had for long shown how much a well-supported public library could achieve without inducing any of its neighbours to follow its example, so in Melbourne the cities of Prahran and South Melbourne had for a long time offered their citizens public library facilities which were well in advance of anything, excepting the City of Sydney, in Australia. Yet only one or two of the remaining 26 municipalities in greater Melbourne did anything about it. Thus, the only other public lending library in the city was that provided—and still provided—by the Public Library of Victoria; and though well used and efficient the fact remains that the appropriate municipality should have been doing this work, or at least shared the cost, as in the case of Hobart.

Since 1947, however, great progress has been made, because of the encouragement and assistance of the Free Library Service Board and its officers. By 1954, 56 municipalities, comprising 934,000 of the state's population of about 2,357,000, had public libraries, 15 being in Melbourne, serving 616,000 people, and 41 in the country, serving 318,000.

[1] See page 161.

To remove any misunderstanding let it be said that here—as in discussions of other Australian states, also—the term 'municipality' is used in its widest sense, meaning a local authority area *not* a town. For example, one 'municipality' in Victoria is a shire extending 12[illegible] from east to west.

The Act does not specify any basis of grant, but from the outset government promised to view its responsibilities generously, and has kept its promise. Grant has been on the general basis of £1 for each raised locally by rates, plus extra grants to rural communities with special difficulties and to help in the establishment of new [illegible]. Thus, towards a total expenditure in 1952–3 of £173,400, the state contributed £96,000. It is interesting to note that the average expenditure per head was higher in the country districts than in the city libraries. Altogether the public libraries of Victoria had 435,745 books in 1953 and an annual circulation of 2,794,000.

The two great problems yet to be faced can only be resolved by greater measure of co-operation between authorities. They are the problems of the multi-authority areas and of the sparsely populated country districts. As an example of the former, just as Melbourne itself is governed not by one but by many independent councils, so is the smaller town of Geelong, which thus has more than one local public library, though obviously one united system would be more efficient and more economical.

As to the latter problem, common to all Australia as to most territories in the world, in sparsely populated areas, with very small authorities each quite incapable of affording useful libraries, the answer is the development of regionalization, as has been started in New South Wales. The trouble is that regional schemes require the support of all the authorities involved, and lack of interest on the part of some can thwart the enthusiasm of the others. Nevertheless, such schemes are under active consideration. How great are the difficulties is illustrated by one suggested region wherein only 14,000 people reside, though it covers an area of 3,700 square miles; yet, with state aid, a very remarkable library system could result, as a penny rate would produce 3*s.* 3*d.* per head, which would be doubled with state grant.

There is a training school for librarians at the Public Library of Victoria, established in 1948, which is helping to provide qualified librarians for this fast extending service.

Queensland

Here there is a slightly different pattern, though ultimate objectives are the same. The Libraries Act of 1943 provides for the appointment of a State Library Board (which started work in 1945) giving it very wide powers. It may 'out of moneys voted by Parliament, provide such library services or book lending services in addition to the (State) Public Library as the Board . . . thinks fit'. It can, *inter alia*, make grants to any local body or affiliated society for library purposes; and any local authority may provide library service as a function of local government, and joint local authorities may be constituted.

The situation prior to 1945, however, was far from propitious. There were a great many mechanics' institutes and 'schools of art' giving very ineffective subscription services; there was the Bush Book Club, a voluntary organization sending boxes to outlying districts; there was not, I think, a single genuine free public library in the state; and the State Public Library in Brisbane, badly housed, ill-supported, under-staffed and under-stocked, did not provide any lending department. In brief, the Board had a very uphill field to plough, and are to be forgiven if they have adopted a process of gradual transformation, especially as their plans have met with promising results.

Subsidies are paid to the following bodies provided they operate library services to the satisfaction of the Board: local authorities, schools of art, the Queensland Country Women's Association, and the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. (the Australian 'British Legion').

Grants are subject to these provisos:

(*a*) that not more than one local body in any one area will be subsidized;

(*b*) the library must be open (but not necessarily freely open) to all members of the community.

During the year 1952–3 grants totalling £22,574 were paid to 93 authorities, which may receive 50% of the total amount spent on books and 50% of the cost of library accommodation and equipment, with an upper limit (for accommodation and equipment) of £2,000 to any one library. By 1953, 6 city, 5 town, and 14 shire councils were providing libraries, and 9 others were about to do so; in several cases they had taken over the schools of art. Of these, however, only 8 libraries gave a completely free service, though two or three others provided freely for the children, and one authority proposed to make the loan of non-fiction free. Otherwise subscriptions or fees were charged. Standards

vary, of course, though it is evident, from the average amount of grant earned respectively by local authority and school of art provided institutions, that the former were already much more active. To give but two examples: (*a*) Atherton Public Library, founded in 1950, serves a shire of 235 square miles, yet it has enrolled 34·5% of the population, and lent 8 books per head in 1952–3; (*b*) Rockhampton Municipal Library, also free, issued 7·7 volumes per head of total population, over 18% of whom are registered borrowers. These results, though they are often exceeded in other areas and countries, are immeasurably ahead of the work of the average subscription institution.

Local libraries are not entirely dependent upon their own resources, as the Country Extension Service now given by the State Public Library, which was taken over and reorganized by the Board, lent nearly 24,000 books to individuals living outside Greater Brisbane, and also lent books and supplied information to readers through their local libraries, and made bulk loans, exchangeable every six months, to some of the smaller municipal libraries. A small grant and loans of books were made to the Bush Book Club.

No regional schemes seem yet to be operating but the need is recognized.

South Australia

The situation in South Australia is much less satisfactory and less promising, because here the mechanics' institute movement is firmly entrenched and the government has adopted the policy, quite mistaken in my opinion, of making a substantial grant to the South Australian Institutes Association. From this organization bulk loans and gifts of books are made to some 250 affiliated institutes. Thus, there is no encouragement to local authorities to provide proper free libraries.

In Adelaide itself the only public library service is that given by the State Public Library, which is very efficient and well organized, with an excellent reference department and a research service which is giving valuable help, especially with regard to scientific and technical matters. The State Public Library provides a lending department for metropolitan readers, 11,000 of whom in the year 1952–3 borrowed 238,058 volumes. It also maintains a country lending service for individual adults and children, and for school groups, and in that same year sent 136,999 books to 3,721 adults and 3,955 children living throughout the state.

Especially when one notes the thoroughness and care with which the Board is carrying out these limited functions which have been entrusted to it, is it a matter for regret that it does not enjoy opportunities and resources comparable with those of the library boards of the four states already described.

Western Australia

Western Australia has been the last to appoint its Library Board, and so far little has been done except to propound a policy and build up the central administration. I said 'except' not meaning to suggest that more might have been done; on the contrary the Western Australian plans are so thorough, so eminently sensible and practical, that they deserve detailed consideration.

Until 1945 the only help given by the state was the dispatch of boxes of books from the State Library to about 80 road boards, or to friendly societies. In 1945 a small committee was appointed and given £1,000 to distribute to the subscription libraries run by local authorities, with a maximum of £50 each. There was only one public library in the state—in Fremantle—in 1952 when, probably realizing the futility of its previous efforts, the state appointed the Library Board, which shortly afterwards selected Mr F. A. Sharr, previously Deputy Librarian of Manchester and before that of Derbyshire County, as its Executive Officer and Secretary. The following is taken largely from an article which he contributed to the *Library Association Record* in September 1954.

He begins with a brief account of the geographical conditions, which must always have a vital influence upon any plans for library development. Indeed, it is very difficult for those who have spent all their lives in Great Britain or Western Europe to appreciate what a very different thing it is to provide libraries in, say, England or Denmark from providing them in most other parts of the world, where the people live in small communities separated perhaps by hundreds of miles from one another. For example, I myself spent several days visiting libraries in Western Australia in 1946–7, driving for hours between each, to discover on my return, on examining a map of the state, that I had explored only one tiny corner of its vast area.

'Australia', says Mr Sharr, 'is about the same size as the United States of America, and Western Australia comprises one-third of the continent; it is a sparsely populated tropical and sub-tropical country

as large as Western Europe, in which some 650,000 people live, half of them in the capital city of Perth and its suburbs. Over two-thirds of the local authorities serve populations of less than 2,500; 82 per cent less than 6,000. These authorities are in the main Road Boards, with areas varying considerably in size but on an average about the size of an English county. Obviously nothing effective could possibly be done on the basis of independent local libraries with static stocks—and the Board has found a radically different solution of the great difficulties to be surmounted.

'The functions of the Board are:

'(*a*) to encourage local authorities to establish free public libraries;

'(*b*) to co-ordinate those which are established into a state-wide system;

'(*c*) to administer a state subsidy of up to £1 for £1 of local expenditure on the maintenance (not establishment) of a library;

'(*d*) to provide for the training of librarians.

'At the outset the Board clearly formulated its policy:

'The purpose of the public library service is to provide and organize print in all its forms so that all members of the community, and all organizations within it, may derive to the fullest extent of their own needs or desires the information, enrichment, and delight which is to be had from books and other printed sources. More specifically, a public library service is needed for the following three purposes:

'To make available to all citizens, young and old, books, periodicals, and other graphic records which foster a full, useful, and good life and which tend to the personal development of the individual or the social development of the community;

'To provide information on any subject which may reasonably be expected to be of value to the public, including the industrial and commercial world;

'To encourage and promote the use of books and information.

'The essence and kernel of any library is its books, including within the term books: periodicals, maps, pamphlets, prints, trade catalogues, manuscripts, archives, music, microfilms, and all the other forms of record which a modern library handles. The book stock of the library should be so chosen as to represent all the interests, economic, social, and leisure, of the people it serves in so far as their needs are not met by other agencies.'

Next it had to decide how best this policy could be implemented. The two major difficulties were recognized, i.e. (*a*) the impossibility of small libraries providing for themselves adequate book stocks, and (*b*) the need for every library to have a good, balanced initial stock—and in this connection I would say that elsewhere in Australia I have seen newly founded libraries which, opening without sufficient books, were gravely handicapped from the outset.

Briefly, the state has decided to make itself responsible for book supply, expecting the local authorities to provide staff, premises, and running costs. Provision of one book per head of population has been accepted as the minimum, and new libraries will be provided with a complete, well-chosen, representative stock of this size on condition that the local authority will repay one-third of the cost. If there is an existing library, the authority will get such a complete new stock if it vests in the Board its whole existing stock, and this represents not less than one book for every three people.

'The main advantages of initial provision of book stock by the Board rather than by the local authority are:

'(i) book selection is retained in professional hands;

'(ii) central processing, necessary with a mobile stock, is facilitated;

'(iii) the inclusion of a proportion of books already in the Board's stock will result in a more balanced collection and in greater economy;

'(iv) the offer of an adequate stock is a powerful incentive to a local authority;

'(v) a new stock of adequate size is the best advertisement for a new library when it opens;

'(vi) the stock of the Board is enriched by the vesting of older books which are now unobtainable;

'(vii) the danger of unattractive and unkempt books being retained in the library to the prejudice of the new service is obviated.'

Thereafter, the Board will 'maintain' the stock, keeping it 'live' and in good condition and attractive to readers—which might well, in the case of a small library, involve changing it as often as three times a year. It is provisionally estimated that the cost of maintaining the stock will be £150 per 1,000 volumes; thus, the subsidy will be calculated, according to population, on this basis and the local authorities will normally be expected to provide an equivalent amount. In many small places, however, the local costs of staffing (and probably it will be 'voluntary') and accommodation may be so low that they could not

amount to the value of the book supplies, and in such cases the authority should make a balancing payment to equalize the expenditure of both parties, as is required by the Act.

When the plan is fully implemented the needs of all but a few thousands will be met, but in the north-west there are areas of such scattered population that no static library could serve them, and for these people a direct loan service will be provided from headquarters by air freight or other means.

Moreover, the Board is setting up a state reference library in Perth, from which books and information will be sent, so that country readers may enjoy something approximating to a reference library service.

Let it be emphasized that all the facilities provided must be free, as with the British public library service. The plan puts paid, if adopted generally, to the bad old subscription system.

It is early days to judge how far local authorities will co-operate in the scheme—some have already done so—but one feels that the originality and practicability of the proposals will make a stronger appeal than the more usual cash grant system.

To provide a good public library service for the metropolitan area may be more difficult. The State Library, which does not yet come within the purview of the Board, gives a reference service on scholarly lines, but otherwise there are subscription libraries, one of them very good of its kind, and Fremantle Public Library. The Board has, however, drawn up plans for a co-ordinated system for greater Perth in which the municipalities, the State Library, and the Board will share the responsibility.

Commonwealth Territories

Services to Commonwealth Territories began in 1936 when, with the assistance of a Carnegie grant of 7,500 dollars, free library provision was made in association with the local administration. All were interrupted by the war but have since been re-established on an extended basis in Papua, New Guinea, and in the Northern Territory, as well as in Norfolk Island and Naura. The Commonwealth National Library selects, purchases, and catalogues the major part of the book stocks, assists in meeting reference requests, and provides from its staff the Chief Librarian in the Northern Territory. In Papua, New Guinea, the central library is at Port Moresby, with regional libraries at Rabaul, Lae, and Samarai, and several small branches. Parcels of books, carried free by the postal services, are sent to remote areas.

NEW ZEALAND

When the British Government took New Zealand under its care in 1840—two centuries after its discovery—there were only a few hundred European settlers, yet in 1842 a mechanics' institute and library was opened in Auckland. Wellington followed the example in 1849, and by 1874 there were 161 libraries of mechanics' institutes and other literary and scientific institutions. The House of Representatives passed a Public Libraries Act in 1869, on the lines of the British acts, and enabling local authorities to levy a library rate not exceeding 1*d.* in the pound. Apparently the first community to adopt this act, and later amendments, was Auckland, which in 1879 took over the Mechanics' Institute, thus starting the movement to transfer control from private hands to local authorities, which is still continuing and has still far to go. By 1926 there were 435 libraries—public and proprietory—and today there are almost twice that number. Thus, coverage is excellent despite the fact that it has been achieved on a voluntary basis, and the high standards attained in the major cities, combined with the fine work of the National Library Service for the country districts and small towns, have given New Zealand one of the best public library services in the world. Having regard to local conditions I would rank it next after Great Britain and Denmark and Sweden.

Nevertheless it offers a variety of providing agencies. There are libraries financed and managed entirely by the local authorities and offering free service on the lines of the British public library; there are others which, though managed and largely financed by the local authorities, charge adult borrowers and maybe children a subscription or borrowing fees, though some of these give all or some free service to children. In these libraries the reference departments and reading-rooms are open freely to all. Then there are a considerable number of purely subscription libraries—mostly in the smaller places—owned by societies and 'non-official' groups.

The trend is towards the 'free' local authority institution, and great strides in that direction have been made during the last few years, with results that should be given the most serious consideration wherever local government-assisted subscription libraries still exist. I shall return to this point shortly. Of the four large city libraries that of Dunedin, established in 1911, has always given a free service, Auckland became

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free in 1945–6, Wellington in 1952, followed by Canterbury Public Library at Christchurch. Incidentally, at this city free service is only given by the central library because here, instead of branch libraries forming an intrinsic part of the city's system, there are a number of independent small subscription libraries which, while receiving city aid, are managed by private associations.

Of the other sizeable cities Timaru gives a free service, and was the first to do so in New Zealand. Lower Hutt and Invercargill became free a few years ago, while Wanganui, which gives limited free service to children and young people under 20, and Palmerston North, are subscription libraries. In the great majority of the smaller places there are subscription libraries, though these are being encouraged by the National Library Service to adopt more generous methods.

Of the larger free libraries it is true that the entire service is not free as we know it because all have rental collections, such as are occasionally (and decreasingly) to be found in the United States. These are collections of the more popular novels, for the use of which borrowing fees or subscriptions must be paid. 'Standard' novels, both the classics and modern works of acknowledged literary worth, are available free of charge and in plenty, but it must be recognized that in certain libraries the 'pay collections' are large—and their use represents all too high a proportion of the issues. The practice is defended by those who have adopted it on the grounds that those who seek light entertainment should be prepared to pay for it. In my view it is to be deplored, for many reasons.

Apart from this, however, these libraries are indistinguishable from similar English institutions in objectives, range, influence, and methods, and they compare very favourably with some of our best. Auckland and Wellington, the latter with a fine modern central building, have good systems of branch libraries, and expenditure per head of population is well above British standards. In Auckland in 1952–3 it was 10*s.* 5*d.*, 8*s.* 11*d.* coming from the rates, with 2*s.* 1*d.* per head of population spent on books and periodicals, much the same being devoted to books in Wellington.

Outside the larger cities—and indeed it indirectly affects their work too—the dominant influence is the National Library Service. As it may well serve as a model for other national and state library agencies, its work demands consideration in detail. Established under the Minister of Education in 1945, following recommendations by the New Zealand Library Association, and under the direction of Mr G. T. Alley, it has

four main divisions: the country library service, the school library service, the library school, and the national library centre.

The Country Library Service makes books, periodicals, and information available to country people in the following ways:

(*a*) Free loans of books on a population basis to libraries controlled by local authorities, which in turn agree to make their libraries free and to maintain reasonable standards of library service.

(*b*) Loans of books to independent subscription libraries at a small annual charge per fifty books loaned.

(*c*) Loans of books through hamper collections to isolated groups of readers at a small annual charge.

(*d*) Free loans of books to isolated readers where no local authority for library service exists.

(*e*) Free loans of books to Works Department, State Hydro-electric and Forest Service camps.

All libraries served under (*a*) and (*b*) and the majority under (*e*) receive regular visits from one of the book vans operated by the service, at least three visits being paid to each library each year. In addition all persons, by whatever of the above means they receive service, may obtain loans of requested books by post.

On 31 March 1954, 900 towns and small centres and 50 Ministry of Works, etc., camps were receiving regular loans. Of these 93 borough and town district libraries and 5 county council libraries, serving some 320,000 people, were getting a free (category '*a*') service, and some 53,000 volumes were on loan to them at any time. Independent subscription libraries getting category '*b*' service totalled 759, and these had over 66,000 books, an average of 87 per library at any time. Nearly 53,000 volumes were lent in response to specific requests, and another 6,000 posted to isolated readers. In addition to the general loans, on a population basis, libraries may have collections of books, pamphlets, and periodicals each dealing with a particular subject, and 475 such collections, embracing 17,000 items, were lent in 1953–4. This is an especially interesting and valuable scheme; not only does it help study groups needing material not appropriate for the general reader, it also demonstrates in even the smallest centres something of the variety and richness of the world of books. Periodicals are also sent, some on a rota of five libraries, others on request. Hospitals, mental hospitals, sanatoria, and prisons all benefit from the service. In order to maintain these loans the National Library Service has a stock of 480,000 volumes for

adults (352,000 of them being non-fiction) and 787,000 for children (for distribution through the School Library Service).

From the School Library Service bulk loans are sent to 2,206 schools, and books are lent to the public libraries of Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington for distribution to the schools in those cities. A request and information service, available alike to children and teachers, satisfies individual needs not met by the regular bulk loans.

The Library School was started in 1946, and gives graduates a year's course. Students are given allowances equal to those made to students attending teachers' training colleges.

The National Library Centre maintains a union catalogue of non-fiction books held by New Zealand libraries, and a union list of serials, publishes an Index to New Zealand Serials and a current National Bibliography of New Zealand Books and Pamphlets—and catalogue cards for these are available. Select bibliographies on various subjects are compiled on request. It is also responsible for a considerable amount of inter-library lending and, in co-operation with the Book Resources Committee of the New Zealand Library Association, takes steps to secure the purchase, by appropriate libraries, of items which are not available.

The New Zealand Library Association is very active, with branches and committees dealing with many aspects of library development. I had the impression when I visited New Zealand a few years ago that in very few countries is there a more alert, self-critical, eager, and united library profession.

Before leaving New Zealand, however, I must detail some important evidence regarding the relative costs and values of free and subscription services.

First, what has been the experience in Auckland? In its annual report for 1952–3 the effects of the changeover are reviewed. 'If', it is stated, 'the principles and ideals of "free" library service are correct the changeover should result in an increase not only in the quantity but also in the quality of the reading. The emphasis should be transferred from the recreational to the informational side of library work and there should be a corresponding increase in the issue of serious literature.' Then follows a comparison between the issues during the last year under the subscription system and the current year, from two branches chosen at random. At one the total issues increased by 29%. Fiction increased 25%, philosophy and religion 35%, sociology 74%, literature

84%, pure science 182%, applied science 189%, fine arts 497%, history, travel, and biography 6%, and juvenile books 32%. At the other branch total issues increased by 70%, fiction 74%, philosophy and religion 112%, sociology 112%, literature 225%, pure science 486%, applied science 200%, fine arts 985%, history, travel, and biography 69%, and juvenile 43%—note, moreover, that juvenile books were *free* under the 'subscription' system.

Next I will turn to a comparison between conditions in Auckland and Wellington, made by Mr R. N. O'Reilly in 1949. The figures relate to the year 1948–9, when Auckland had been free for three years and Wellington charged a subscription for both adults and children. Let it be emphasized that then as now these libraries were giving much the same *kind* of service—excellent in both places.

	Wellington	*Auckland*
Population	133,800	140,100
Registered borrowers	21,494	41,011
Percentage of total population registered as borrowers	16%	29%
Issues—Fiction	605,000	753,000
Non-fiction	186,348	277,200
Total issues per head of population	9	11
Adult non-fiction issues per head of population	1·4	2·0
Total revenue	£43,705	£33,000
Revenue from *City* funds	£29,093	£28,424
City contribution per head of population	4*s.* 6*d.*	4*s.* 4*d.*
Cost *to the City* per borrower	27*s.* 1*d.*	13*s.* 10*d.*
Cost per issue	6*d.*	4½*d.*

The moral is obvious. The ratepayers of Wellington spent *more* both in total and per head of population than those of Auckland, but *because* a subscription was charged fewer people used the library and consequently the service was more expensive both to all the citizens and to those who used the library, the latter of course paying twice.

Within a year conditions at Wellington changed to a remarkable extent. In 1950–1 (under the subscription and rental system) total issues were 1,029,170; in 1952–3—the first complete year under the 'free and rental' system—they amounted to 1,449,869, an increase of 40·8%. 'In other words', says the report, 'the City's library assets are being far more extensively used.' Even more striking was the increase in the number of borrowers: in 1950–1 there were some 13,000 subscribers; in 1952–3 there were 35,273 registered borrowers. 'Expressed otherwise', we read, 'the City's library assets are being used by approximately 171% more citizens.' And it should be added, for it has great significance, that though the librarian very rightly states that he needed and should have had a much bigger book vote he did not get it. In fact a little less was spent on books in the *latter* year (£13,651 in 1950–1 and £13,355 in 1952–3).

SOUTH AFRICA

It is perhaps ironical that the first of the Dominions to have a genuine free public library should be that in which as yet there are fewest. Such is, indeed, the case, because in 1761 Joachim Nicolaas von Dessin left a collection of 4,565 volumes 'to serve as a foundation of a public library for the advantage of the community' of Cape Town, and in 1818 the Governor of the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, directed that the proceeds of a charge of one Rix Dollar on each cask of wine passing through the Cape Town market should go to create a fund for the formation of a public library which 'shall be open to the Public and lay the foundation of a System, which shall place the means of knowledge within the reach of the Youth of this remote corner of the Globe, and bring within their reach what the most eloquent of ancient writers has considered to be one of the first blessings of life, "Home Education".' Accommodation was provided in the government offices. In 1827, however, the tax was repealed and, all government support being withdrawn, the library became a subscription library, which it remained until two or three years ago, although meanwhile it had become, as the South African Public Library, the national library and bibliographical centre.

Other subscription libraries were established early at Swellendam (1838), George (1840), Grahamstown (1842), Graaff-Reinet (1847), Port Elizabeth (1848), and elsewhere. In 1874 regulations were issued by the Colonial Secretary, J. C. (afterwards Sir John) Molteno, who

had in his youth been an assistant at the South African Public Library, which provided for government grants to libraries in the Cape on the basis of £1 grant for every £1 raised by subscriptions, with a maximum of £100 per library (later raised to £150 and still later reduced to £135). Grants exceeding the maximum were, however, given to the larger town libraries, and occasionally for building and other special purposes. These regulations, which remained in force until they were superseded by the Cape Provincial Library Service Ordinance of 1949, began gradually to be applied. It naturally led to the widespread development of subscription libraries—though these, according to the *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Libraries of the Union of South Africa*, 1937, 'spent the government grant almost wholly on fiction and have neglected the building up of a collection of representative works of a more solid nature'.

The Molteno regulations were accepted in principle by the governments of the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and Natal, which paid grants to libraries up to the time of Union.

In Natal the first public library to appear was that of the Natal Society of Pietermaritzburg in 1846—still a subscription library, though it receives small municipal and provincial grants. It was followed in 1853 by the Durban Municipal Library, which became free in 1937.

In the Orange Free State the Bloemfontein Public Library was established in 1875 and has recently become free, but the first free public library in the state was opened in the small town of Harrismith in 1908 with a Carnegie building grant.

The oldest public library in the Transvaal—the State Library at Pretoria, now recognized as one of the two national libraries—appeared in 1887. In this province the free public library idea made more progress than elsewhere, with the outstanding example of the Johannesburg Public Library, founded in 1889 and made free in 1924. This library today, in the words of Messrs L. Milburn and H. V. Bonny (in an article on South African Libraries in *The Australian Library Journal*, January 1952), 'stands head and shoulders above other free public libraries in South Africa'—with its magnificent new central library premises, its stock of some 400,000, annual book vote of £20,000, 85,000 registered borrowers, and annual issues of over 1½ million.

Milburn and Bonny note that there are 300 municipalities in the Union, though many have European populations of less than 5,000, and state that of the 250 public libraries only 30 are free. 'Why',

opportunity for those adults able to use the service, a very small number, and to serve the children while they are at school', though, it is added, 'when they leave school they also cease to use the library'. Nevertheless here is a great opportunity and a great responsibility calling for more positive and widespread measures. It might well be that those responsible for library development feel that they cannot tackle this immense problem until the provision for Europeans has been brought more in line with the standards of other comparable nations. Undoubtedly, with few exceptions, they are still far behind. But a simultaneous campaign may in the long run prove more effective.

I realize that any movements designed to improve the educational and social status of the non-Europeans are fraught with innumerable difficulties. Yet I believe in my heart of hearts that backward races are so because they have never had any opportunity to become otherwise, and that librarians and all other men of goodwill have a particular duty to those of all races who are 'under-privileged', and who will remain so unless and until they are progressively given the means of self-development.

CANADA

Canada is larger than the United States but has about one-tenth of its population. About half its people live in towns, and about two-thirds live in the two largest provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Rather less than 10% of the total population are public library users but, of course, this is no indication of coverage; as yet the service is dominantly an urban one. I cannot find any up-to-date statement of the number of people who are still without any public library service, but the official statistics for 1949 show that, whereas excepting in Quebec (76%) and Manitoba (91%) 100% of the dwellers in cities of 10,000 population and more have libraries, the rural areas are virtually unserved, except in Prince Edward Island (100% coverage), British Columbia (48%) and Ontario (26%). Provision in the intermediate-sized communities (towns and villages) ranged from 100% in Prince Edward Island and 92% in Ontario to only 3% in Quebec. The total coverage in the various provinces is as follows:

	Per cent
Prince Edward Island	100
British Columbia	74
Ontario	70

	Per cent
Manitoba	36
Quebec	35
Alberta	33
Nova Scotia	28
New Brunswick	22
Saskatchewan	22

(Figures not given for Newfoundland.)

Education in Canada is an affair of the province, and this means that library services are also a provincial and a local authority concern. Not all public libraries, however, are provided and administered by local authorities; on the contrary, of 798 public libraries in 1951, 354 were 'free public libraries' and 444 'association' libraries (though the great majority received local and provincial government financing). These 798 libraries had 7,466,000 books, lent over 25,000,000 in the year to 1,390,607 borrowers, spent $6,448,000, and employed 1,397 full-time personnel. Of the 779 libraries included in the Government of Canada's *Survey of Libraries, 1948–50*, 459 were in rural communities of less than 1,000 people and another 207 served populations of from 1,000 to 4,999.

These overall figures do not, however, give a true picture of affairs any more than overall and average figures ever do. Conditions vary considerably from province to province because of a variety of factors of history and interest, the religious factor, the relative proportions of urban and rural dwellers, and so on. No single one of these factors seems to be alone responsible for varying standards of provision. Whereas British Columbia has fewest inhabitants per square mile (about 3) it has 74% coverage, compared with 36%, 22%, and 33% in the three slightly more densely populated prairie provinces, and 35% in the twice as populated Quebec.

Considering only the cities, expenditure and circulation *per capita* are as follows:

	Exp. per cap.	*Circ. per cap.*
British Columbia	149 cents	4·4
Ontario	134 cents	6·1
Prairie Provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan)	90 cents	4·2
Quebec	51 cents	1·1
Nova Scotia & New Brunswick	28 cents	1·3

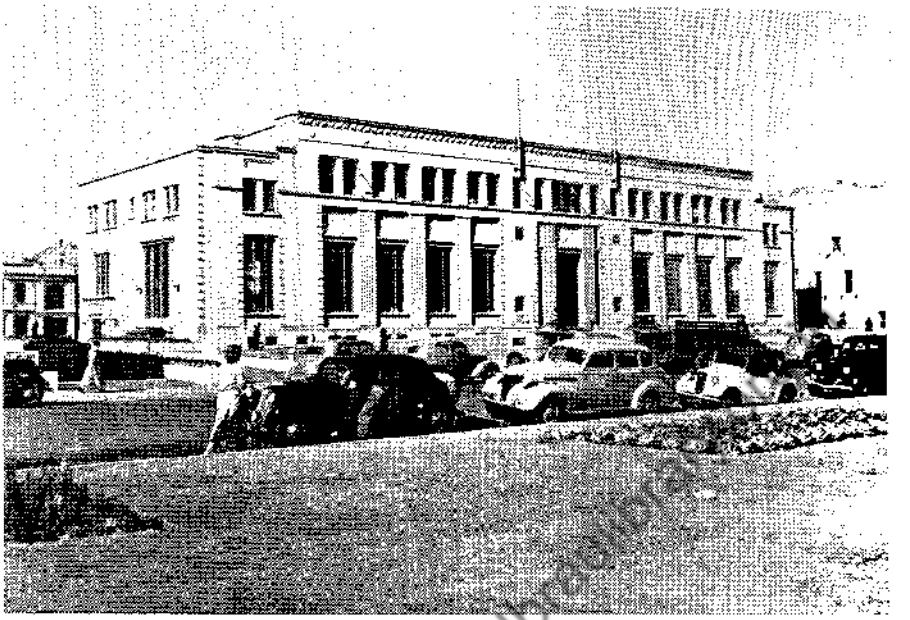
Subject to the limitations imposed in most cases by their size, the city libraries of Canada appear to be reasonably well supported and administered. Average expenditure *per capita* in many exceeded $1 and circulation 5. Of their full-time staff 41% had had professional training. About one-third of the borrowers from all libraries were children, who were responsible for 40% of the total issues.

The provision of library service for the rural population has been and remains the major problem, and has been tackled in various ways in different provinces.

The most satisfactory solution has been by some form of mobile service. In districts with small communities not too widely separated, some form of regional library service is recognized as being the best system. Several provinces, however, have rural residents located in areas unsuitable to regional organization. For such outpost areas a system of library service by mail has been utilized. The service may emanate from a provincial travelling library, such as those which function in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Newfoundland, or from a university, as, for example, the extension services of the University of Alberta, Macdonald College in Quebec, Acadia and Saint Francis-Xavier Universities in Nova Scotia. The regional library system has been growing as rapidly as circumstances permit in several provinces.

The first regional service was established in the Fraser Valley in British Columbia in 1934, with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. It serves an area of 1,500 square miles with a population of 116,000. Twenty-one local authorities (2 cities, 10 districts, 4 villages, and 5 school districts) contribute to the cost, and the Provincial Public Library Commission makes grants totalling about $12,000 to a total budget of some $70,000. Service is given from 11 branches, 12 deposit stations, 129 book van stations, and 120 school deposits, and nearly 500,000 books were lent to over 30,000 borrowers—a highly creditable achievement. Since then other 'union library districts' have been formed, and the Provincial Public Library Commission provides travelling library service and a postal service to individuals without a local library.

In Ontario there have been since 1920 'county library co-operatives', which arrange for the central purchase, processing, and quarterly exchange of books to individual libraries. The co-operatives get grants from the province of up to $4,000 a year—and the individual libraries also get provincial assistance.

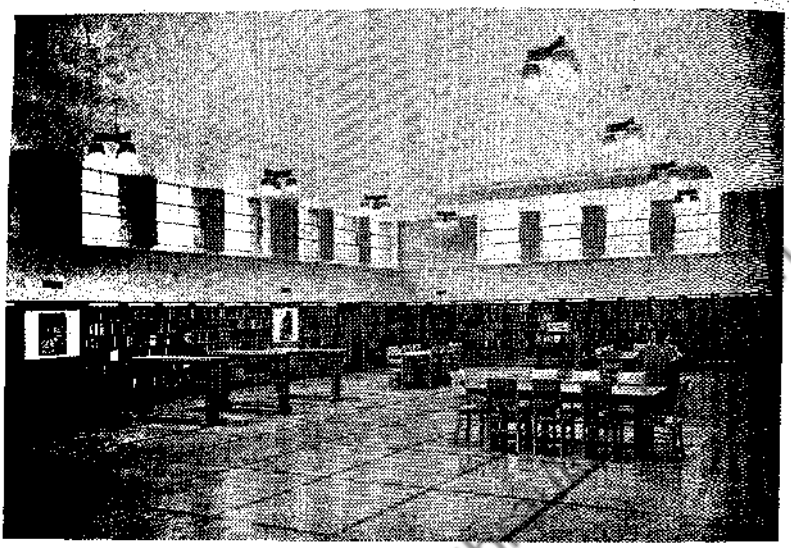


High Commissioner for New Zealand

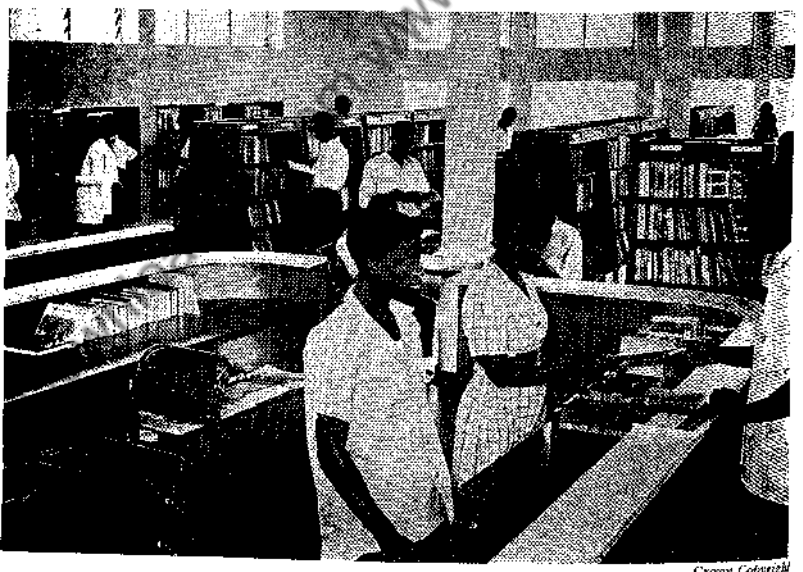
Wellington Public Library, New Zealand.

South African Railways and Harbours

Johannesburg Public Library, South Africa.



The George H. Locke Memorial Branch, Toronto, adult department.



Crown Copyright

Ashanti Regional Library, Kumasi, Gold Coast, lending library.

Alberta (Public Library Act, 1948), Saskatchewan (Libraries Act, 1953), Nova Scotia (Regional Libraries Act, 1937; Libraries Act, 1952), Newfoundland (Public Libraries Act, 1935) have all established grant-aided regional libraries, supplemented in some cases by a provincial library agency with travelling library and postal services for areas without a public library. A report by Peter Grossman, Director of the Nova Scotia Provincial Library to the Government of New Brunswick, recommends similar developments, and an unofficial library development committee in Manitoba is pressing for action. The regional service in Prince Edward Island, a compact province, is, however, completely organized from the provincial centre. Quebec lacks any regional organization. The supervision and promotion of public library development are normally carried out by a provincial library board or commission, or it may be directly under the Department of Education, advised in some cases by a library advisory council. Legislation in most provinces still permits municipal support for association libraries, and some also make provincial grants.

Let me, however, return to the relatively backward position of Quebec, because it is germane to the general purposes of this book. Why does library provision in this province, which has so many advantages, lag behind that of others? Why (in 1949) had the Montreal Bibliothèque Municipale with its 10 branches only 36,861 borrowers from a population of 903,000?

I quote from *Libraries in Canada: a Study of Library Conditions and Needs*, by a Commission of Inquiry appointed by the American Library Association, 1933:

'Of this population of almost 3,000,000 people more than 85 per cent—all but about 400,000—are French in origin and speech, and Roman Catholic in faith. . . . It will thus be evident that the library situation in Quebec has features that differ entirely from those of the other provinces of Canada. . . .

'It will also be self-evident that the problem of book service must, in the main, be solved in terms of the language of the majority. But though the Provincial Government has done and is doing much to encourage the publication in Canada of books printed in French—particularly works on history and literature—relatively few books in the French language are issued in Canada. . . . The bulk of this reading material must necessarily come from French authors and French publishers—that is to say, the supply of books read in Quebec is, and must be, very largely dependent on France and Belgium.

'Side by side with this language difficulty is another, of equal—perhaps greater—importance. Quebec is Roman Catholic in religion and faith to exactly the same extent as it is French in race and speech. To a much greater and more complete extent than is the case with the Protestant churches, the Roman Catholic Church claims, and exercises, the right to advise and direct its believers and adherents, not alone in essential spiritual matters, but in all things having to do with the mental and social life of its people. . . .

'When one contemplates the character of many of the modern books issued from the presses of France, it is easy to understand, and even to sympathize with, the dubiety—sometimes the alarm—with which the Church regards this literature. It is natural, therefore, in view of the fact that the great bulk of modern book material available for the overwhelming majority of the citizens of Quebec must come from France, that the Church should deem it its duty to exercise rights of selection, supervision, and control over what is practically the only book material available.'

[6]

Some Under-developed Territories

AFRICAN COLONIES AND PROTECTORATES

THE BASIC PROBLEM in Africa is that of illiteracy. The provision of libraries is everywhere dependent on the educational standards of the people they serve, and in the African colonies those standards, though varying especially between west and east, are low. Let us, moreover, remember that illiteracy in an African colony is a different problem from illiteracy in, say, an Arabic-speaking country. Books in Arabic are still far from adequate to meet either the needs of the technician or the newly literate, but books in the African languages are few indeed—some of these languages are only spoken and not written languages. A very small minority learn and can read English; to the vast majority it is a foreign tongue.

As R. A. Flood points out in his excellent booklet on *Public Libraries in the Colonies*—to which the present writer is much indebted—literacy figures are difficult to discover. Only 20% of those in the Gold Coast are illiterate, fewer than 28% in Sierra Leone. Of the Somaliland Protectorate it is said that 'the incidence of illiteracy is very high and the only library of any size is for government servants only, who are thought to constitute the majority of the literates'. But he goes on to make the important point that 'what is more important from the librarian's point of view is not the overall literacy figures but the statistics of school attendance, because the comparatively high percentage of children attending school [e.g. 66% of those in Kenya] means a large number of potential users of a library service. These children are learning to read at school, they are the coming citizens of the African colonies, the people to whom more and more responsibility will be given in running their country. Are they to grow up as well-informed citizens or is their elementary education to be forgotten soon after they leave school, and their ability to read and to learn lost? The answer to that lies in the provision or otherwise of adequate library facilities.'

What then has been achieved, what is being projected?

West Africa

A report made by Miss Margaret Wrong, of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, led the Carnegie Corporation in 1939 to offer a grant towards library development in the West African colonies, but the matter was not pursued because of the war. In 1944 Miss Ethel S. Fegan made a further report, in which she recommended co-operation with the British Council, which was then beginning to open libraries in West Africa, concentration on the training of librarians for the four colonies (Gold Coast, Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria), and the setting up of services in each in succession. Though her plans were not completely fulfilled she helped to lay the foundations, and already in the Gold Coast there is a library service, well established on sound and progressive lines, which may well prove a model for development elsewhere in Africa and beyond.

The Gold Coast

Just before the war Bishop Aglionby gave £1,000 for the founding of a library, and a special wing was incorporated in the George V Memorial Hall at Accra. But further progress was delayed by the war, during which the building was commandeered by the military. In 1944 the British Council started a library, which in time introduced a book-box service for districts outside Accra. When the war was over the government offered to subsidize the Aglionby Library if the town council also contributed, and the British Council librarian drew up a plan for the service which was intended to extend to the whole colony and protectorate. In 1946 the Aglionby Library was opened, and in 1947 a five-year plan was accepted which provided for the setting up of the Gold Coast Library Board to administer the scheme, and generally to establish, equip, manage, and maintain libraries in the colony. An Ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council in 1949 to establish this Board, which commenced its work in 1950. Its members include appointees by the Governor, the town councils, the Board of Education, the regions, the Chamber of Commerce, and the British Council.

In 1952–3 its income amounted to over £30,000, mainly provided by the Gold Coast government, with grants from the town councils, the Commonwealth Education and Welfare Trust, and (for the training of staff) the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

The headquarters are at the Aglionby Library, Accra, which acts both as administrative headquarters, where all book ordering, cataloguing, and preparation is conducted pending the erection of permanent premises, and as a library for Accra itself. Branch libraries have been opened in Kumasi, Tamale, Cape Coast, Sekondi, and Ho, at the outset in temporary premises, though the programme provides for the erection of permanent regional libraries.

Mobile libraries are being used to tour the country and to take books to people outside the areas where libraries are available. Two were in use in 1952–3, and ultimately there will be at least one in each region. In addition, boxes of books are distributed by road and rail to smaller centres. The vans are constructed with the shelves outside, not, like the typical English bookmobile, with interior shelving. This is done partly because (as Flood points out) in the tropical climate the atmosphere inside would be oppressive, partly because more people can use it at once, partly because the inside has to be used for storing petrol and camping equipment.

Work with children is awarded special attention and there are three children's libraries in Accra and children's sections at Cape Coast, Sekondi, Tamale, and Ho. There is close co-operation with the schools, and story hours are being used as a means of helping and encouraging the children to read. These have here a particular value because, as already noted, to these children English is a foreign language, and so the stories are first told in English and then 'questions are asked by the children and explanations made in the vernacular. The story is then read and the children encouraged to borrow copies of the book'. A free service to teachers was started in 1950, books being sent all over the country on request.

Apart from the last mentioned the service is not absolutely free. Adults using a library are charged *4s.* a year and children *6d.* Country members receiving postal loans (post paid one way) subscribe *10s.* and groups and communities receiving book boxes pay £2 for 50 books, which can be changed as often as once a month if so desired. These subscriptions represent only a very small part of the total income. As I am one who in general condemns the imposition of *any* charge or subscription may I, in fairness, quote Flood, who says: 'Subscriptions are not designed to exclude any part of the population or primarily as a source of income. It has been found necessary . . . to charge subscriptions and deposits. At the present stage of development of the African, as a race not as an individual, it appears that he appreciates a thing far

better if he has to pay a little for it than if it is provided free. In addition it may be said, strictly as a generalization, that the African does not have the same regard for public property as the European'. I confess that for me that phrase about a man appreciating better that for which he has to pay has a familiar ring. I have heard it too often as a conventional defence of the indefensible subscription library-institute form of library provision. But as I know that Mr Flood, and the Gold Coast Librarian and her colleagues, are completely wedded to the genuine free public library philosophy, I am willing to grant them superior knowledge of the African's attitude—and I hope that because I accept this exception I shall not be regarded as accepting it as a general principle.

The staff consists of three professionally qualified Europeans and seventeen Africans, who are being trained and encouraged to take the examinations of the Library Association (of Great Britain). Two of the African staff had already, in 1953, obtained the Associateship of the Library Association, and several others were well on their way to this qualification. And, if I may digress, I would note here that I have met, and helped provide practical experience in my own library for, several students from Africa, the West Indies, Indonesia, and other parts of the world and I have noted how these, and others who have not been able to study in this country, have succeeded in studies which are not easy for even the most favoured of our own 'native' (English) young people. I have been impressed by their thoroughness, common sense, and intelligence, and their good manners and bearing. And I regard this as important evidence that many of those people who have for centuries been denied opportunity are just as good human material as many of their more privileged Western brethren. I regard this as important because it means that with proper education, guidance, and purpose the people who can be trained to do all sorts of other things besides librarianship can be just as successful in their chosen careers. In other words I believe that education and library services may well produce not less but greater dividends in the 'backward' countries.

In a working paper prepared for the Unesco African Seminar (see later [1]) the four main problems are said to be the vast distances to be covered, the insufficiency of published material suitable for the majority of African readers, both in English and in the vernaculars, lack of trained staff, and inadequate finance. 'Cuts in the estimates have been made under the economy drive in the past two years.' I shall have more

[1] See page 241.

to say about this [1] but there are some truths which cannot be emphasized too often, and one is that it is a poor idea of economy, in the interests of this Commonwealth of ours, to deny expenditure on something without which there can be no proper development of the vast human and economic resources of the colonies. Incidentally, it should be noted that the Gold Coast is regarded as one of the richest of African territories.

Gambia

Of this colony a similar Unesco paper says quite baldly: 'There is, strictly speaking, no public library in the Gambia. . . . It is most unlikely, for financial reasons, that the Government of the Gambia will be able to develop a public library service in the near future'. This being so there is surely a strong case for assistance from outside. There is at least a British Council library, and this should be strengthened and its work expanded.

Sierra Leone

Of this colony it is said that 'undoubtedly the best library service at present is provided by the British Council. The Freetown centre is equipped with a first-class library containing 18,000 volumes. In addition, the Council sends book boxes to up-country centres and bulk loans to five towns. It also assists various institutions and organizations which intend to establish small lending libraries'.

The principal education institution, Fourah Bay College, is gradually building up a library, and 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, but it is not a public library in the strict sense of the word. Maybe in time the City Council will absorb the British Council library, it is hoped on a similar basis to that of the Gold Coast. At Bonthe the Sherbro Urban District Council has a small lending library. At Port Loke a group have built their own library with the help of books given by the British Council and the Public Relations Department. In Konema the community centre houses a collection which has received similar assistance.

[1] See pages 244–5.

Nigeria

In Lagos there are two libraries. One is the Tom Jones Library, a reference collection given to the government by a citizen of Lagos but inadequately housed and administered. The other is the Lagos Public Library, a joint venture of the British Council and Lagos Town Council, which has taken over the Lagos Library, a subscription institution.

A standing committee has been set up to advise the government, but so far the only service covering the whole territory is such as can be given by the British Council. In a country which in area equals France, Germany, Holland, and Belgium combined there is obviously need for a number of regional libraries, each co-ordinating the efforts of local libraries, as yet virtually non-existent, though it is reported that there are some 150 reading-rooms in the country, with newspapers, periodicals, and small book collections.

East Africa

Standards of education and of culture generally are lower in East Africa than in the West African colonies and the language problems even more serious.

In 1948 the East African High Commission was established to administer certain common services in the colonies of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, and Zanzibar, and one of these, started as the result of a report made by Mrs Elspeth Huxley, is the East African Literature Bureau, which has four main tasks:

(1) The publication of books in the vernacular languages of East Africa.

(2) The setting up of some form of library service.

(3) The production of a periodical magazine in Swahili.

(4) The preparation of manuscripts for school text-books.

Mr G. Annesley was appointed to plan and administer the library service. He has described his approach to this most difficult project in papers submitted to the Library Association and to Unesco—and, as similar difficulties will have to be faced in many library development schemes elsewhere in Africa and outside, it is useful to give his own account *in extenso*.

He states that from the outset a number of outstanding factors had to be considered. 'From an educational point of view East Africa is

still on the lower rungs of the ladder. Compulsory education for African children is still not yet practicable for the reason that there are insufficient educational facilities to provide all children with a basic education. The demand for education is, however, great. It follows therefore that the bulk of the population (about 16,000,000) are still illiterate, even in their own languages. The appeal of a library service would therefore be by no means universal. On the other hand, with the steady increase in education which is being made, and especially in the secondary schools, there would be an ever-growing body of educated Africans who are taught English at school and who finally emerge reasonably well able to understand and converse in that language. Up to the present there has been little provision in the way of literature for the educated Africans, and it is to these primarily that a library service is likely to have the greatest appeal. Many of them, on leaving school, return to their villages which are, to say the least, still rather primitive, and there is always a danger that they will lose their newly acquired abilities through atrophy, unless some means are provided of supplying them with material to feed on.

'East Africa is not by any means a homogeneous entity. Its population consists of many different tribes with their own customs and languages. There are, of course, the larger tribal and language groups, such as the Kikuyu, Luo, Baganda, Masai, and other tribes, but even these are too small to warrant large-scale publication of books in their languages. Swahili is the language of the Coast and certain parts of Tanganyika, and fulfils to a certain extent the function of a lingua franca in East Africa. It must be emphasized, however, that it is not by any means the native language of all the inhabitants of East Africa, nor is it by any means universally spoken or understood. It is, however, probably the most widely understood language in East Africa, but its literature is very small. One copy of every book in Swahili would not fill a small bookcase. Publications in other vernacular languages are so few as to be negligible. It is therefore impossible to base any library service on either Swahili or the vernacular languages. It was evident therefore that the service would have to be founded on English, and books in this language would form the bulk of the stock, although such vernacular literature as existed would be utilized. The library service would thus appeal primarily to the educated and English-speaking class of African. This, however, has not proved a drawback, since it is only the educated African who is conscious of the need for library facilities.

'Bearing in mind the still small number of literates, the fact that their

reading must be to a great extent confined to foreign languages, the fact that East Africa is still a somewhat primitive country, it is not surprising that the actual *demand* for books is not so great as is currently supposed. On the other hand, the *need*, as against the *demand*, is considerable. An important factor in the technical and economic development of the territories and the improvement in the standards of living of the population, is the ability of the African to increase his knowledge of the world and to improve his technical ability in all types of work. For example, it is clear that an African will never become a satisfactory carpenter unless he can measure up his work; for this he needs at least a rudimentary knowledge of arithmetic; he also needs to know about his tools and how to use them. The same applies to any other type of employment, particularly trade. The only way adequate knowledge and information of this nature can be obtained is from the study of the printed word. It is thus clear that the *need* for books is considerable. On the other hand, the actual demand by Africans themselves is not so considerable. No doubt a contributing factor to this is the fact that Africans must, almost of necessity, read in a foreign language. In the same way as it is generally an effort, and rarely a pleasure, for the English to read in, say, French, so it is for the African reading in English. It is therefore inevitable that only a few Africans read for pleasure. Many are anxious to obtain books, but in nearly all cases they want books of information which they think will help them to qualify for better jobs and pay. Only the really well educated ask for novels or books of recreational value.

'It is hardly necessary to state that any scheme for a library service would have to be reasonably inexpensive, yet adequate for the Territories. There could be no question of special buildings, lavish equipment, or highly paid librarians in the places where libraries would be established. Nor indeed is such provision necessary. It was anticipated that the funds for the establishment of the service would be provided from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, but only for the initial development period. Thereafter the service, if it was to continue, would become a charge on the Territories. It was therefore important to keep expenditure at a figure which it was considered would be within the capacities of the territories.

'The Territories to be provided with some form of library service cover an area of nearly half a million square miles, over four times the total area of the British Isles. Means of transport and communication over this vast tract of Africa are generally poor by European standards,

and in some cases almost non-existent. Kenya and the eastern section of Uganda are fairly well served by a railway, while a line also runs through the central section of Tanganyika, but outlying districts are only served by earth roads, which are frequently no more than rough tracks. The poverty of communications thus became an important factor in considering how books were to be transported to the readers.

'Once again it must be emphasized that East Africa is an area which has only recently begun to emerge from the primitiveness of centuries. Any attempt therefore to impose elaborate systems on Africans would be doomed to failure. The greatest essential in implementing a library service was that its method of operation should be not only simple, but of the very simplest. It was considered to be quite useless to suggest such elaborations as card-charging systems, dictionary or subject catalogues or even classifications, beyond the first sub-divisions. Everything had to be simple and easy to understand.

'These were the principal factors to be taken into consideration in evolving some scheme of book provision for Africans in East Africa. The main proposals embodied in the Scheme were as follows:

'(1) The Library Service would have to follow the general pattern of the county library system in England, with a central headquarters distributing small batches of books to outlying areas.

'(2) In view of the vastness of the area to be covered, it was considered necessary to establish a branch headquarters in the principal town of each territory, i.e. Nairobi, Kampala, and Dar-es-Salaam.

'(3) The libraries must be small, self-contained, and easily portable. It was decided to use the book box, specially designed to open out to form a small bookcase, and to be easily closed and locked up. It had also to be readily moved from place to place.

'(4) The books had, for the most part, to be simple of language and cover subjects which would have some interest or appeal to the average literate and educated African. This stipulation automatically precluded 999 out of every 1,000 books published in English. The problem would thus be to seek out the elusive one in a thousand which would appeal to the African reader. Book selection, in fact, is one of the most difficult tasks in the operation of the service.

'The Scheme was submitted in 1949, and after some delay was approved by the East African Governments and Colonial Office in 1950. An initial order for books was placed in London immediately, but these did not begin to arrive until the spring of 1951. It was thus not

possible to begin to get the books in the hands of the readers before April. Since that time the service has been built up gradually in the Territories, and during the past twelve months small libraries have been sent to many centres. They go mostly to village halls and social centres all over the Territories, certain selected secondary schools, and technical training establishments or organizations, such as medical and police schools, veterinary laboratories, and similar institutions where the incidence of literacy is high.

'Each library is fairly small, containing between 150 and 200 books, but an attempt is made at least to touch on the whole field of knowledge in as far as it is applicable to African interests and tastes. This necessarily means that in a short space of time a library would grow stale unless measures were taken to refresh it with new material. It is arranged therefore that the book stock of each library will be changed at regular intervals, up to three times a year. The change is, in fact, effected about twice a year in most cases. Books which have a steady or popular appeal are allowed to remain in the same centre indefinitely, but the general literature is changed. This means that while the libraries do not increase much in size, they always contain fresh material.

'The results obtained in the centres are variable, being mostly dependent upon the interest displayed by the local authorities. One fact is significant. Libraries established in the various educational establishments function much better than in the village halls and social centres, and this is undoubtedly due to the discipline and supervision which prevail there. However, it is confidently expected that in the course of time, the library will take its place as one of the important social services in the villages and towns, as the number of educated Africans increases.

'It is clear that the establishment of libraries in the centres of population does not affect those living in the outlying and rural areas. The view I have taken is that these people are as much entitled to service as those living within reach of the libraries. A special service has therefore been devised to meet their needs. All communication with these readers is through the postal services. Readers register as library members with the library headquarters and receive a catalogue of the books available for loan. From this they choose the books they want to read and send in their requests to the library. The books are then forwarded to the readers by post. Books are sent both ways on the departmental postal frank, and postage thus costs the reader nothing. It is, of course, important that some measures should be taken to ensure

the safe return of the books so sent out. Each reader is therefore required to deposit a sum of 10*s*. with the library, which is returnable on the member signifying his desire to terminate his membership. This is quite an enormous sum for the average African, but a large number have paid willingly. This service has only been in operation a few months, but is expanding rapidly as it becomes more widely known. It is now possible to assert with some truth that any African living in East Africa can obtain almost any book he requires at virtually no cost to himself.'

How these schemes work out in practice is shown by a recent account (Unesco *Bulletin for Libraries*, April 1954) of the work of one of the colonies embraced—Uganda.

'In 1950 the East African Literature Bureau took over a library service in Uganda which had been started in 1947 with donations of books from the British Council. The present librarian arrived in July 1951 and spent the first few months organizing the library headquarters at Kampala. In January 1952 a week's training course was held for social welfare assistants and other voluntary librarians who were responsible for the bureau's libraries. They were given instruction in elementary procedure and certain simple routines were laid down so that methods should be uniform.

'By the early months of 1952 the organization of the headquarters was almost complete, and it was felt that new supplies of books could be distributed with a reasonable hope that they would be suitable and would be adequately looked after. By the middle of 1953 there were 60 library centres all over Uganda, most of which exchanged their books regularly. The libraries are for the most part supplied to African social clubs, missions, schools, and training centres, from a total stock of some 16,000 books. The charge for this service is Sh. 100 per annum, paid to the Uganda administration, the bureau bearing all transport costs.

'A service by post to individual readers was started in 1948 but has been reorganized since 1951, when there were 153 members, of whom not more than half were active. By the summer of 1953, largely owing to publicity measures, there were 400 members. The book stock set aside for these readers is of a rather more advanced standard than that supplied to the library centres. A new catalogue of some 1,200 titles was issued in 1952. In 1953, issues averaged 260 books a month and new applications were arriving at the rate of 25–30 a month.'

There is also in Kampala a municipal library, opened in 1953 in a small room built on to the town hall by a wealthy merchant. The cost of

the basic book stock and equipment (£2,800) was borne by the Uganda Protectorate Government and the Kampala Municipal Council, the former also making an annual grant of £200 for the purchase of books, and the British Council made a small present of books. 'In view'—and I now quote from an account of the library presented in the Unesco Seminar—'of the smallness of the building and for reasons of economy the Municipality decided that the scope of the Library must at first be restricted to that of a Reference Library where people must come and consult books on the spot. Fortunately, as the work of the organization of the Library progressed it was recognized that the value of the Library to the community would be immeasurably greater if the books could be borrowed. It was finally decided that at only slightly more cost this could be done. The only real drawbacks were the smallness of the stock (3,000 volumes and 200 for reference only) and the fact that no money was available for the purchase of books during the first year of the Library's life apart from the £200 from the Protectorate Government. It was then decided to charge a subscription of 15*s.* per year for two tickets per person plus a deposit of 15*s.* The rather high subscription was calculated to (*a*) bring in a slight revenue and (*b*) restrict the membership so that the small stock would be adequate to the demands made upon it in the first case. It is to be hoped that it is recognized that a lower subscription and an adequate yearly book fund are aims to be achieved as soon as possible.'

And this quotation has aroused my anger and indignation, so I might just as well digress. Too often have I seen, all over the world, libraries that have been started on too small a scheme and died through lack of resources, libraries where subscriptions were introduced to try to keep the almost stillborn infant from expiring, and library authorities lacking the first idea of how much it costs to provide a decent library, that I am horrified that, with all the sad lessons of history to warn them, any library should in 1953 be started on so futile a basis. And of course it would be very wrong to give any impression when describing the aspirations of the pioneers of colonial library services, that one can regard the financial basis as anything but gravely inadequate and likely, if not considerably improved, to lead to failure and stagnation. It will make these schemes not an example but a deterrent. The same applies everywhere. For example, may not the Unesco pilot schemes suffer from inadequate initial funds?

What of the other East African territories?

Let us see what library services are available in Nyasaland, a relatively

small territory with an area of 37,000 square miles and a population of some $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions. The four 'principal' libraries are:

(*a*) The Nyasaland Public Library, founded in 1937 by public subscription. 'There is difference of opinion on whether or not the library was free in the first place, but the present position is that it is open to all races upon the payment of an annual subscription of £2 10*s*. The membership at present is entirely European'—I quote from a Unesco Seminar document. 'The library is in dire financial straits and is almost certain to be forced to close . . . this year. It is involved in a vicious circle: the fewer subscriptions, the fewer new books, the fewer subscriptions. The books are mainly fiction and travel.' The library had until recently some valuable Africana but these books had to be sold to enable the library to survive. 'The total stock is around 3,000 volumes and is housed in part of the Blantyre Town Hall. The librarian is a European lady employed part time. . . . She will carry on without salary in the hope that the library will somehow be saved from extinction.'

(*b*) The Ewing Bequest Library, founded under a bequest by a one-time manager of the African Lakes Corporation to provide a library for 'natives of Nyasaland'. Its annual income averages about £50 a year. 'There are eight or nine branches, mostly on mission stations' which are assumed to be active, 'but the main library at Zomba is not in circulation. It was handed to the African Recreation Hall some years ago, and for lack of someone with initiative has remained in boxes ever since.'

(*c*) The Nyasaland African Library 'which derives its income from the Native Development and Welfare Fund and has, for the current year, £270 for books and £35 for the African librarian's salary. . . . It is the only library of the four on a strictly racial basis. Africans may become borrowers on payment of an annual subscription of 2*s*. 6*d*.' African organizations paying 25*s*. a year can have 50 books at a time, and 8 such centres are supplied with books, 'though none of them have as yet been persuaded to pay the subscription'. The book stock consists of some 1,500 volumes, many of which are thin pamphlets, a certain number in the vernacular.

(*d*) The British Council Office Library, with a stock of 2,600 volumes 'which are lent to anyone at all on whom the British Council Representative has some check'.

'When compared with the need', the document continues, 'the service is pitifully inadequate. . . . Such resources as do exist are inefficiently exploited. . . . The geographical distribution is bad.

'The actual demand for books is uneven and complicated. The well-educated European lays hands on reading matter in one way or another, although many books which he particularly wants are denied to him. An increasing number of less well-educated Europeans do not read and do not make use of the existing facilities. The Indian appears to read nothing at all. The African demand is many-sided. The villager, literate in the vernacular only, appears to be reading more books but the number of books in his own language is very small. Among school children the use made of small school libraries where they exist has very recently shown an astonishing increase. For example, a recent report to the British Council on the use made of a small presentation to a large local school was to the effect that in two years the use made of library books has increased 100%. Among the two or three generations of educated Africans who are at work the demand is pitifully small, and it is in this group where the political leaders are found. There are many good explanations for this state of affairs. Some of these are:

'(*a*) lack of good artificial light (the evenings are very short);

'(*b*) lack of peace and quiet in the home;

'(*c*) lack of any reading-rooms;

'(*d*) lack of libraries and library propaganda in schools until comparatively recent years.

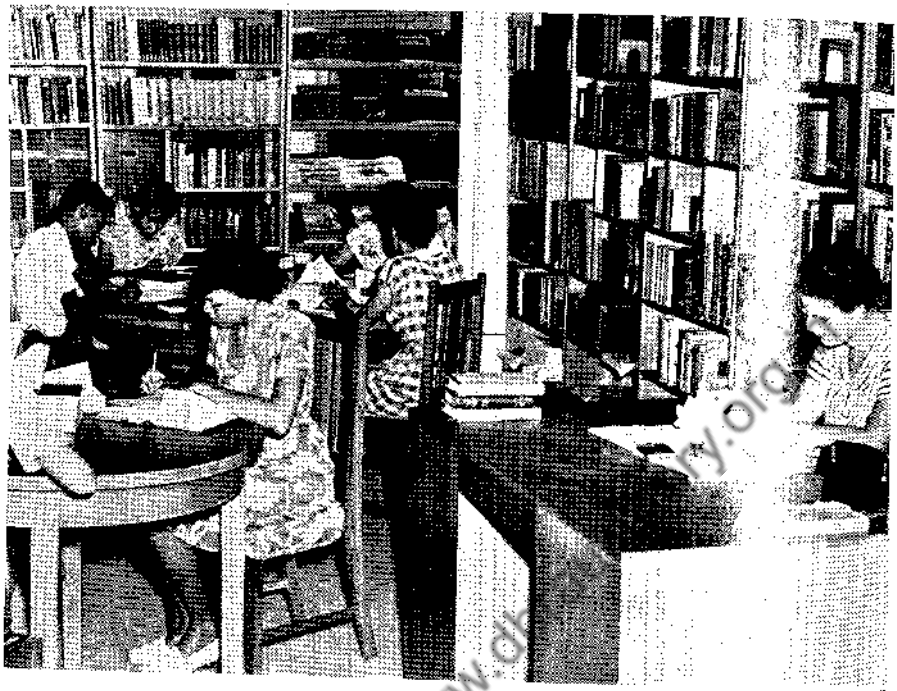
'The situation with regard to this particular group is not just one to be regretted. It is a public danger with which the writer is in personal contact every day in the course of his work among a mere handful of this section of the community. The lacunae in the backgrounds of these men are obstacles to progress but the misconceptions on all kinds of matters are, here and now, a grave danger, and wide reading could go a long way in helping to dissipate that danger.'

It was not until 1928 that the first public library in Northern Rhodesia was opened in Livingstone, the then capital. Elsewhere there were a few club and women's institutes libraries, supported by subscriptions and staffed by untrained volunteers, and these are still all there are to serve the Europeans in the rural areas, while an occasional welfare hall library is available for the African population around the district or provincial headquarters. Free libraries now exist at Livingstone, Ndola, and Lusaka, the first two grant-aided by the local authority (and presumably subscription libraries), the last wholly rate-supported. Mine libraries in the copper belt, maintained by the mine clubs, are open to the general public.

In Southern Rhodesia also the local welfare societies have built up

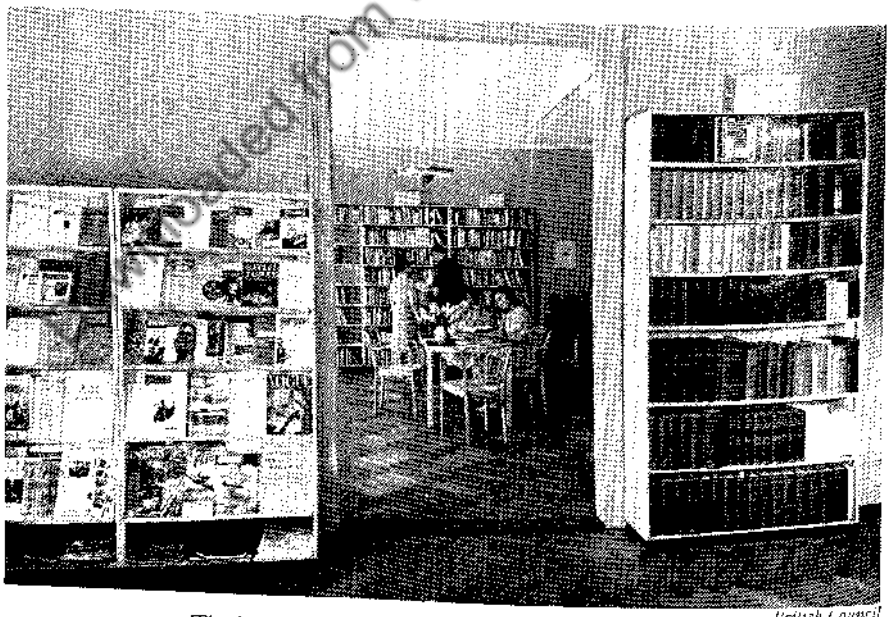
The Gold Coast Library Board, mobile library

Lagos Public Library, lending department



British Council

Library School students, E.C.R.L., Trinidad.



British Council

The British Council Library, Zürich (now closed).

small libraries for residents in African urban residential areas. The rural African population has at present no library facilities, and suitable books for them, either in simple English or the vernacular, are almost non-existent.

THE CARIBBEAN COLONIES

The West Indies have long had library services. Indeed there is there an example of the free public library established three years before the first English Public Libraries Act—in 1847—and since then continuously open to all members of the community and charging no subscription. This is the Public Library in Bridgetown, Barbados, founded by Sir William Reid, who was Governor of this colony. Previously, when Governor of Bermuda in 1839, he was responsible for creating a subscription library there. Elsewhere, over a hundred years ago, various subscription libraries came into being, such as the Trinidad Public Library (1851) and some in the Windward and Leeward Islands (including that at Antigua founded in 1830). The next true public libraries, after that at Bridgetown, did not come for a great many years. These were the Georgetown Public Library, British Guiana, established in 1909, and the Carnegie Library at San Fernando, the second largest town in Trinidad, in 1916. Both these had Carnegie grants towards the cost of the building.

In 1934 Dr E. A. Savage prepared a report for the Carnegie Corporation. He found nothing that could be regarded as adequate. The older subscription libraries had fallen into decay; the more recent institutions suffered from over expensive buildings and grossly insufficient resources. As remarkable—if far from sufficient—progress has been made since then it is worth while to remind ourselves of things as they were then, the better to see in what ways improvement has been secured, despite the prevailing poverty of these colonies and the many very small and widely dispersed administrative units, and also to see why nothing like sufficient has been achieved.

In Jamaica in 1933 'library provision', to quote Flood, 'centred on the Institute of Jamaica, . . . founded in 1879. The general library of the Institute charged a subscription of 5*s*. per annum but, in addition, members of certain societies throughout the island were entitled to borrow books as "affiliated" members of the Institute without charge. This was presumably an attempt by the Government to obtain some

service for the whole of the island in return for the subvention of £3,000 it paid to the Institute. It does not appear that the attempt was particularly successful.'

The Trinidad Public Library was until 1951 a subscription library, though it got small grants from the government and the city. British Honduras did not have a public library, neither was there one in the British Virgin Islands. The subscription libraries in the Windwards and Leewards groups were sadly inadequate. Savage advocated greater financial support, the recruitment and training of educated library staffs, the organization either of all the libraries as one service or at least the grouping of services within the present governmental boundaries, and the alteration of legislation to make libraries public as that term is understood in Great Britain and the United States.

In support of the last recommendation he compared the public library at Georgetown, British Guiana, and the subscription library at Port of Spain, Trinidad, both of which received subventions—of £808 and £1,000 respectively. Figures showed that 'the Georgetown Library, in a town of smaller population, has a subvention less by £200, receives no subscriptions, yet it issues many more books . . . and, allowing for inactive registered readers, has five times as many borrowers. . . . Such comparisons', he adds, 'generally prove that . . . public libraries, even when seriously in need of modernization, are more used. Subscriptions, in short, exclude people and bring in little financial support.' A subscription library supported by public funds serves a small privileged section of the community at the expense of the community as a whole, and the whole direction of the library is subordinated to the needs of this small section.

Savage stressed 'the basic principle which every modern report on public libraries stresses', says Flood, 'the necessity of having an autonomous unit large enough to support a library service. The individual units of the Caribbean colonies are not large enough' and 'cannot maintain separately adequate library services. . . . The plan proposed . . . was to choose a suitable governmental unit in which to set up a public library service with Carnegie Corporation assistance and encourage the extension of the service to other areas' by 'the circulation of book boxes, coupled with central training facilities, and the equivalent of the National Central Library to supply those books which the small library could not afford to stock but which would be needed by the student and the specialist. Trinidad was suggested as a suitable unit; a central library would be set up there, as the size of the

island warranted the appointment of a fully qualified librarian, and the service could be extended gradually to British Guiana and the Lesser Antilles.'

The Carnegie Corporation allotted $70,000 for the Central Library scheme and Dr Helen Gordon Stewart was appointed to administer the scheme. Between 1941 and 1944 she built up a service for Trinidad and Tobago. That year, however, currency restrictions put an end to the Carnegie assistance, and the British Council took over on condition that the Trinidad Government accepted responsibility for the service for that colony (which it did) and the Central Library Scheme was developed separately as a regional scheme for all the eastern Caribbean colonies. A sum of £80,000 was made available over a period of years.

For the next four years Dr Stewart continued to work indefatigably, seeking to reorganize the moribund libraries in the islands and to demonstrate the desirability of a free public library service. Her method of doing so was simple, though it involved her in enormous, selfless labour. As described in *E.C.R.L.*, the report on progress, 1941–50, she took over part of the building of the old subscription library, had book stacks and furniture made, trained one of the local staff to issue the books and keep the necessary records, and set up in effect what was a miniature public library with two or three thousand well-chosen books which could be borrowed by anyone, free of charge. The books and equipment for the demonstration were provided from Regional Library funds. If at the end of the demonstration period the Island Legislature agreed to accept the free library principle and abolish the subscription service and to make adequate provision for maintaining the library, the demonstration books and equipment were handed over, and the Regional Library undertook to continue to help build up book stock and give assistance in reorganization and staff training.

In 1948 Dr Stewart retired and a director, deputy-director, and cataloguer from England were appointed and the work continued. Meanwhile, in 1947, Mr Edward Sydney, Librarian of Leyton, had made a survey and put forward recommendations. The final scheme envisaged that the Regional Library would ultimately be maintained out of funds contributed by each colony and governed by a representative body drawn from each of the participating colonies—an eminently desirable proposal, provided it were capable of achievement, as, on the one hand, the British Council grant would soon be exhausted and, on the other hand, because public library services should be a local and regional responsibility and one more likely to be willingly assumed if

the governments concerned have a share in the management. This last stage has not yet been reached.

Mr Sydney defined the main functions of the Regional Library as follows:

'(1) To maintain constant contact between all libraries in the area for their mutual benefit.

'(2) To establish and maintain a Union Catalogue of the book stocks of the area.

'(3) To organize the machinery of inter-lending between libraries.

'(4) To build up a pool stock of books comprehensive in range and quality, but mainly of books not ordinarily purchased for general library work in the islands.

'(5) To act as a bibliographical information centre for the Region.

'(6) To establish in due course a working relationship with the other libraries of the Caribbean.'

Though this full programme cannot be operative until all the islands have well-established local services, it is on such lines that some progress has been made. A library school has been established, at which students have been prepared for the Entrance and Registration Examinations of the [British] Library Association, in which they have been remarkably successful—a tribute both to the thoroughness of the tuition and to the native ability for and interest in the work. A 'dictionary' union catalogue of the book stocks of the libraries in the region was commenced in 1949, and the inter-loan of required books, facilitated by this catalogue, was begun. At the same time a 'pool' stock, now embracing some 4,000 volumes, was built up at Regional headquarters. This contains books which should be available in the region though not perhaps items likely to be required very frequently at the individual libraries—technical works, manuals on government, economics, education, specialist books on art, child psychology, English literature, technical subjects, and the like. From this pool about 80% of the special requests are met. Obviously such a collection is essential if the more serious readers are to be served, just as similar collections have proved a necessary element in our own county library services. In 1948 a library bindery was set up, though this has now been discontinued.

Unfortunately, in 1953 when the British Council grant became exhausted, the authorities here were unwilling to renew it on similar

lines, though the excellent work already done was ample justification for increased support. No steps had been successfully taken to secure contributions from the Island governments—which are indeed barely able or willing to support adequately their local services (see later).[1] However, the scheme was, in March 1953, put under the control of the Development and Welfare Organization, and the Colonial Office made a first grant of £5,000 for the next six months' operations, and a further grant of £12,000 to continue the scheme until March 1956. This meant a reduction in the average annual expenditure to less than half the previous amount (£10,000 p.a.) and consequently book purchases had to cease and the staff to be drastically reduced. In other words a fine ship is being sacrificed for a ha'porth of tar—and who knows what will happen after 1956, as it is most unlikely that by then the Island governments will be ready to take over.[2]

This unlikelihood will be more evident when we consider in greater detail some of the Island services.

Let it be remembered that it is the libraries in the islands themselves which give the actual library service; it is from them that active readers obtain their required books, to them that others must be encouraged to resort; it is there that they make contact with the only staff who can discover their needs and help to meet them. The Regional Library has brought about great improvements and supplements their resources in many ways but, ultimately, it is the quality of the individual libraries that determines the standard of library provision. The Regional Library acts not *instead of* but entirely *through* these libraries. If they are not adequately housed, appropriately stocked, and well staffed the Regional Library can achieve little. Consequently, though the island governments *should* contribute to the Regional Library, which trains the personnel, provides the guidance, and supplies the less ordinary books without any of which they could not offer an effective service, it is not unreasonable that they should devote their first efforts to building up and maintaining their *own* libraries. The contribution of the Regional Library cannot be properly exploited saving through a useful, effective local library, but, no less important, the latter cannot rely excessively upon this help but must be capable of meeting most of the everyday needs of the population—in exactly the same way as the local public

[1] See pages 200–1.

[2] Since this was written a scheme has been adopted (in 1955) for combining the Eastern Caribbean Regional Library with the Central Library of Trinidad and Tobago and the Public Library of San Fernando, under one British director. The continuance of the work has thus been assured, though still without adequate financial resources.

library in Great Britain, for example, though it can draw upon the regional bureau and the National Central Library for 'unusual' material, can send its staff to library schools elsewhere, can use central bibliographical services and the like, must, nevertheless, look after 95% or more of the needs of its readers with its own resources. To seek more would be uneconomical, and lead to great delays and dissatisfaction.

The need for a reasonable measure of self-sufficiency is even greater in this region, because its few small units are scattered over an area of 900 miles from north to south. There are ten separate library services and five different governments—and varied economic and social conditions.

The *E.C.R.L.* report, 1941–50, already mentioned, gives this 'composite picture of the history of the typical island library':

'We find a good building, usually built by Carnegie funds in the early years of the century, supplied with a good standard collection of books and opened as the Carnegie Free Library. Unfortunately, owing to economic conditions, a concession had to be made allowing subscriptions to be charged to supplement the meagre local grants, with the inevitable result that as the years went on the library dwindled to a small subscription library with its scanty income mainly devoted to supplying periodicals to a handful of subscribers. Very few books were bought, and a survey in 1948 found that a large proportion of the original stock still remained on the shelves fighting a losing battle against the cockroach and silver fish, but seldom troubled by the rude hand of a borrower. Trained staff was non-existent and, indeed, unnecessary for the work being done. This was the background against which Dr Stewart set up her "free library demonstrations". . . . The stage was now set for the reorganization of the library, which was usually "closed for alterations" for a month or six weeks, during which time the Director or Deputy-Director with two members of the staff assisted the local staff in the work of transforming the library into a headquarters library, serving as a Public Library for the capital town and also as the administrative centre for the organization of the rural service. The usual departments were set up—Lending Library, Reference and Reading, and Children's Library, with a stack room and work room for the rural work, and the appropriate routines for the issuing of books, keeping the necessary records, etc., were instituted. The library's own book stock was processed and catalogued and the "Demonstration" books and any further Regional Library presentations were then combined in one sequence on the shelves. The most encouraging feature of these operations was the interest displayed by

the local committees and the inhabitants and, after weeks of co-operative work by carpenters and many other willing helpers, the library would emerge from dust and chaos, equipped to carry out its new duties and be formally opened as a Free Public Library Service. . . . From this point the Regional Library undertakes, for a limited period, to continue to build up the book stock and to assist in any other way, short of direct financial aid, in the development of the reorganized service. That is briefly the position in most of the library services at the moment. . . .

'In moving on to the next stage of development, the extension to the small towns and villages, many obstacles familiar to all British County Librarians, such as the reluctance of some of the Town Boards to relinquish their autonomy to a "government library service", still have to be overcome: equally familiar will be the practical difficulties of organizing, with limited resources, services of this kind over areas where communications are often extremely bad, and the usual background of social services and public amenities practically non-existent. In general the policy being adopted is that of actual deposits of books in library centres in selected towns and villages rather than a travelling library service. The reasons for this decision are:

'(i) A library centre, open two or three times a week, situated in some building in a central position, can be of greater service to the community than occasional visits of a book van.

'(ii) It is possible to open the libraries at times suited to the readers rather than the readers having to conform to the limitations of a book van schedule.

'(iii) A community will develop a greater interest and pride in a library which they consider to be "their own" than in a service which they can see only occasionally.

'(iv) Now that community centres are being set up it is becoming possible, not only to find a room in which to house the library, but also to organize local library committees and to locate and appoint local librarians. Moreover, the community centres can be used as reading-rooms even when the library is closed. This is of particular importance in country districts where inadequate housing and lack of lighting make reading at home difficult if not impossible.

'(v) Roads, when they exist, are often bad and the rate of depreciation and the cost of maintaining a book van will be correspondingly high. This saving will offset the cost of the somewhat larger book stocks required for a service of "fixed" centres.

'(vi) The collections of books, which will be changed wholly or partially three or four times yearly, will remain in a given place long enough for the reader to use all the books he requires. . . . Naturally a reservation or "request" service must be used . . . but it will not be subjected to such heavy demand as a book van service would occasion, and a postal service along the lines of the student service in English county libraries can deal with a large proportion of special requests.

'The great weakness of this method is, of course, that voluntary workers and local Library Committees, however enthusiastic, have their limitations, and that unless constant supervision by trained staff can be maintained from the main library, the overall service will be uneven, and in some cases completely ineffectual. No one who has worked in an English County Library will have any illusions about the value of the "box of books" method, which failed, and in some places is still failing, to touch more than a fraction of the population which a library should be serving, and every effort is being made to ensure that the closest contact is maintained between Headquarters staff and the branches and centres. The present deficiency both in quantity and quality of trained staff in some of the islands and the lack of appreciation of the need for "field" work on this scale will have to be overcome, but some help is being obtained by effecting a close liaison with officers of the Social Welfare and Education Departments whose duties take them periodically into the country districts, one officer of this kind usually being a member of the Library Board.'

How far these libraries will achieve their objectives in time it is difficult yet to judge.

The Central Library of Trinidad and Tobago, which was established as a department of the government of the colony in 1949, serves the whole of Trinidad and Tobago, excepting the Port of Spain (which is served by the Trinidad Public Library) and San Fernando, where there is a Carnegie Library, and with which the Central Library works in close co-operation. By 1952 it was operating through its headquarters (which also serves the vicinity of Port of Spain) 2 regional branches, 7 branch libraries, and 65 book van centres. From a total stock of 58,353 it circulated that year 231,793 volumes; the population of the area served is 450,000. San Fernando, with a population of 30,000, had in 1952, 3,527 adults and 3,552 children registered as readers, and a stock of 12,645 from which 108,000 books were borrowed. For years pre-

viously, before reorganization, trained staffing, and participation in the E.C.R.L. scheme, fewer than 500 people used the library.

Barbados, with its long-established public library, has one of the best services in the region. But in 1951 it only spent 8½*d.* per head of population, though it had 11·4% of the inhabitants enrolled as borrowers (32% of them children) and lent 2[illegible],000 books, a daily average of 884.

The highest expenditure per head of population (excepting in San Fernando) was then in the Virgin Islands (1*s.* 5½*d.*) with 1,350 issues to a total population of 7,200, of whom nearly 1,000 were registered borrowers. On the other hand, in 1951 Dominica spent only 2*d.* per head and St Lucia only 2¾*d.*; the former had only 16 books per hundred population, the latter only 10.

It is true that by 1953 the British Council had given these libraries nearly 70,000 volumes, but there is still a very serious deficiency of book stock. In 1953 the Director of the Regional Library estimated that at least 160,000 more books were needed for Barbados, the Leeward Islands, and the Windward Islands. These books can only be provided either by continued and augmented grants from the British Government or by the island authorities themselves. Thus it is obvious that, at least, it is unreasonable to expect the island authorities to make any contribution towards the essential regional services until they are able and willing to put their own houses into better order. Unless and until they have good local book stocks the best regional service will not be able to achieve much.

Jamaica

Jamaica was not included in the original Carnegie scheme since a separate system seemed desirable and practicable, but soon after the war the British Council, in agreement with Colonial Development and Welfare, offered to provide £70,000 over a period of ten years on condition that the Jamaica Government contributed £[illegible],000. A British librarian was appointed as Director in 1948 and a plan prepared. A provisional Island Library Board was appointed the following year, in the October of which the Jamaica Library Act became law.

The Jamaica plan divides responsibility between the local authorities and the Regional Library, called the Jamaica Library Service. The various parishes are empowered to adopt the Library Act, and the scheme envisaged that a library service would be set up in each, the Jamaica Library Service paying the cost of necessary buildings as these

came to be erected, providing the book stocks, undertaking central cataloguing, building up a union catalogue, and organizing inter-library loans, arranging for the training of personnel, and generally supervising the work and having overall control of policy. The parishes would be responsible for the upkeep of the buildings and the salaries of the staff, and would appoint local committees and enjoy a measure of local responsibility.

By 1954, 12 parishes, embracing a population of approximately 1 million, had established libraries, two of them with branches. In addition there were 36 centres receiving from headquarters collections of 300–400 books partially exchanged three times a year. It is intended that the library of the Jamaica Institute (to which reference has already been made) should become the public library for Kingston, but this has not yet been achieved, and so there is no public library service at all (excepting two book centres on the outskirts) in the capital city with its 238,000 inhabitants.

The Jamaica scheme has three great advantages over the Eastern Caribbean Regional Library—that it serves a compact area, has one government, and that this government was at the outset brought into the picture, making its contribution and exercising a large part of the control and responsibility. Nevertheless progress has been slow—even disappointing—despite the praiseworthy efforts of the staff at head-quarters and at the parish libraries and of many of the local committees. The explanations are what one might expect, i.e. a shortage of funds, a shortage of trained staff, and the absence of a 'library background'.

As regards the first, considering that stocks had to be built up from practically nothing and that the building programme has made heavy demands, support on the basis of £170,000 for ten years (assuming that to be actually available) is grossly inadequate. For example, in 1953–4 only 9,394 books were added though 4,450 were withdrawn as being worn out—a net increase of less than 5,000. It is true that there were, from a population of 1 million, only 22,600 readers, but the inadequacy of the stock must be measured not in relation to the number of actual users but to those who could and would become users were facilities available and attractive.

Flood points out that 'mention has been made earlier of the high percentage of illiteracy in the colonies. In Jamaica it has been estimated at 50% despite the fact that elementary schooling is compulsory. The fact is that until recently the child who learned to read at school had no access to literature apart from school readers and on leaving school

soon lost the reading habit. It is significant that among the readers at the various parish libraries there is a remarkably small percentage of people in their late teens and early twenties. The reading public is made up of older people who have learnt to read through literacy campaigns, the better educated in the younger age group and, by far the largest proportion, school children and those just leaving school. The fact that this last group is using the libraries is a good sign for the future.'

But the Director of the Jamaica Library Service laments that he cannot cope with the demand for children's books—although the service has now started to supply schools with funds supplied by the Education Authority. And he makes this illuminating comment: 'The preponderance of the issue of fiction over non-fiction in Jamaica is, however, in direct contrast to the experience of librarians in other parts of the West Indies where, to quote from the annual report of the Trinidad Central Library (non-fiction issue 62% of total), "the adults' reading remains what it has been from the start, an occupation that is undertaken more for profit than pleasure". The inescapable conclusion is that the collections of books at present in the Parish Libraries and Book Centres are mainly used by the more sophisticated members of the reading public, who are accustomed to such services, but that little has been done yet to reach the many people who have little knowledge of the uses of books, and particularly those of limited reading ability who, nevertheless, can profitably use suitably presented reading material. Without making any controversial statements about the merits of most modern novels, or the extent to which they should be provided by a public library service, it is obvious that the average English novel is going to appeal to only a small percentage of the literate population of Jamaica. These people can be drawn into the service only by a much more generous provision of carefully selected books and more active field work by trained staff capable of assessing and satisfying the needs of borrowers—requirements involving expenditure which the Government has not yet been able to accept. As soon as funds and staff are available an experimental mobile book service will be launched which, manned by trained staff, will provide a much wider choice of books to readers in the country districts and will help to break down the isolation in which the small centres function at the moment. It will also provide much more detailed and reliable information on reading habits than has hitherto been available.'

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Maybe the ideal way to write a book is to start at the beginning and proceed steadily towards the end. I confess that I have never been able to adopt this procedure. Instead, having a general background and a mass of information to work upon, I write various sections 'as the spirit moves me' and then fit them together afterwards like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Probably this is a bad method the ill-effects of which will be only too apparent. Nevertheless it explains why the other day I wrote of Yugoslavia as a country with too many independent libraries and found that the next to be dealt with was one with many, many too few. According to *Libraries in India, 1951*, issued by the Ministry of Education of the Government of India, there were then only 1,166 libraries of all kinds and only 248 which were described as 'public libraries'. Yet India has a population of 362,000,000 people.

It is true that 85% of these are illiterate and so have yet no need for libraries—excepting those attached to schools for fundamental education. Nevertheless there remain some 60 million potential readers many of whom would, as experience at Delhi shows, gladly use libraries were they available.

The difficulties are, admittedly, enormous. The standard of living is deplorably low, with an average *per capita* income of less than £20 a year. The death rate is very high, largely because of diseases which are rampant because poverty lowers vitality and resistance. Preventive measures have lowered the death rate from 22 to 17 per thousand in ten years but only to accentuate the further grave problems of over population. Three-quarters of the people are employed in agricultural work, but under conditions which preclude India from being able to feed itself even at existing very low standards of subsistence. About 15% of the people live in towns, where the percentage of literates is higher, though housing conditions are deplorable.

Some 250 different languages are spoken. Most of these are not written languages and have no literature, and are spoken by relatively few. But there are at least eleven major languages in which much has been written. Hindi, the 'official' language which is to replace English as such as soon as practicable, is spoken in various forms by 80 million people—and only five languages in the world are spoken by more—Bengali by 50 million, Telegu by 30 million, and so on. A nation-wide public library service would have to provide books in all these

languages at least, as well as material in English and other European languages. Moreover, as there are considerable districts in which more than one language is spoken, many individual libraries would need to make multi-lingual provision. Actually the books do not exist in anything approaching adequacy. In Hindi, the major and official language, for example, there are probably no more than 10,000 books in print and only 300 to 400 new items are published each year. On many subjects nothing has been written. Frank Gardner, speaking of his experiences at Delhi (see later),[1] says, 'At least 60 per cent of the books published are fiction; of non-fiction, lists show a heavy preponderance of religion, philosophy, and sociology . . . with a good sprinkling of books on astrology and other suspect sciences. We were unable to find any books in Hindi on chess, radio, motor engineering, photography, or flower gardening, to name four subjects at random, and very few of any value in technical subjects except accountancy, journalism, and education.' Such books as exist are invariably very badly printed on wretched paper and are subject to the ill effects of dust and damp and the prey of white ants and rats. To these grave difficulties one could add several others—the lower status of women, religious and political factors, the caste system, and the absence of housing conditions and artificial lighting to make book reading possible in the vast majority of the homes.

Dr S. R. Ranganathan, for many years a dominant figure in Indian library circles, in one of his flights of fancy stated that 'by 1980 India must be provided by a national central library, 22 state central libraries, 154 city central libraries, 712 city branches, 373 rural central libraries, 4,100 rural branch libraries, 13,107 mobile libraries, and 268,361 delivery stations'. This may be an accurate estimate of need, but if a small part of this programme is to be made real there will have to be a phenomenal change in public and official opinion and, maybe, more realism on the part of the library profession.

Mr John Makin, in an unpublished thesis on 'The Background to the Problems of Library Provision in India', accepted by the Library Association in 1953, describes the position as follows:

'It must be made clear at the onset that truly "Public" libraries, wholly provided by public funds and freely available, without charge, to all members of the community, are almost unknown. There are exceptions, of course—the Unesco pilot project, the new Delhi Public Library, makes no charge for its services and is open to all—but apart

[1] See pages 207–10.

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Maybe the ideal way to write a book is to start at the beginning and proceed steadily towards the end. I confess that I have never been able to adopt this procedure. Instead, having a general background and a mass of information to work upon, I write various sections 'as the spirit moves me' and then fit them together afterwards like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Probably this is a bad method the ill-effects of which will be only too apparent. Nevertheless it explains why the other day I wrote of Yugoslavia as a country with too many independent libraries and found that the next to be dealt with was one with many, many too few. According to *Libraries in India, 1951*, issued by the Ministry of Education of the Government of India, there were then only 1,166 libraries of all kinds and only 248 which were described as 'public libraries'. Yet India has a population of 362,000,000 people.

It is true that 85% of these are illiterate and so have yet no need for libraries—excepting those attached to schools for fundamental education. Nevertheless there remain some 60 million potential readers many of whom would, as experience at Delhi shows, gladly use libraries were they available.

The difficulties are, admittedly, enormous. The standard of living is deplorably low, with an average *per capita* income of less than £20 a year. The death rate is very high, largely because of diseases which are rampant because poverty lowers vitality and resistance. Preventive measures have lowered the death rate from 22 to 17 per thousand in ten years but only to accentuate the further grave problems of over population. Three-quarters of the people are employed in agricultural work, but under conditions which preclude India from being able to feed itself even at existing very low standards of subsistence. About 15% of the people live in towns, where the percentage of literates is higher, though housing conditions are deplorable.

Some 250 different languages are spoken. Most of these are not written languages and have no literature, and are spoken by relatively few. But there are at least eleven major languages in which much has been written. Hindi, the 'official' language which is to replace English as such as soon as practicable, is spoken in various forms by 80 million people—and only five languages in the world are spoken by more—Bengali by 50 million, Telegu by 30 million, and so on. A nation-wide public library service would have to provide books in all these

languages at least, as well as material in English and other European languages. Moreover, as there are considerable districts in which more than one language is spoken, many individual libraries would need to make multi-lingual provision. Actually the books do not exist in anything approaching adequacy. In Hindi, the major and official language, for example, there are probably no more than 10,000 books in print and only 300 to 400 new items are published each year. On many subjects nothing has been written. Frank Gardner, speaking of his experiences at Delhi (see later),[1] says, 'At least 60 per cent of the books published are fiction; of non-fiction, lists show a heavy preponderance of religion, philosophy, and sociology . . . with a good sprinkling of books on astrology and other suspect sciences. We were unable to find any books in Hindi on chess, radio, motor engineering, photography, or flower gardening, to name four subjects at random, and very few of any value in technical subjects except accountancy, journalism, and education.' Such books as exist are invariably very badly printed on wretched paper and are subject to the ill effects of dust and damp and the prey of white ants and rats. To these grave difficulties one could add several others—the lower status of women, religious and political factors, the caste system, and the absence of housing conditions and artificial lighting to make book reading possible in the vast majority of the homes.

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from some free reading-rooms which provide only newspapers, the majority of Indian public libraries charge a fee to each individual member and are, in fact, "subscription" libraries; although in many cases they may be receiving a grant from the State Government through its Ministry of Education, this grant is conditioned by the income from subscriptions, this subscription income being an essential condition of government aid, and it is unfortunately true to say that once the money barrier, no matter how small, is introduced, a large proportion of the Indian public must of necessity exclude itself. As for government grants, examples can be quoted where the annual sum received does not exceed Rs 200 (£15), whilst in many cases the library's total expenditure does not total Rs. 1,000 (£75).

'The Delhi Public Library is financed by Central Government and Delhi Municipality funds and Unesco; Bombay State maintains libraries under a Government order and only Madras State has a Library Act, passed in 1948. The history of public libraries in India is, therefore, very largely an account of the strivings of a group of persons to persuade Governments to enact legislation by which instrument cities, towns, and villages could provide library services. A considerable amount of work has been done in analysing, estimating, and costing these services, both on a national and local basis, but these have been largely theoretical exercises with no basis in reality, and at the moment no further legislation is contemplated, even of a modest kind.'

In the Princely State of Baroda, which was the first in India to introduce compulsory primary education, a good system of town, village, and travelling libraries was established in 1911. Under the guidance of an American librarian, Mr H. A. Borden, it flourished, and by 1931 had over 500,000 books, 62,000 readers, and lent 316,000 volumes a year. But, on partition, the state of Baroda was merged with the state of Bombay, which 'took over' the library system and, lacking the necessary support, interest, and inspiration, this soon fell into decay; the smaller libraries have largely grown moribund and only the Central Library remains effective. Despite this the Government of Bombay has continued to recognize subscription libraries and make them grants, and has started a system of deposit collections.

'Financially,' says Makin, 'the present arrangement whereby the government contributes a sum equal to that collected from membership fees is most unsound, for on this limited base of subscription must be founded a scheme for the public at large, and, not unnaturally, membership fees are shrinking because of the promise of state aid. Book

stocks are often pitifully inadequate and insufficient to provide a lending service for the general public; in its stead, a reference service is offered, but only the newspaper reading-rooms are in fact used, used to such an extent that it is not an uncommon sight to see "house full" notices outside many reading-rooms. Other libraries are provided by the State Social Education Service, but these are libraries for neo-literates and not in fact public libraries, and usually consist of a small collection of pamphlets, charts, etc., published specially for this purpose; the state recognizes some 5,000 of these village libraries, the maximum grant payable being Rs.18 or 27*s*. per year.'

Conditions elsewhere are even worse. Of the 28 states 6 have more than 10 'public libraries', only 3 have 40 or more (Bombay 80, Madras 41, and West Bengal 40). Only 198 of the libraries have more than 5,000 books and 31 of them more than 20,000—and it must be noted that though total stock statistics are always suspect unless one knows of what the stock consists, they are specially misleading in a country where very little is ever discarded. Of 248 libraries, 208 are managed by private bodies, 22 by state governments, and 18 by local boards. No wonder that strenuous efforts are being made to induce state governments to adopt legislation to encourage local authorities to provide libraries. But legislation alone is not the answer.

Neither, let all concerned be warned, is example. In India there has been established a library service which is intended to afford an example for the guidance of all-India. But people can admire examples or ignore them, or say 'that is very good for *them* but not for *us*'; they will not necessarily follow them. I have often seen shockingly bad libraries existing cheek by jowl with excellent examples. I know, for example, of one conurbation of 29 municipalities 2 of which had very good libraries for decades without causing emulation or public demand for any service in the other 27. In other words this Indian 'example', the Delhi Public Library Project, must be made the focus of and the excuse for active nation-wide propaganda. And, of course, all pilot schemes, anywhere, must be good examples, by which I mean capable of demonstrating genuine accomplishment and both sufficiently 'typical' and sufficiently within the means of other similar authorities.

This most important project is best described in the words of Frank M. Gardner (*The Delhi Public Library Project*, Unesco 1952 [Occasional papers in education]).

When in 1949 the Unesco General Conference proposed to establish a demonstration public library, the Government of India suggested that

it should be established at Delhi, and preliminary arrangements were made at once. Mr Edward Sydney was appointed Advisory Director, and spent from December 1950 until June 1951 preparing the scheme and planning its development. Meanwhile, the Permanent Director spent six months in Europe studying public library problems, returning in February 1951. The library was opened in October 1951 and soon after Mr Gardner went out as consultant.

'The original purpose of the project was to assist in the work of fundamental education, and in the final agreement between Unesco and the Government of India in May 1951, the terms of reference for the project were set out:

> '"It shall provide a public library service for the people of the city of Delhi and shall be a model for all public library development in India, and in all other countries where similar development of public libraries can be undertaken. The Library shall be designed to carry out the policy of the Unesco Public Libraries Manifesto and to serve the needs of popular education."

'For the achievement of these purposes there are certain basic principles, without which, it has been proved, the library cannot flourish. They are:

'1. Major or entire support by taxation.
'2. Freedom of membership.
'3. Access to the shelves for individual selection.
'4. Organization of the library for use, not preservation, of books.

'Since the public library is a community project, it should be supported by the community. Further . . . the public library requires not only adequate financial support, but continuous support, and this can only be provided by taxation.'

Delhi was chosen for various reasons—because it made possible constant contact with the government, because Delhi, with over a million population, was badly provided, there being then, apart from the university library, only a semi-moribund subscription library, and so a clean start could be made. The premises, a large single-story building in a thickly populated district in Old Delhi, originally built as a canteen, were suitable and capable of adaptation.

'Since the Library was the result of direct negotiation between Unesco and the Government of India, and there was no legislation either local or national to provide for control and management, it was necessary to create a suitable instrument to which these functions could

be delegated. The Delhi Library Board was created as an *ad hoc* body for the purpose. . . .

'The Board consists of twelve members, nine nominated by various agencies, and three co-opted for special technical qualifications. . . . The chairman is nominated by the Minister of Education, the vice-chairman by Unesco. Of the other seven nominated members, two represent the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance, two the Delhi Municipal Committee, one Unesco, one the Delhi District Board, and one the Chief Commissioner, Delhi.'

Although, as there is a school of librarianship in Delhi (though it trains people for a very different type of librarianship from that required in a public library), a nucleus of trained personnel was available, it was no easy task to prepare the staff of 45 (half of them attendants and servants) for this completely novel task. Mr Gardner's account of these difficulties is illuminating, and its wider significance should be noted in connection with similar projects elsewhere.

The book stock (of some 7,000 when the library opened) was in three languages—Hindi, Urdu, and, to a limited extent, English.

'From the very beginning the response of the public was much greater than had been expected. The original regulations had provided for free use of the Library, under safeguards, to people wishing to borrow books, and for their enrolment as members. People wishing to consult books or read magazines or newspapers were admitted, however, without formality. This was very quickly found to be a mistake. Within a very few days over 1,200 people a day were using the Library, and the problems of supervision were too great. A change was therefore made, requiring all persons using the Library to become members under the usual conditions of enrolment, and at the same time a separate place for newspaper readers was found on the verandah. . . .

'The conditions for enrolment were that persons on the taxpayers' list were admitted under their own guarantee, while persons not taxpayers were admitted free on the guarantee of a ratepayer. For people unable to find a guarantor, a deposit of 10 rupees was charged. As experience showed that some persons were embarrassed by this regulation, it was relaxed experimentally to provide that teachers, heads of Social Education Centres, and other responsible persons could recommend persons for membership without any financial liability. Powers were given to the Director to admit without any guarantee on personal application. It was not found that this resulted in any misuse of the

Library, so that within a few months the Library was available to all without restriction beyond the formal act of registration. . . .

'In the first eight months of the Library's existence, a total of slightly over 10,000 members were enrolled, with the rate of registration increasing continuously. This, it must be admitted, was a larger number than the Library could cope with in comfort, and caused serious problems in book supply and accommodation. But it was a deliberate policy not to restrict membership in any way, since it was thought that the only way to discover the extent of the demand for the Library was to enrol all who applied. Thus, apart from restricting the period for registration to two hours each day, no one was turned away. Of these 10,000 readers, only about 300 were required to pay a deposit, and most of these were accepted before the relaxation of regulations . . . 40% of the total is young people below the age of 18—a very high proportion, but not unexpected, in view of the low adult literacy rate. . . .

'Up to the end of May, a total of 74,000 books was loaned, an average of 285 per day; but this does not give a true picture of the situation, since loans were continually rising, and in the month of May 1952 alone, 17,858 books were loaned to adults and 2,861 to children, a daily average of nearly 600 for adults and 150 for children. By this time, the book stock had been raised to over 14,000, and even so, over 50 per cent of the stock was constantly on loan.'

A high proportion of the books borrowed were fiction, due in some measure to the relative paucity of books in Hindi on other subjects.

'The general orientation of Indian taste in reading was shown, however, by the fact that in all three languages there is great interest in philosophy, religion, and literature. . . . Literature, mainly poetry and drama, far outstripped other subjects in preference . . . next biography, and next philosophy, religion, and sociology. . . . Technical books were fairly well used, but fine arts and science occupied the same position as philosophy and religion in England. . . .

'Most of all, one missed in Delhi those readers so conspicuous in a western public library, who are bent on improving their knowledge of craft or hobby, such as photography, model-making, cookery, or amateur acting, just as one missed the books provided in quantity for such readers by British publishers. But there were encouraging signs. Although few such books were available in Hindi or Urdu, when they were provided in English it was soon noticed that readers came forward for them. . . .

'After a few months, membership can be seen as being in three distinct layers. First, there are the general reading adults, mainly middle-class office workers, teachers, and professional people, reading fiction and general literature. Second come the young people from 15 to 21, who also read fiction in Hindi, but are responsible for a good deal of the demand for recreational and semi-technical material. Third are the more highly educated people and students. Students form a considerable part of the membership, and this is not altogether desirable. Throughout examination of the use of the Library runs the warning that if care is not taken, it may become a source of text-books for students concerned with reading for examination purposes. . . .

'In addition to its use for home reading the Library was also available for reading on the premises, and the general book stock was used for both purposes. Newspapers and periodicals were provided. The use of newspapers was very heavy indeed.'

A Social Education Department was set up to 'serve another purpose —that of an informal approach to the non-literate or newly literate. Although close co-operation with community centres, mainly for the poorer classes, was intended from the outset, there must come a point at which the new literates are persuaded to enter the library', and much attention was paid to the problems of the newly literate.

'The Children's Library was an integral part of the library service as originally planned, and has been well used since the beginning. Originally, however, use of it was confined to reading on the premises, the commencement of a lending service for home reading being delayed until May. . . .

'The first problem was to find sufficient books. The supply of children's books in Hindi is not only very small, but the majority of the books available are unsuitable for lending in their original form, being nearly all 24- or 32-page pamphlets in paper covers. . . .

'The stock in Hindi and Urdu was supplemented by a selection of books in English chosen for their universal appeal. The use of English books was, however, very limited, since English is not generally taught in schools until secondary standard is reached at the age of 10, and few children are able to read English well before the age of 15 or 16.'

Various steps had to be taken to improve the supply of material in Hindi.

'The Library has so far successfully shown that western library techniques are practicable under Indian conditions, and that there is an urgent and unsatisfied need for popular libraries adequately financed

and served by trained staffs. As it expands, it will no doubt show the value and economy of a single co-ordinated library system for an area.'

Since Gardner's booklet was written a mobile library (a van) has started to give service in the surrounding country districts. The permanent Director in a statement in 1953 says that 'the total expenditure up to 31 March 1953 was 517,549 rupees [about £39,850], that the book stock totalled 34,404, the membership 15,803 and that loans from the lending department were 207,381 and from the children's department 59,556, and that 112 meetings (story hours, film shows, debates, etc.) were held in the children's department, and 453 meetings (group meetings, film shows, lectures, etc.) were held by the Social Education Department.'

I have no personal knowledge of conditions in the Indian continent (I have spent only 3–4 days in Karachi and one in Calcutta) or of the Delhi project. I have my doubts whether in truth this project should be regarded as a model for demonstration projects elsewhere. In saying this I know full well that immense good will come from Delhi in many ways. But I feel that a more modest scheme—or, better, several schemes started in much smaller places—would have been better, not alone because these would have been more typical but because any attempt to provide services in a great city which could be calculated to demonstrate the public library idea involves problems of staffing and book supply that India is not yet in a position to solve. Moreover, apart from these problems, it is idle to suggest that so relatively small a book stock and such limited financial resources are adequate for a city of this size. It is as though one were deliberately seeking to project the conception of a library with high ideals but insufficient resources vainly seeking to cope with excessive demand. I would rather see a library sufficiently provided, and so organized, to give a first-rate service to a limited population using such books and staffs and premises as can *now* be made available—a library able to do its job *under present conditions* rather than one which imperfectly shows what might be done in future possible circumstances.

Having written these words I find that Makin agrees that those responsible in Unesco and in India have 'too readily side-stepped the fundamental issues and given us instead an exercise commencing in the second, the *development* stage; the problem in India is not how to extend, improve, develop, or correctly administer a library service, it is how to initiate such a service.'

Of the Delhi project he says, 'It is perhaps unfair to criticize what is undoubtedly a fine project; nevertheless, from the writer's point of view, the foundations on which this service are being built are not perhaps as firm as they should be. Great difficulty is being experienced in obtaining adequate subject coverage in vernacular languages, and to cover this deficiency multiple duplication of such titles as are available is resorted to—the inevitable result of such a policy, where "demand" is subordinated to the resources available, must result in an unbalanced stock. The large-scale extension activities are also open to criticism, for whilst in no wise decrying their value or popularity, one is left to wonder if a new library such as this would not be better employed in perfecting its primary function, the provision of books. The fundamental concept of the library, as a Public Library *and* as a library for neo-literates, must also be suspect: the two tasks are quite separate and distinct, the techniques are entirely different, and each is a major task; more important still, whilst admitting that illiteracy does exist in a large degree in the cities, it is fundamentally a problem of the rural areas, and the techniques applied in an urban library will do little towards evolving the necessary techniques of the larger problem of overcoming illiteracy in the villages.'

And he has much that is very wise to say about 'idealistic plans', remarking that the first step towards library development is for existing librarians, with existing libraries, to put their houses in order—and this, of course, is true of most other countries as well as of India.

He formulates the following practical steps that the Indian Library Association and Indian librarians should take—and again these proposals are internationally applicable:

'1. An appreciation should be made of the efficiency limit of any service under existing Indian conditions, as to attempt to do too much with insufficient resources will result in an even greater loss of reputation. This may mean, and I personally think it does mean, that any plans for participation in illiteracy campaigns, fundamental education programmes, comprehensive rural coverage, etc., must be shelved at this stage, but it is better to do a thing on a small scale and do it efficiently than to attempt a larger task and do it badly. The stand of the Indian librarian on illiteracy, for example, is surely unrealistic; the librarian's true function is to continue the individual's *education*, not his reading ability, and whilst with the educated classes the two are enjoined, with the neo-literate the ability to read is a thing in itself and as such is too vital to be thrust on the already straining back of the

librarian. In any case, neo-literate material, as at present produced, is physically unsuitable for circulation.

'2. A set of basic standards for public libraries should be drawn up and published, standards beneath whose minima it is known that no library can operate satisfactorily. So often one is asked the question, "How can we improve our library?" when the only possible answer is to reorganize from the ground up: building, furniture, fittings, stock, and finance. It should be possible to evolve a formula, based on the reading (not the total) population of a given area, from which can be computed the original outlay in building, stock, and furniture, together with the annual expenditure necessary to cover accessions, replacements, salaries, etc. Libraries that fail to reach or maintain these standards should be advised to amalgamate with other libraries, to offer their assets to any existing local cultural group or to the local authority in return for adequate financial support, or, if all else fails, to voluntarily liquidate themselves, donating their stock to a central library in return for postal facilities. Such a programme, harsh though it sounds, would obviate two great evils—the privately endowed library now struggling on without adequate financial backing, and the library that may be receiving an inadequate government grant, and which, but for that grant, would long ago have faded gracefully away.

'3. The Association should take a firm stand on the amount of extension work that should be done. It is perhaps unfortunate that so much publicity has been given to this work in the West and so much has been written about it in the professional press; it is attractive, it is popular, and it attracts attention—nevertheless in the first few decades the emphasis must be on stock and reader-service and all available resources concentrated on these.

'4. Priorities should be awarded to groups of readers rather than to areas. Groups that suggest themselves as urgently needing the help of an efficient library service are students, for many of whom the existing facilities are greatly lacking, skilled workers, for whom no vernacular literature exists, and children, who have neither literature nor libraries. Not only would the satisfying of these needs be a most vital function, it would also serve to build up a reserve of support at all levels in the future, even though it might mean the sacrifice of the present generation of would-be library users.'

In the other part of the Indian continent, Pakistan, conditions are probably no better. The Central Government created a Directorate of Archives and Libraries under the Ministry of Education in 1950 and

laid the foundations of a national library, but there is no organized system of free public libraries. There are subscription libraries in some of the larger towns, sometimes aided by the province and local governments. For example, the Punjab Public Library at Lahore, founded in 1884, has about 120,000 volumes—and a special children's department; there are municipal libraries at Peshawar (6,000 volumes), Sukkur (11,000), Quetta (15,000), and Karachi (20,000).

Conclusions

I

WHEN I FIRST PLANNED this book, I proposed to begin with a statement of the purposes of public libraries—of the reasons why, in my opinion, there *should* be public libraries everywhere, for everyone. I changed my mind for three reasons: First, I have found to my dismay too often that precisely those people whom one would expect to know all about public libraries and be eager to promote their interests are those who know little about them and care less. I refer to such people as civil servants, teachers, business and professional men, university professors, Members of Parliament, members of local authorities, trade union officials, and others who, in general, lead and create. Do not misunderstand me. I do not suggest that the majority of such men do not use public libraries; to an increasing extent they *do*. But I think that if I were to ask, say, a hundred members of the types specified and a hundred housewives, or a hundred clerks or skilled craftsmen or school children, what they knew about their public library, where it was, what it provided, and who administered it, I should find much greater ignorance in the first group than in any of the others. This is quite understandable and forgivable—if unfortunate. It is understandable because those of my specified groups who are interested in books have probably been brought up to use other libraries—those of their universities, their professional or research associations, supplemented for current lighter materials by commercial subscription libraries to which they can afford to belong. It is forgivable because it must be admitted that until recent years few public libraries have been able to meet their needs—and many still cannot—and once a man finds that an institution is not able to serve him and he has to have recourse to other sources he is unlikely to discover that that institution has improved and may now be very useful. A very senior civil servant once told me with amusement how, when he told his aunt that he found his public library most useful, she raised her hands in horror. 'But surely, Charles, you don't use such awful places!' Her ideas of a public library had been formed at a period when they were usually 'awful places'. (Incidentally the libraries for which I am myself responsible are used much by Members of Parliament and civil servants, and are visited and 'worked in' by numerous visitors from all over the world, and I have often remarked—and

believe it to be true—that if these libraries did nothing else but demonstrate to *those* people the scope and function of a decent public library they would fully justify their existence.) It is unfortunate because usually, all over the world, the people who have it in their power to promote library development are just the people who know least about it—which makes the life of the keen librarian so much more difficult than it need be. Consequently, on second thoughts, I decided that before discussing 'whys and wherefores' I should describe library services as they are.

Secondly, I decided that if anyone were likely to peruse this work he would be more willing to do so if I started with facts rather than theories.

Thirdly, I confess that I have spent so many years of my life preaching the public library doctrine that I am becoming guilty of repeating myself, of expounding ideals that have become so clear and crystallized that I began to wonder whether I am not in danger of being guilty of selecting evidence to support my opinions rather than of basing my opinions upon the total available evidence. I suddenly realized that it would do me good, on this occasion, to try to forget my own ideas and ideals while I studied and presented the picture of present conditions. Thus I would give myself the chance to see things afresh, if necessary to revise my philosophy, if not perhaps to find new cause to expound it. The experience has not been altogether unsuccessful. I shall surely find myself saying again some of the things I have said often before but at least I hope I can say some of them in different phrases.

And the first thing I want to say is that I am not by any means sure that reading in itself is necessarily a good thing. In my youth I often heard the argument that it was better for a man to read *anything* rather than nothing *because* trivial reading led often to serious reading, that he who once embarked upon the adventure of books would surely travel far. I early rejected this theory because the facts did not support it. It was a comforting philosophy to the poor librarian of forty or fifty years ago who, though lacking the money to provide a true, useful library service, nevertheless had to justify his existence. But I soon discovered that the man who was really interested in real life and real books would use good libraries if they were available, whereas he who was only interested in 'unreal' life and 'unreal' books would go his own sweet way the more surely the better the supply. In other words I discovered that books and public libraries could do as much harm as

good—if indeed there *is* any harm in reading for escape and pastime. I don't really think there *is*. If a man wants to read trivial books instead of watching trivial films or listening to trivial radio programmes, why not? Indeed, I found that most people, for some of their time, like to be trivial—and, again, why not? I myself often indulge in trivial reading—and all sorts of other trivialities. Why not? Might there not be another freedom even more valuable than all the other freedoms of the Atlantic Charter and maybe the 'end product' of them all—the freedom to do what you like best to do?

But, as a librarian, I realized, gradually, that with my inevitably limited resources I could cater only for part of the needs of my potential clientele, and that, since I had to make a choice, I was wise to give preference to those kinds of human needs—and those kinds of books—for which my readers would find fewer substitutes. I had to say that while there are people who want to do and think and dream, to plan, discuss, argue, seek, and discover, I should serve these rather than the people who can be just as well satisfied by the films and the newspapers and the radio, or who can, if they want their escape in bound volumes, go to the nearest 'twopenny' library.

I am not, now, discussing the principles of book selection for public libraries, however. What matters is that while discovering what one needs *not* to do one gains a clear idea of what one *should* do. And it was early apparent that without books there were several very important things that one's potential readers could *not* do. One discovered—to put it in the simplest terms—that without making full and appropriate use of books a man could not be efficient and useful, could not be himself and individual, could not be free.

The first realization needs little exposition. It is manifest that the greater part of human knowledge—all of it excepting that which is a matter of skills and understandings, rather than ideas and facts—is recorded and preserved in and transmitted by books, periodicals, and similar materials. Therefore, all those who use facts and ideas for whatever reason must find most of them in books at either first or second-hand. They must read, or they must learn from those who read. The facts that the majority of men can discover for themselves in their own experience are few, relatively. All scientific and technological activities, scholarship, education, law, and the pursuit of philosophy and literature are based upon the use of books. All extensions of human knowledge demand the use of books at some stage or other. Most extensions of individual knowledge demand the use of books. Until books were

written, gradually embracing widening fields of knowledge, progress was slow and limited. As Carlyle said, 'With the invention of printing the age of miracles began'. Present-day civilization has been largely created by and increasingly depends for its existence on the book.

The significance of the book is, however, recognized unequally by occupational groups, by individuals, and by nations. Some occupational groups—and I use the phrase in its widest sense as will be evident later—need books more than others, some *appear* to need them less. Those who are engaged in creative activities or in research of any kind obviously need them, and on the whole have taken active steps to provide themselves with the libraries of specialization and learning without which they could not work. Students of all kinds need them, and the success of their studies depends largely upon how well they are available. People whose vocations involve conditions which are liable to change, such as, for example, many business men, need them, as do those who have constant occasion to refer to precedents and enactments, such as lawyers. Those who have occasional need to step outside the more normal activities for which they have been trained and educated—such as men indulging in certain hobbies—require books. One could increase these examples *ad infinitum*.

On the other hand, however, we must recognize that most of the world's work is a matter of repetition and inertia, of obedience and of tradition. Most people, once they have acquired sufficient knowledge and experience to do what it is that they have chosen or been obliged to do, can, sometimes actually sometimes apparently, go on doing it without much need for books or periodicals except perhaps a popular trade journal. Today most businesses run themselves, only modified by changing circumstances, much as they did yesterday. Most manufacturers go on making much the same things in much the same way; if changes or novelty are required someone else does the research and the experiment. The great majority of people do what they are told and have no desire to think about it or read about it and are not encouraged to do so. Now, so long as there *is* no need for books there is no more to be said; either we can do without books on our vocation or can let others use them for us. Frankly, I think it is a great mistake for us to expect the average man to read about his work—it is the last thing he wants to read about and often would be the most useless, as he would be unable to apply his knowledge if he did.

But one must be sure that one *can* do without books. The business man and the manufacturer, for example, must ask themselves whether

if they knew and thought more about their activities they would be more successful, better able to face competition, from within or from without, better able to give greater public service. They must remember that few positions remain unchanged in a changing world, that activities which do not become more efficient usually become less so, and that it may be difficult to change for the better unless they know what other people are doing, what other means and opportunities exist. Nevertheless the fact remains that some groups use books more than others—chemists more than engineers, doctors more than politicians, economists more than farmers; and in any group book use by individuals will range from much to little or none. How far this arises from the nature and complexity of the occupation, how far from understanding and opportunity, it is impossible to say. Here indeed is a useful theme for research.

When one passes from the group to the individual, however, can one have the same complacency?—if indeed one *can* be complacent if our technical and commercial activities, our productive and distributive agencies, are not using knowledge to the full. With the individual it is not solely a question of external efficiency but primarily one of internal development. There is no doubt that the majority of people in this country—and in all others—do not read books at all and only a minority read to any active purpose, gaining anything in stature or development in the process. Can one say that *some* need to read more than others—that to *some* failure to read means greater or less loss? Yes, and no. Lots of those people who don't read are just as happy and as successful as those who do, and vice versa. Some need to read to keep their jobs and pursue their hobbies; others don't. Why should, say, the miner who does not aspire to be a manager and whose hobby is darts, or the bus driver, read? Many such people *do* read, even more than those whose apparent need for books is greater.

The answer is a fourfold one.

First, reading is in itself a very convenient, adaptable, pleasant occupation which can be pursued when other pastimes cannot be undertaken, perhaps on a wet Sunday afternoon when one doesn't like the radio programme, cannot go for a walk, or dig in the garden, or resort to the pub. In most people's lives there will come times when the habit of reading would relieve boredom—to put the matter on its lowest, most mundane basis. In other words the man who is willing, even occasionally, to read, and has the ability to do so, has a personal resource that those who do not or cannot read do not enjoy. And note

that the words 'has the ability' to read have a genuine significance. It is not easy to read a book, even a trivial book, unless one has had some experience. Few who are, for example, reading *this* book can appreciate how difficult book-reading is to most people, who have not learned to concentrate, to follow an argument or a story, to give reality to the printed word, to make the necessary contribution from their own experience and imagination that *has* to be made by every reader. And this means that the habit of reading has to be acquired—and that may mean that a man has to read at other times than the occasional wet Sunday afternoon. Just as a man cannot expect to play a game that requires some skill only once in a blue moon and still enjoy it and maybe hope to win, so he cannot hope to read and enjoy only once in a while. And, therefore, one of the reasons why people should read is so that they can read when they want to. I would even add 'when they need to' —because to every man there will come the occasions when it would be very *useful* to be able to read.

Secondly, reading is a means of increasing one's interest in life, of widening one's horizons, of increasing one's understanding. I am one of those who think that reading should not be a substitute for but an aid to living, not a means of escape from life but a way into life. I do not deny the right of any man to read for reading's sake if he so chooses, but I think he will gain most from that reading which is akin to the other things in which he is interested or concerned, which is an aid to action, thought, and imagination, and a complement. Such reading makes life more effective, more interesting, more enjoyable. In a very rough and ready way one may speak of 'positive' and 'negative' books, the former being those which to some degree make a contribution towards the enjoyment of the fuller life and the latter those which don't.

One must, of course, remember, first, that the human being need not and probably should not always be taking in positive elements but has need for a proper share of 'negatives'. And, secondly, it stands to reason that some books will make a positive contribution to some readers and be negative for others. In actuality most positive people, who are interested and do and think and dream, read quite a lot, and those who concern us most are those who would like to be more interested and do more but are limited and frustrated by lack of books, and those who have not realized that with books they could be more interested and induced to *want* to be more interested.

When I say that more people need to read I am presupposing the acceptance of a philosophy of life which is not perhaps generally

accepted. In my opinion it is a pity if a man does not get the full enjoyment out of life by developing all those interests and abilities that could be developed with the help of books and other influences. There are other philosophies. I remember a friend saying to me once: 'Why are you so keen on persuading people to read? If they're happy as they are why disturb them by putting ideas into their heads? Look at the Arabs sitting about fishing, thinking of Allah, as content as can be. What do they want with libraries?' I did not then know the answer because I had never seen any Arabs and there seemed to be quite a lot in the argument. Had not Shakespeare said: 'Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise'? But when I did see some Arabs—enslaved by superstition and ignorance, the prey of politicians, poverty-stricken, blind and deaf and dead before their time, I was not quite so sure that they were happy and content, and I *was* sure that if they were it was a damned shame, because no one *should* be content with so little. Of course, I do not suggest either that all Arabs are like this—I have met some who have been to Oxford and would if need be go to Harley Street—or that there are not other people besides Arabs who are no less in need of education and books. I wish that I could then have given my complacent friend Ritchie Calder's two books *Men Against the Desert* and *Men Against the Jungle*.

That is an extreme case. Less extreme instances can be found everywhere—of people who lose things they need not lose, be it material or economic advantage, happiness and enjoyment, a few years of their lives, or the ability to enjoy the years they have or their freedom. Even if we agree, as we do, that education and access to books and the use of books will not guarantee success, freedom, and satisfaction, even if we admit, as we do, that the 'noble savage' had many compensations for his lack of the opportunities of modern 'civilization', we are obliged to realize two things. One is that whenever and wherever books *can* bring benefit it is a pity, or a tragedy, if books are not available and if people cannot use them. The other is that there is a danger line—variable according to individual and national circumstances—below which it is unwise to fall. This danger line may be when, as in a supposedly highly developed country, people are neither capable of exercising their influence as members of a 'democratic' society nor sufficiently interested to do so. Or it may be, in an under-developed country, where the people are unable to feed themselves, to guard themselves against plague and pestilence, to release themselves from exploitation and slavery. And there are danger lines for the future

which we must anticipate if we have any sense of responsibility. I will mention only three—(*a*) that democracy, still only a partial reality in limited areas of the world, will be destroyed even where it exists; (*b*) that increasing population will outstrip increasing resources for subsistence; (*c*) that racial prejudice and nationalism will increase and lead to greater strife and destructive warfare.

In all these matters the writing on the wall is there to be seen. The enemies of democracy are apathy and totalitarianism and both can be countered only by the spread of active individualism and a sense of responsibility, both of which are little likely to flourish among those who do not read books. The safeguards against the second danger are, on the one hand, increasing production, which can result only in educated countries, and on the other hand the limitation of the birth rate which comes only with the decline of superstition and the active desire for better standards of living. And races, and nations, hate one another only so long as they know little about one another. In plain English, until we achieve Utopian conditions, we have to accept the fact that everywhere, for all people, there are conditions which can be ameliorated and improved by the sensible use of books. So we are wise to consider how the sensible use of books may be made possible for all people and how they may be encouraged to use them.

This is not the place to consider at length the different ways in which people can obtain books. They can and should buy many, and some people have access to different types of libraries. There is, however, an incontrovertible mass of evidence to show that most people will only enjoy full access to books and be encouraged to use them if there are adequate public library services—that these are both the most efficient and most economical means, in co-operation with others, to ensure the optimum amount of book use by the individual and by the nation. I have not the full evidence, though I am sure that it exists, to support my theory. But I believe that one would find a striking parallel between the national standards of living, of political stability, of individual happiness and freedom of different nations, and the extent of their development of library resources. Naturally there is a large element of 'cause and effect'—not only do good public libraries encourage the better way of life but those who enjoy the better way are more likely than others to provide them. Nevertheless it is safe to say that in backward countries, in countries where there are powerful factors limiting education and individualism, there are bad libraries, if any at all. Conversely those countries in which most people find it most worth

while to live, and where they enjoy the greatest freedom, have the best public libraries. And there are no exceptions to this rule of which I am aware.

II

The functions of the public library can be defined more precisely—and have been so defined on several occasions.

Probably no clearer statements exist, however—nor ones which would be more generally accepted—than those of the American Library Association, and I reprint them as consolidated into one statement by Robert D. Leigh in *The Public Library in the United States*:

'*A. General Definition of Objectives*

(1) To assemble, preserve, and administer books and related educational materials in organized collections, in order to promote, through guidance and stimulation, an enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives.

(2) To serve the community as a general centre of reliable information.

(3) To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves continuously.

'*B. Fields of Knowledge and Interest to which the Public Library should devote its resources*

(1) *Public affairs: citizenship.*

(*a*) To awaken interest, stimulate reading and discussion on crucial problems.

(*b*) To improve people's ability to participate usefully in activities in which they are involved as citizens of their communities, the United States, and the world.

(*c*) To help people develop a constructively critical attitude toward all public issues and to remove ignorance regarding them.

(*d*) To promote democratic attitude and values; i.e. sensitivity toward peoples of other backgrounds by knowledge concerning them and by appreciation of the dignity of the individual person; preservation of the precious heritage of freedom of expression; and understanding of the democratic processes of group life.

(2) *Vocations.*

To equip persons, and to keep them equipped, for efficient activities in useful occupations and practical affairs (including vocational information, parent and home education, child care, nutrition, physical health, emotional stability and growth, budgeting and consumer information, specialized business and industrial information).

(3) *Aesthetic appreciation.*

To seek to give people an opportunity to improve their capacity for appreciation and production in cultural fields.

(4) *Recreation.*

To help people make such use of leisure time as will promote personal happiness and social well-being.

(5) *Information.*

To help people keep abreast of progress in the sciences and other fields of knowledge, and to furnish them with the detailed information required for their personal projects and everyday needs.

(6) *Research.*

To serve those who are aiding in the advancement of knowledge.'

III

In my opinion there are three fundamental conditions which must be met if the public libraries of any nation are to achieve their objectives:

(1) They must be generally and adequately available to all people, everywhere.

(2) They must be good enough to do the work that is theirs.

(3) They must provide people with a full, free opportunity.

These qualities need little elaboration, but unless they are present the public library service is defective and may even defeat its true objectives.

As to the first: Manifestly the justification for a public library in one place is its justification in any other. No one could suggest that the people of one nation, of one town in a country, of the towns and not the rural areas, need public library services without at the same time implying that the people of other nations, of other towns, of the rural areas need them also and equally. The arguments in favour of a public library service in America are the arguments for one in Abyssinia, for one in Madras, for one in Mandalay, for one in Manchester, for one in Muddlecombe-in-the-Mud. Indeed, the arguments may be even more

applicable as regards the areas without good services and without the conditions which would make provision relatively easy.

They must be generally and adequately available also in the sense that they are reasonably accessible and easy to use. And they must everywhere attain adequate standards, so that for no man is the nearest service point too distant, too difficult to use, or less good than that which his fellows may have. And they must be generally and equally available to people of all classes and races, to minorities as well as to majorities, to the under-privileged as to the elect.

I hope that in all nations there will be some libraries which are better than others, because thus only can progress be ensured and the dangers of mediocrity and standardization be avoided. But all libraries should, in every country, achieve at least the average standards attainable in the country at that time. There should, in other words, be no 'empty places' and no 'bad spots'.

As to the second factor: The basic argument is undeniable. If one creates a machine to make a particular kind of product it is quite valueless if it is not capable of producing it. And a library which is intended to give certain people certain types of material under certain conditions is valueless if it lacks that material in sufficient range and quality, cannot give the necessary staff assistance, and erects unnecessary barriers between user and satisfaction. What is *not*, apparently, so obvious as to be generally appreciated is that a library which is not good is not only bad but expensive in relation to what it does. It may be strange and it may be sad, but it is true that the library which is least well financed, stocked, and staffed inevitably devotes its attention most to the types of library service which are least worth while. Conversely, it is equally true that the better provided a library the more does it attract and satisfy those for whom it has something worth while to give. What matters most, however (apart from the overriding fact that inadequate libraries are not fulfilling their proper functions at all), is that the inadequate library costs nearly as much as the good library—nearly, but not quite. The inadequate library involves some expenditure on premises and their upkeep, on staffing, on administration—which is not appreciably greater in a comparable good library. This is equally true, to a considerable extent, of the library which is used by a few and that which is used by many. In other words, strange though it may seem, the worst libraries are, in relation to results, the most, expensive. Therefore, I would go so far as to say that there are many libraries in the world which do not, *as they are now*, justify the costs

that their communities have to bear—though, of course, I would add that they should be *made* good enough to justify not only present but necessary future expenditure. The moral, however, is a most important one. If, when planning library services we think in terms of standards of expenditure which will not provide good libraries, we are preparing to waste public money. For this reason, and others, I am absolutely opposed to any policies of small beginnings and large coverage. I favour, if funds at first *must* be limited, doing some part of the job properly and letting the rest wait.

And as to my third point: As the primary purpose of any worthy public library is that of facilitating and promoting individual freedom, I have no use whatever for any systems which inflict limitations or ulterior objectives upon their users. I would go so far as to say that I would much rather have no public libraries at all than public libraries which seek to make their users espouse any particular political, moral, or religious cause. Such libraries are not means to freedom; they are devices further to enslave the souls and minds of men. For this reason I read with loathing of the expansion of libraries in totalitarian countries.

There is, however, a very prevalent half-way house which is little less undesirable. As a librarian I have no religion and no politics, because I have an equal responsibility towards all religions and all political doctrines and also towards those who espouse none. But I do not deny – how could I?—the right of any religious, political, or other body to propagate its own ideas by any legitimate means. If the Roman Catholics or the Presbyterians, the Communists or the Conservatives, want to use books and libraries as a means of furthering their ideas by all means let them do so. They will be foolish if they don't. No country can pretend to be a free country if its peoples—its sections *and* its individuals – are not free to express their ideas and, in free competition with the ideas of other people, seek adherents. *But these things must not be done at the general public expense*, and they must not be done in such a way as to prevent others from enjoying similar opportunities or having free full access to conflicting viewpoints—or to no viewpoints. Yes, I am, quite openly, attacking the system by which in some countries subsidies are given to religious or political libraries by state or local authorities, as in Holland, Belgium, or Quebec. I regard this as wrong. I regard it as offensive and unjust that a man who is not a Catholic (for example) or a Socialist, or an anti-socialist—or one who may say 'a plague on both your houses'—should have to pay, through local or national taxation, to promote causes in which he does not believe.

And I regard the system as especially pernicious when—as is usually the case—the division and diversion of support means that the genuinely 'free' opportunity—the true public library—suffers.

Moreover, I firmly object to any sectional interference with the full opportunity of public libraries when they do exist—by censorship, by political or religious 'influence'. No one has any right to say that any books shall not be provided by the public library because *he* does not favour their outlook.

The long and the short of the foregoing is that I believe that public libraries everywhere must be provided by those authorities, local, state, and national, which are responsible to the generality of the people (and *not* by any sections), that these authorities, whatever their political or religious 'majority', must remain constantly aware of their responsibility towards *all* their people, that everywhere the *librarian*, and not any committee, must be charged with full responsibility for book selection, and that all librarians, whether in private life they are Catholics or Calvinists, Communists or Conservatives, must never forget that they are librarians when they are at work—and that librarians are apostles of freedom.

There are two things in life which I most detest—and they are force and fear. I hate and despise those who, because they are able to do so, force their views upon other people. And I feel that when the advocates of any religious or political belief regard it as necessary to prevent people from knowing about and thinking about alternative beliefs it must be because they are afraid that their own faiths are not good enough to prevail in the face of opposing ideals. Surely the man who honestly and truly believes that he is right should believe also that truth will prevail. He who censors and prohibits, reveals his own doubts.

IV

This book has surely shown that standards of public library service vary very considerably from country to country, and from one section of any country to other sections. Had I surveyed provision—and lack of provision—in the whole world, even greater variations would have been disclosed.

What are the basic causes responsible for these variations? Some will be evident; there are also others which are not so obvious.

The first is that 'nothing succeeds like success'—or, in other words, unless and until the purposes of good public libraries can be demonstrated it is perhaps asking too much to expect that the generality of those upon whom responsibility rests will recognize that they have any responsibility. There may be, in a country, people who realize the need for some of the things that public libraries could provide but who don't know that public libraries could provide them. The only solution of this dilemma is for them to be made aware of what public libraries are doing in other countries, and this is in large measure a task for those international agencies which I shall deal with later. It is also a task for national 'library-promotion' agencies, also to be discussed later.[1]

The second is apathy and lack of understanding. Those of us who advocate public library development are apt to forget that there are lots of other people who are also clamouring for support for their own pet schemes for salvation, and that the politicians and the administrators concerned at best are bedevilled by pressure groups and choose to heed those which exert most pressure—which means that *we* must be among *those*—or adopt a protective colouration towards all.

The third is economic insufficiency, as in the country which can find no money for anything. I remember hearing in an Australian up-country township that the electors had been told that there was only so much money and that if they had a library they couldn't have water closets, and to the blunt question, 'Would you rather have a library or a water closet?' I find it difficult to give a categorical answer. Seriously, it is true that some countries do not *appear* to be able to afford libraries. Yes, undoubtedly, I know the answer to this dilemma, which is that until you have public libraries you will never be able to afford water closets, but it is not easy to convince others that that *is* the right answer. And there *may* be another solution. In independent countries such as India the solution lies in providing limited, properly directed public libraries, if necessary with state support, which will enable general educational improvement gradually to overcome economic limitations. In other regions—as in some of our own colonies—the answer is assistance from the 'metropolitan' government.

There are, however, other obstacles to library development which should be easier to overcome—probably never really *easy*, though easier if the obstacle can be recognized in its true light.

There is the historical factor—in other words the idea expressed in such words as these: 'This is the kind of library service we have always

[1] See pages 235–8.

had. How can it be made different?' Examples are the subscription libraries of South Africa, the institutes of South Australia, the 'independence' of the Swiss, the 'museum' libraries of the French. The answer to this attitude is that in most countries library services started in the same way, but whereas some found the means to break away from tradition others have not done so yet. There were subscription libraries in Great Britain and the United States of America before there were public libraries, but in these countries it was realized that these were not good enough. Has not the time come for *you* to realize the same? Whatever the past gave that was good can be retained but whatever there is of the past that is limiting can be discarded or expanded.

Then there is the obstacle of the vested interest. There are many vested interests in the library world—the subscription library, the religious library, the 'scholarly' library, the village library, *et alii*. The glib answer is that the community at large should not let itself be prejudiced by vested interests, but probably the true answer is that of demonstrating that the vested interest has a place in a wider scheme of things—that the subscription library can give to its own members, but not *alone* to them, all that it set out to give, but *better*, as when the American 'association' libraries became public libraries, as when the village libraries in Denmark came to gain enormously when they were associated with the county libraries and the wider resources of the nation, as when the scholarly *stadsbibliothek* may find that as the central library of a public library system it has much more and not less to do that is worth while. I am afraid I have nothing much to offer the propagandist, sectional library by renunciation of its advantages of municipal and state aid, but I can see how much the community at large would gain were it to be obliged to take its proper place side by side with a genuine public library service.

Multiplicity of library services is another potent handicap. Let me not be misunderstood. There is ample room, especially in any larger community, for those libraries which serve particular specialized functions or which cater for people who, as regards their book-using activities, have special needs, i.e. for libraries of specialization and research, school, college, and university libraries, the libraries of industrial firms, professional bodies and the like, and there is room for libraries which cater only for the more recreational needs of those who prefer to read the trivial or seek the latest best-sellers. But only when a library reaches a certain size can it provide a sufficient range of

worth-while material. The small library inevitably tends to cater for majority demands, though the probability is that minority demands, for books which relatively few may need though that few may need them badly, are more important. The smaller libraries tend to duplicate one another, and to leave much that none of them provide. A library with, say, 50,000 books will have a considerable wealth of material that five or even ten or more libraries of 10,000 volumes would not possess. Moreover, the smaller libraries cannot afford to employ fully qualified or specialized staff and, if they *did* employ them, could not make full use of their expert and specialized abilities.

It is true, also, that in any community there is a limit to the amount of money that can—or will—be made available for library purposes. It is seldom sufficient to support even one really good library system. To divide this between two or more institutions is to make them not only inferior to one combined system but even bad of their kind and size. In other words (quite apart from the fact that four small libraries could never do the work of one large one), if these four are to live upon the total support of the community they will probably be bad small libraries.

There must, of course, be innumerable small libraries in any country because it will have innumerable small communities. This is a different and more general problem—that of providing the small-town and rural inhabitant with resources wider than can possibly be given by each community acting independently. Clearly in every small community there will be readers requiring materials which few if any other people in that community would also need—materials which it would be impossible or grossly uneconomical for each community to attempt to provide itself. Behind every small library there must be wider resources—comprehensive book stocks, a good reference and information service, expert staffing. Otherwise, the country dweller is condemned always to suffer much lower standards of service than those in the larger town.

The answer to this—and the only answer—is the creation of large units of service, each embracing many small service points and, preferably, also including one or more large city libraries which can act as a main source of supply. Where such large units of service exist, and where they are backed by nation-wide systems of library co-operation, it does become as possible for the man in the village as for the man in the large city—apart perhaps from some delays—to obtain whatever he may require that can be of value to him. But these units must be

large enough, they must give their services to all as a right and not as an occasional privilege, and they must be adequately supported. A bad large rural system is no better than a bad large city library, and may well be worse than a good small library. But there is no reason why they need be bad or too small. The larger British county libraries backed by the regional bureau and the National Central Library, the county library systems of Denmark and Sweden similarly integrated into a nation-wide machine for book distribution, and the regional projects of the U.S.A. are all good examples of a pattern which should be emulated. I feel, however, that when new library systems are being planned or inferior systems being reorganized it is necessary to *begin* with the regional, or large unit, system. Where such larger units are now in operation they have often appeared at a late stage in the history of library development—where small independent libraries already existed, often to handicap regionalization. It is far wiser, when practicable, to begin with a clean slate by starting central services and expanding rather than by starting small decentralized libraries and seeking to co-ordinate them later.

In brief, I believe that one of the reasons why in so many countries standards are so low is because too many small libraries, in towns and in country districts, have been allowed to establish themselves. These libraries have not been able to do work of any genuine value and so have not served to teach the public or their governments that libraries have a genuine function to perform.

Another grave hindrance to development has been the continued maintenance of subscription libraries and the levying of subscriptions and loan charges. This matter may be approached from two different angles. One is that any charge for service introduces barriers to full enjoyment of the opportunity to use books, that it limits the encouragement of reading, that it is unjust that *all* citizens should help to pay for services which they may not use unless they pay again. There is also the sound argument that a public library brings benefit not only to its users but to the whole community, that it is just as much in the interest of the whole community that people should use libraries as that there should be free education, free roads, free public health services, and free prisons. From another angle, however, it is quite certain that the library which charges is less used than the library which is free to all, and consequently it is more expensive, more wasteful. This book is full of evidence to support this contention.

For the hindrances so far mentioned the community at large must be

blamed, but there are two other obstacles for which the library profession itself must be held responsible.

One of these is failure, on the part of those librarians working in scholarly and specialized libraries, to recognize the true function of the public library and to support the movement actively. Undoubtedly these men and women have their own special tasks and responsibilities, their duties towards their own clienteles, and their own traditions. But the fact remains that they, of all men, should be better able than any non-librarian to understand the value of all types of library to all men. Thus, they have a responsibility to foster public library development, and are wrong to ignore, decry, or hinder it. Again, the evidence is in this book. Those countries with the best public libraries are those with a truly united, co-operating library profession, with a minimum of separateness and a maximum of interchange. In the United States and in England, for example, the same library schools train people for all types of library. Men and women pass from university to public, public to special libraries in the course of their careers—not often enough it is true, but it *is* possible. In Scandinavia and Great Britain they belong to one united association. Conversely, among the 'advanced' countries with bad library services one finds separation.

The other 'librarian-created' obstacle is quite frankly inefficient librarianship. I do not wish to give offence but it cannot be gainsaid that whereas some libraries are easy and pleasant to use others are damnably difficult and unpleasant. And it is equally true that the easy and pleasant libraries *are* used much more fully and generally. Obviously if a man could choose between an attractive open-access library with modern issue methods and a minimum of formalities and restrictions, and capable staff to help when necessary, and a library where he had to queue up at a catalogue, queue up at a counter, wait to have books fetched for him, fill up an application form and reader's cards, and, in general, waste a great deal of time and endure much frustration and disappointment, he would choose the former without hesitation. But, unfortunately, he would have no choice. He would have to use his bad library or stay away—and unless he is very keen or very apathetic he *does* stay away.

And a vicious circle flourishes. Because fewer people use the library, it enjoys less support, can buy fewer books, and so loses still more readers—and still more repute.

Therefore, I am convinced that in many towns in many countries the

first thing that should and could be done is for the librarian drastically to reorganize his own library.

This may often require a change of heart and a break with tradition. But I have talked with many of the librarians of inefficient 'closed' libraries and I have found that most of them do not defend existing conditions but do not think that improvement is possible. I would assure them, as I have done often, that seldom *is* it impossible to introduce open access and modern methods—not, probably, as well as one would wish, but well enough to change the whole conception of the service. And in all these libraries—and also in many open-access institutions—better 'housekeeping' is possible. I am a great believer in 'good housekeeping'—in libraries that are clean and well decorated, with clean attractive stock. Too many libraries are ramshackle, dirty, and dingy; too many book stocks include too high a proportion of little-needed, outworn, and worn-out books. Most libraries I have been in would be better were a considerable proportion of the books they contained either thrown away or banished to reserve stocks, and many of the clumsy, over-high, depressing book stacks removed.

V

I fear that I could add to this catalogue of reasons why few people in the world have good public libraries, many have bad ones, and still more have none. The pessimist, or the timid, may say that with so many obstacles to be surmounted it is idle to expect much progress. The realist, however, knows that there are answers to all these difficulties which, though they may be slow to produce results, can, given the will, be initiated and pressed forward with some confidence. The answers to apathy and lack of understanding are propaganda and demonstration. The answer to the argument that a country cannot afford libraries is that it will never be able to afford them until it has them and that, if need be, something else must be postponed so that the wider educational process, involving library services, which alone will make other things possible, may be given priority. The answer to inefficiency and bad organization is the education of librarians and library authorities. The answer to the subscription library menace and the predominance of the 'sectional' (religious or political) library is effective demand from those who want services that are free in every genuine sense. And so on.

What matters is who is to give these answers—and make others

accept them. Someone *must*. Public library services have never been created or developed as a result of public demand, of the unprompted ideals of governments, or even because those who would most have benefited from good libraries have realized what difficulties they had to endure because they lacked them. No. Everywhere, whatever has been achieved has resulted from the enthusiasm and the faith of a few individuals. Some of them have been men interested in social or educational progress, such as William Ewart in England, von Raumer in Berlin; some have been philanthropists, like Andrew Carnegie and J. Passmore Edwards. The great majority have been librarians. This need not cause us any surprise. Because librarians are closer to the people who use libraries they are best able to appreciate values and requirements. Because it is their job to provide libraries those who wanted to do their job fully, to find in their professional work satisfaction, purpose, and fulfilment, have sought those conditions which would best justify their existence. I expect that precisely similar circumstances apply in other departments of life—that teachers are chiefly responsible for the improvement of educational facilities, scientists for technological developments, and so on.

Consequently, I believe that most of those answers will have to be given by librarians, and that the first step towards improvement involves means by which librarians can best give them, with the maximum force and influence. In other words we need, in every country, active and progressive associations of librarians which will serve three main purposes. One is to provide the individual librarian with every possible opportunity to develop his understanding of the purposes of librarianship and to improve his ability to implement it, by the wider professional education that comes with the exchange of experience, opinions, and ideals. The second is to unite all librarians, of all types of library, so that, as a united organization, greater influence can be exerted than any one librarian could exert alone. The third is to enable fruitful co-operation between a united organization of librarians and comparable organizations of educationists, social and cultural workers, and with governments.

To be effective a national library association should, therefore, I believe, fulfil four major requirements. First of all, it must understand its function to be that of actively promoting development, not that of consolidating conditions as they are. It must have a mission—a progressive outlook. Therefore, it must pay every attention to the improvement of librarians—their professional education, status, and

rewards—because only with good librarians can there be good libraries; because their status as individuals is closely allied in the public mind to the status of their institutions, because without reasonable rewards, in the long run, sufficient of the right people will not be attracted to the work. Thirdly, as already noted, a national library association should embrace *all* librarians, not only public librarians. There is no reason why the united association should not provide sections, within itself, concerned with each of the varied provinces of library work (e.g. national and university, specialized, hospital, etc.) but there should not be a separate and distinct public library association—for two main reasons: (*a*) that an unreal cleavage of primary functions is created and emphasized, and (*b*) because other librarians should be the best able and most willing to support the objectives of the public librarians. For example, the British Library Association was, at the outset, avowedly mainly concerned to promote the establishment and improvement of public libraries, yet its first president was librarian of the national library, and his successors, and others associated with scholarly libraries, both then and later, played an important part in its promoting activities. Without them it would have achieved much less, especially in the first three or four decades.

Fourthly, a national library association should embrace not only practising librarians but also representatives of the authorities responsible for library provision. This is useful, *inter alia*, because thus the councillors and committee members can gain better understanding and interest by their contacts with librarians, e.g. at conferences and other meetings, and because an association which thus, as it were, unites 'employers' and 'employees' is not open to the suspicions, however unjust, that it is concerned only with the personal interests of its members. Good examples of these united, librarian-authority associations exist in Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Australia, and elsewhere. The librarians of other nations, with either purely public library associations, or those which are entirely professional, are recommended to study the advantages of this basis.

In those countries (and states and provinces) where the nation (or state or province) participates in public library services (by grant aid, inspection, or otherwise) there is always some department or secretariat of the government charged with appropriate responsibilities and authority. Such a department can be a potent and valuable influence, but only if it meets two requirements. Otherwise it can be—and sometimes has been and is—a 'dead hand'. The preceding chapters will

have provided examples of both types, e.g. of Denmark and of—but let the reader fill in this gap himself. Government participation and government grants are not necessarily advantageous—especially when the basis of grant is so low that it induces mean, meagre conceptions. It is only good—quite apart from the standard of grant aid, though this is unlikely to be anything but stultifying otherwise—when these two conditions are fulfilled, i.e. (*a*) when the government works in close co-operation with the library profession, and (*b*) when the government department is directed by qualified, one-time practising librarians and not by government officials who merely happen to be put in charge of libraries instead of, say, fisheries or mental asylums. There are exceptions to every rule, of course, but on the whole history proves this theory of mine to be the right one. Close co-operation with the profession, i.e. with the people who have to do the work either with the help of the department or in spite of it, is best secured by the appointment of librarians to any committee there may be to regulate the work of the department, or by advisory councils. These latter can both advise and assist the department in framing policy and make the department's policies known to and accepted by the profession. They should have the right to initiate policy and bring it forward to the department, and be able if necessary to go over the head of the department to the responsible minister of state or government. In practice one finds that where there is a strong active department there is also a strong library association and the maximum co-operation. It is difficult to imagine how the two could be in conflict on essentials. There is, however, a danger of a negative, bureaucratic, department paying lip service to co-operation with the profession and seeking the advice of only those who will agree with it: against this danger the only safeguard is a strong professional association.

There is, also, an undesirable tendency for governments to prefer the assistance on committees, both standing and *ad hoc*, of so-called 'user' interests, and to overload them with, for example, educationists. The plain truth, however, is that librarians are the people best able and most anxious to safeguard the interests of 'users'. Of various examples of library councils and committees, again the best is probably that of Denmark.

Occasionally there have been non-professional and non-official bodies interested in library promotion. These have united either interested laymen or local authority members, or both. They have a place in countries where so little has yet been done that there are few

professional librarians able to participate. Otherwise it is better to have the united library associations mentioned earlier. The Public Library Movement of Australia may seem to have been an exception to this rule. It did invaluable work, but in fact practising librarians played a vital part in its work, and in due course the logical union was achieved a few years ago when the Australian professional association was reorganized as a united body, similar to the Library Association of the United Kingdom.

Here let me interpose an observation which I should have included in my catalogue of reasons why library development has been hampered. I believe that there is a proper balance to be found between the respective functions of library authorities and of librarians. Where the library authority takes too much upon itself the service invariably suffers. Some library boards interfere far too much in the detailed professional work of their officers, making themselves responsible not only for minor staff appointments and details of administration but also for book selection. This latter *must* always be left to the librarian, because it is his especial and most important function, and one which can only be adequately undertaken by a librarian with the necessary knowledge and experience of both books and readers. But the matter goes beyond this. It is often said that the library board is responsible for deciding on policy and that it is the librarian's duty to put that policy into operation. I do not agree. The policy decisions of a board may be—and in some countries too often *are*—influenced by political and religious tendencies and dictated by expediency. The freedom of the librarian to follow the libertarian teachings of his professional creed is a vital safeguard and should be respected. In my opinion the duties of a library board are those of understanding sympathetically the needs of a sound, broad-based public library service, of doing their utmost to secure the necessary resources from the providing local authority, and of protecting the librarian from the attacks of any of the public who seek either to limit library provision or to attach to it sectional objectives. These duties are ample justification for library boards everywhere.

In brief, if, anywhere, good public libraries are to exist, there must be sufficient qualified, effective librarians, enjoying the opportunity to do their work without limitation and interference, united by membership of an active, progressive library association and aided by a central (national or state) library agency which exists primarily to understand and promote the true objectives of librarians and local library authorities.

VI

The public library is, however, more than a purely national institution. On the one hand it does a great deal, by its everyday activities, to promote understanding between the nations, because most people learn more about the ideals and outlook, achievements and conditions, of their fellow men in other countries by reading about them than by any other means. I once estimated, after studying a typical day's loans, that between 20% and 30% of the books borrowed—novels, books on history, travel, economics, biographies, languages, literature, and the like—dealt in some way with wider, international aspects. On the other hand pioneers in many countries have been inspired by what they have seen abroad. England and America have always exchanged ideas. Edward Edwards's evidence presented to the 1849 Public Libraries Committee consisted largely of data concerning what was being done elsewhere. The first modern public libraries in Holland were staffed by people who had studied in America and England. At the turn of the century and earlier Danes and Germans came back from America to preach the public library idea after what they had seen there. Swedish librarians openly admit their debt to the Danes. English and Scottish librarians emigrating to New Zealand took their library background with them. Progress in the colonies has been guided by the British librarians. Englishmen laid the foundations of the Delhi project and, years before, the outstanding Indian advocate of libraries was trained at an English library school, as were prominent librarians in Egypt. An Austrian has worked in Iran; a French woman in Central Africa. And so on.

If in the past progress in many countries has stemmed from this export of ideas and example, the process has been greatly accelerated since the war largely through the activities of certain international—and internationally operating—agencies. The more effective these can be made the sooner and more surely will world-wide library services be created. This task is urgent and important. The nations of the world cannot wait until each starts and painfully builds its services as these were developed over a century or more in, say, the U.S.A. and Great Britain. There is no need for them to wait. There is no need for the same mistakes to be made time and time again. The newly providing countries can start with the experience of the older to guide them.

The most important international agency is Unesco, which has many spheres of activity, though to all of them library services, of one kind

and another, are germane. Indeed, as the present Director-General, Luther Evans (formerly Librarian of Congress) points out, the fundamental tasks of librarianship and those of Unesco are closely associated: 'The first Article states, among the purposes of Unesco, that it is to "collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples"; that it is to "give fresh impulse to popular education and the spread of culture"; that it is to help to "advance the ideal of equality of educational opportunity"; and, even more precisely, that it is to "assure the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books" and "give the people of all countries access to the printed and published material produced by any of them". This is, of course, exactly what all of us as librarians have always been trying to do in our professional work. I am sure it is heartening to see that the professional objectives of librarians and, indeed, the spirit that pervades the profession have such a striking place in the statement of Unesco's aims.'

Incidentally he goes on to say—and these are words that I could have quoted at the beginning or the end or anywhere in the middle of this book with equal relevance—'Librarians are indeed part of the apparatus of civilization, and it is the librarians' business, in America and everywhere else, to see that the apparatus works at maximum efficiency. One need not press a theory of cause and effect to an extreme in pointing out that it is where there are no libraries, or such hopelessly inadequate libraries that they can hardly be said to exist, that undue and arbitrary control of the free development of education, science, and culture is most serious'.

Unesco has sought to promote library development, as a means of educational, scientific, and cultural progress, as a way of giving reality to the ideals of the four freedoms, and as an essential element in fundamental educational programmes, in many ways. The chief of these have been to formulate and publicize ideals, to provide information for the guidance of librarians and library authorities and governments, to afford librarians the opportunity to meet and discuss their problems, to provide demonstrations, and to enable selected librarians to travel and study conditions in other countries. These various activities have been interrelated. Thus, for example, some of its publications have presented the discussions at the seminars or described its projects and other field activities, and participants in the seminars and projects have been given fellowships. Though the work of the library department at the Paris headquarters, ably and courageously directed by Mr Edward

J. Carter, has always been limited by budgetary considerations expenditure has been so directed that the maximum results have been achieved —results far out of proportion to the costs involved.

The basic principles are outlined in the Unesco Public Library Manifesto which is given as an Appendix.

The first seminar was held in Manchester in 1948 and was followed by others in Malmö (described in *Libraries in Adult and Fundamental Education*), in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1951 (*Development of Public Libraries in Latin America*), and in Ibadan in 1953 (*Development of Public Libraries in Africa*). The reports of these three conferences, together with works on *Education for Librarianship*, *Adult Education Activities of Public Libraries*, and *Public Library Extension* (by the author of this present book), form the Unesco Public Library Manuals series and have been widely circulated. My own *Public Library Extension*, for example, has been published in English, French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, and Japanese. These, and various other pamphlets and reports, and the Unesco *Bulletin for Libraries*, have done much to disseminate ideas and information, and promote discussion, throughout the world.

With the Delhi project I have dealt elsewhere. In 1955 a further seminar on public library development in South Asia was staged there. A further project has just been started at Medellín, Colombia.

The approach has always been realistic. For one thing, it is realized that, in the words of Luther Evans, 'a library system, although it may conform to certain fairly generally accepted principles, must be properly adjusted to the complex of social, economic, and political conditions of its immediate environment. This is, of course, at the root of the Unesco problem. We have to clear our heads of the idea that because a certain type of institution works well in the United States, for example, exactly the same organization will work well in places where the whole environment and cultural climate are different and where library service has to meet the needs of people with basically different cultural traditions and enjoying a different stage of social development'. For another, the background requirements have not been overlooked, such as the need to establish literature bureaux to produce the books needed where few as yet exist, the obligation to remove currency, customs, and other barriers hindering the free flow of books from one country to another, and the importance of relating public libraries to libraries of specialization and learning and to bibliographical centres.

My only criticism of the activities of Unesco is that there are far from

enough of them. For this, not the personnel of Unesco but the governments and the people of the nations supporting the organization must be held to blame. It is tragic that, in our own country, for example, too few people are sufficiently able to understand the vital significance of this work to encourage their governments to increase many-fold their contributions, so that there might be not two but twenty or fifty pilot projects, not four international seminars but one in every region where both interest and need could be found.

Nevertheless the work of Unesco has already left its mark upon the future. It has been able to approach the problems of library development from a new direction—that of directly interesting the governments concerned; it has been able to associate library development with other programmes—for education, for attacking disease and poverty, for developing natural resources and improving technical methods. Thus it has helped to make people look upon libraries not as institutions working in isolation but as a part of the whole programme for world betterment. One must not measure its achievements solely in terms of the activities which it has itself initiated, financed, and directed. On the contrary, no inconsiderable part of its resources has been devoted to helping various international associations with related objectives—the N.G.O.s as they are called (Non-Governmental Organizations). In the field of librarianship and bibliography the main N.G.O.s are F.I.D., the International Federation of Documentation (concerned primarily with the collation and dissemination of scientific and scholarly information) and I.F.L.A., the International Federation of Library Associations, both active some years before the war.

I.F.L.A. has operated mainly by means of annual meetings of representatives of its affiliated national associations and, between these, by the activities of committees set up to deal with specific problems and working mainly by correspondence. Until recently it would be true to say that the demands of the national and scholarly librarians have been given major consideration, and such often valuable activities are outside the scope of this book. In recent years, however, the claims of public library services have been more fully recognized, and a Public Libraries Section has been created which has adopted a positive policy of stimulation. It has, in other words, understood that an international body like this, able to enlist the support of practising public librarians in many countries, can lend its weight to the movement. It can offer guidance and encouragement to those who, in their different countries, are seeking development; maybe more important, it can bring the needs

of the service to the notice of the public and of governments in ways not always open to those working in these countries. So far its major act has been the drafting and publication of a memorandum which offers a clear statement of the purposes of public libraries and how best these may be achieved. This memorandum is reprinted as an Appendix, as it crystallizes so much that is argued in these pages. It has been translated into French, German, Swedish, Spanish, and other languages, circulated to all national library associations by whom it has been discussed, and printed in *Libri*, the international library periodical. It has provoked violent objections—and been received as valuable 'ammunition'. It was adopted at the Brussels International Congress of Librarianship and Documentation in 1955 with the recommendation that it be brought to the attention of all governments and all library associations.

A third force has been that which has been exerted by national library services overseas—e.g. by the United States Information Agency and its predecessors and by the British Council. The former, in 1953, operated 196 libraries in 64 countries, with total book holdings of over 2 million volumes, an annual circulation of 10 million, and an annual attendance of more than 36 million readers. These services were built up during the years 1946–52 by the State Department, which took over the O.W.I. libraries set up for war-time propaganda and reference purposes, the Amerika Haueser created as a part of the occupation programme in Germany, similar institutions created in Austria, in Korea, and Japan, and libraries set up in Latin America. These libraries have, admittedly, three objectives, summarized by Mr Dan Lacy in an article in *International Aspects of Librarianship* (University of Chicago Press, 1954): '1. People abroad disliked and mistrusted the United States. This could only be, it was thought, because they were ignorant of this country or misunderstood its aims. Obviously, what was needed was to disseminate information about the United States—in the words of the Smith-Mundt Act, to "present a full and fair picture". This conception of the problem dominated the propaganda effort until 1950.

'2. People abroad proved susceptible to Soviet propaganda. This could only be, it was thought, because they failed to penetrate Soviet deceit. The obvious remedy was to expose the falsehood of the Soviet pretensions—in official language, to wage a "campaign of truth". This concept has dominated subsequent thinking about the information program.

'3. People abroad did not produce as efficiently as Americans. This must necessarily be in part at least, it was thought, because they did not know how. The obvious remedy, in the hackneyed phrase, was to export "know-how"—to provide technical knowledge and skills. It was this conception that underlay the Technical Assistance Program.' [1]

Nevertheless the fact remains that these libraries have to a marked extent demonstrated the nature and values of library services, often in countries where none with a comparable approach existed, and they have, within the limitations of scope imposed by their purposes, shown something akin to the kind of public library which is enjoyed by a majority of American citizens.

The same is true of the library services of the British Council, which was established as an unofficial body in 1934, and in 1940 granted a charter which defined its task as being 'to promote a wider knowledge of the United Kingdom and the English language abroad, and to develop closer cultural relations between the United Kingdom and other countries for the purpose of benefiting the British Commonwealth of Nations'. I think it has done much more than that. It has brought considerable benefits to the peoples of the countries in which it has worked and especially in those in which it has provided library services.

I am tempted to give here a full—and probably critical—account of these library services, but instead will refer readers to an article by Sir Ronald Adam in the *Library Association Record*, January 1955. All I would say here is this. This library service has presented an opportunity for the British people not only to promote wider understanding of British ideals and ideas, the wider use of the English language, and the more considerable utilization of British materials and processes; it has been a means of 'exporting', on a very small scale maybe, an institution—the public library—which is typical of the British approach. I am sorry that we have not 'exported' many more and better-provided, better-staffed British public libraries, and hope that the opportunity will still be seized.

For, after all, if a nation has something good to show to other nations it is wrong not to do so. It is true that a man should, for the peace of his soul, seek out the good in others and the evil in himself so that cherishing the one he may better remove the other. But it is equally true that it is better to give than to receive, and that it is very good and

[1] There is a full discussion of 'The Role of the Information Library in the United States International Information Program' by Henry James, Junior, in the *Library Quarterly*, April 1953.

warming and pleasing to *have* something to give, to be able in some way to feel that what one has found and learned and developed may give benefit to others as well.

I believe, myself, that many of the people of this country—as of the United States and of Scandinavia, and a few other parts of the world, too—find their lives easier, more enjoyable, more fruitful, because during the last hundred years or so we have gradually evolved a conception of public libraries which is not always recognized in other countries. And I believe that similar public libraries would give similar benefits elsewhere—everywhere.

I remember very clearly—and there are personal reasons why this occasion is very vivid in my mind but which have nothing whatever to do with this book—once addressing an audience, not in England, when I said 'what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander', meaning that if a good public library was justified in one town, one country, it was equally justified in another. And I was aghast when, after the meeting, I was besieged with eager inquirers who asked: 'What is a gander?'

But my English readers will know 'what is a gander'.

I have often been accused—say it not in Gath, mostly by French-speaking librarians—of trying to impose upon them an Anglo-Saxon conception of public library services. I have been told—and am grateful to know—that the world is not entirely Anglo-Saxon, or even Anglo-Scandinavian. I am quite willing to admit that there may be many different ways of giving the generality of people—the 'common' man *and* the 'uncommon' man—full, free access to books so that they may gain in stature all that this opportunity can offer them.

To be quite frank I do not care a damn what system is adopted in any country so long as it is capable of producing the same results in terms of freedom and opportunity.

All I ask is this: that the librarians—and their 'masters'—of each and every nation shall first of all ask themselves 'what are the true purposes and what are the attainable objectives of a good, efficient public library service'. That they shall then try to measure, in general terms—use, range, necessary expenditure, facilities, educational incentives, fulfilment of objectives, and the like—their own and *other* public library services. That they shall then be able either to say, 'Our system is as good, as efficient, as effective as the best, and is capable of improvement as needs require', or to say, 'We have a lot to learn. It is time we learned it. It is time we started to set our house in order'.

And I ask them, whatever the answer, to remember that, these days, the whole fabric of civilized existence is threatened as never before. The only hope for the future lies in the creation of more decent, well-informed, tolerant, sensible men and women, able to live their lives in reasonably decent circumstances, able to hope that when they are dead the world will go on and will be an even better place for their sons and grandsons. And they must ask themselves whether good public libraries have or have not *something*, however little, to contribute to that future.

I think they have.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

The Unesco Public Library Manifesto

The Public Library
A Living Force for Popular Education

Unesco and Public Libraries

Unesco, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, has been created by the will of 46 countries. Its aim is to promote peace and social and spiritual welfare by working through the minds of men. The creative power of Unesco is the force of knowledge and international understanding.

This manifesto, by describing the potentialities of the public library, proclaims Unesco's belief in the public library as a living force for popular education and for the growth of international understanding, and thereby for the promotion of peace.

The Public Library
A Democratic Agency for Education

The public library is a product of modern democracy and a practical demonstration of democracy's faith in universal education as a lifelong process.

Though primarily intended to serve the educational needs of adults, the public library should also supplement the work of the schools in developing the reading tastes of children and young people, helping them to become adults who can use books with appreciation and profit.

As a democratic institution, operated by the people for the people, the public library should be: established and maintained under clear authority of law; supported wholly or mainly from public funds; open for free use on equal terms to all members of the community, regardless of occupation, creed, class, or race.

What the Public Library should offer

The complete public library should provide: books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, maps, pictures, films, music scores and recordings, and give guidance in their use.

The public library should offer children, young people, men and women, opportunity and encouragement: to educate themselves continually; to keep abreast of progress in all fields of knowledge; to maintain freedom of expression and a constructively critical attitude towards all public issues; to be better social and political citizens of their country and of the world; to be more efficient in their day-to-day activities; to develop their creative capacities and powers of appreciation in arts and letters; to aid generally in the advancement of knowledge; to use their leisure time to promote personal happiness and social well-being.

A Vital Community Force

The public library should be active and positive in its policy and a dynamic part of community life.

It should not tell people what to think, but it should help them to decide what to think about. The spotlight should be thrown on significant issues by exhibitions, book lists, discussions, lectures, courses, films, and individual reading guidance.

Reading interests should be stimulated and the library's services publicized through a well-planned continuous public relations programme.

The public library should link its activities with the work of other educational, cultural, and social agencies—the schools, universities, museums, labour unions, study clubs, adult education groups, etc. It should also co-operate with other librarians in the loan of publications and with library associations for the advancement of public librarianship.

The books in the library should be made accessible on open shelves and by use of efficient technical processes; and the library's service should be brought close to the homes and work-places of the people by means of branches and mobile units.

The People's University

With a well-trained, resourceful and imaginative staff, an adequate budget, and public support, a public library can become what it should be—a university of the people offering a liberal education to all comers.

Citizens of a democracy have need of such opportunities for self-education at all times. The complexity and instability of life today make the need an urgent one.

What You Can Do

This manifesto has described the potentialities of the public library as an agency for popular education. Obviously it is to your personal advantage to have these potentialities realized in your community. What can you do to help?

If your community does not have public library service: interest your friends and neighbours and local organizations in obtaining such a service; ask your national library association or Ministry of Education what steps you should take to get public library service; follow through on the action recommended.

If your community now has a public library: get acquainted with the librarians; find out what services are offered; use these services.

Work with the librarian to promote local support and demand for the standard of service endorsed in this manifesto.

Appendix B

The I.F.L.A. Public Libraries Working Paper

The Development of Public Library Services: a working paper prepared by the Public Libraries Section of the International Federation of Library Associations in 1953

A 1. The first essential to any consideration of the public library service is a clear understanding of the purpose of such a service.

A 2. In the briefest possible terms we would assert that it is the purpose of public libraries to make it possible for all men, according to their needs and circumstances, to enjoy whatever benefits full access to books and related forms of record may bring them. We recognize that the public library is only one of many means of access, including libraries of other kinds and the personal possession of books. The public library should not compete with these. Co-operation between public libraries and other libraries should be developed to the maximum so that as far as possible the total book resources of a country shall be available to all citizens, the public library supplementing those of national, learned, and specialist libraries and the resources of these made available, when necessary for the greater convenience and better service of the general public, through local public libraries. The conception of a clear-cut distinction between so-called 'popular' libraries and 'libraries of learning', a distinction sometimes emphasized by the existence of two distinct 'professions' with different status, training, and professional associations, is gravely prejudicial to the public interest. The genuine public library is *not* a 'popular' library in the sense that it is concerned with matters of little value but wide appeal; it is concerned with all material of value to the individual and the community, whether it provides this from its own stocks or by means of co-operative arrangements with other libraries. It is the duty of public libraries not only to meet existing demands but also to encourage and facilitate wider demands from more people.

A 3. This being so it follows that the range of the materials to be provided and the needs to be met can be limited only by two considerations—firstly, the extent to which any individuals may better obtain,

and be able to obtain, any materials from other libraries and other sources, and secondly the extent to which, on the widest consideration, the use of books and libraries will, in fact, bring benefit. It is the purpose of libraries to promote and sustain freedom of thought and action, individual development and the good of the individual and the community. It is essential that nothing should be done to deny the principles of free choice and liberty of thought; and it is essential that due regard should be paid to the differing needs and abilities of potential readers.

B 1. Applying these principles to consideration of the basic pattern of public library service, the first essential factor emerges, i.e. that the public library must be a comprehensive, general service for the use of all sections of the community.

B 2. The alternative—and we regard it as an undesirable alternative—is the provision of public library services on a sectional basis, i.e. the existence not of one public library for the use of all, but of a library or libraries intended only for part of the community—e.g. for particular social classes, or religious, political, racial, or linguistic groups.

B 3. The disadvantages of such sectional provision are many, including the following:

(*a*) They have naturally a bias, an ulterior objective, a primary responsibility towards the interests of the section concerned. We do not deny the right of any section to promote its own objectives (using its own funds and not those of the community at large for this purpose), but it is manifest that the total effect of even many such libraries could not be the promotion of that full free opportunity which we regard as the essential function of the public library.

(*b*) They cannot, even in total, provide for the whole community which must embrace many people who are not associated with any of the sectional interests for which libraries are provided. Neither can they comprehend the fullest range of materials.

(*c*) It is inevitable that library service shall thus be given by a multiplicity of small units whereas it is abundantly evident that the greatest benefits can be given most economically and efficiently when a community is served by the largest possible unit of library service consistent with social and geographical circumstances.

B 4. The advantages of a service provided for the whole community include the following:

(*a*) It can afford a full free opportunity for all the people and it can embrace all matters of interest to any individual.

(*b*) Every member of the community may use it as a right, regardless of his social position, class, religious or political beliefs, or vocation.

(*c*) Catering for the whole community it can be more economical as more people will use it and the fullest use can thus be made of everything that is provided. It will be a larger and better provided library. It is likely to enjoy greater permanence and continuity and is capable of more efficient management.

B 5. It is, nevertheless, necessary to establish library service for groups of citizens who for various reasons are cut off from the use of the general library service—such as hospital patients, members of the armed forces, seamen, prisoners, etc. Such services should either form part of the general public library provision or be closely associated with it.

C 1. Since the public library should be provided for all members of the community, it is proper that it should be provided by the community as a whole, at the common expense of the community (with or without additional assistance from the common funds of the state—see G 1–8).

C 2. Consequently it should be a 'free' service in that no user should be required to pay any fee, subscription, or other charge—for any reason whatever—in order to avail himself of its services.

C 3. The alternative is a library which levies a charge upon users either for all or any service, or for part of the service (e.g. the loan of fiction).

C 4. The disadvantages of levying a charge are, among others:

(*a*) That any who are unable to pay the required charge, no matter how small, are unable to use the library at all, or to the full—and these may well be persons to whom access to books is especially desirable.

(*b*) Those who are unwilling to pay the required charge, usually because they do not appreciate the value to them of books and libraries, will not be subject to its educational influence and may well be those who, in their own interests and those of the community, should be encouraged to make better use of books.

(*c*) There is also the danger that those unable or unwilling to pay might be induced to borrow 'by proxy' (i.e. using the books obtained by other, paying borrowers) in which case the library

would be unable to exert its full 'educational' influence on the 'proxy' readers.

(*d*) A library which charges is likely to be one which depends unduly upon the income from such charges. It is, therefore, likely to prefer to provide those books which will produce the most income and so to meet popular demands in preference to demands for material of greater value but less wide appeal.

D 1. Since the public library should be provided by the whole community for the free use of all, it follows that public library provision should be a responsibility of government, as are education, public health services, street lighting, and the like, and that it should be financed from public funds (i.e. local or state taxation).

D 2. This being so it is proper that it should be governed by the appropriate public authority, and administered by a committee appointed by and directly responsible to that authority. As will be noted later, this should be a local government authority. Nevertheless it should not be possible for a local authority to deny its citizens the services of an adequate public library service, the provision of which, by all appropriate authorities, should be obligatory.

D 3. Alternatives to government and administration by a local authority appointed committee are:

(*a*) Government by societies, associations, and other non-governmental bodies (e.g. with a committee appointed or elected by members of a library-supporting society), although all or part of the funds may be provided from public funds.

(*b*) Government by a board the members of which are in whole or part appointed by that board (i.e. a 'self-perpetuating' board).

D 4. The disadvantages of the alternatives noted in D 3 are:

(*a*) That the public authority is less able either to exercise sufficient control over the expenditure of public funds or to determine the nature and standards of the public service given by the committee or board.

(*b*) The citizens, and potential users of the library, are unable to exercise adequate influence or to enjoy proper access to the governing body.

(*c*) It may be, or usually is, difficult for the proper claims of the library to be brought to the attention of the public authority responsible for providing the necessary funds. E.g. the chairman of a local authority committee (who should be a member of the local

council) can present his case directly to that authority's finance committee and council, but the chairman of a non-authority board may not even be a member of the local council. Moreover, the council is unlikely to feel the same measure of responsibility for, or to take the same interest in, a service which is not under its own control.

(*d*) There are certain aspects of the public library service which will suffer if they are not properly related to the local government system—e.g. the provision and maintenance of buildings in relation to the authority's public works department and programme, the payment of staff and their recruitment and training in accordance with the prevailing scheme for local government officers in other departments, questions of financial control and administration, legal aspects, and the like.

D 5. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, it should be admitted that a self-owned institution will often be more likely to have on its board members who are especially interested in library development. Nevertheless the services of such persons (though they are not members of the council) may be secured by 'co-opting' them to the library committee of a local authority.

E 1. As already stated we believe that the public library should be provided by the local authority (i.e. the council of a municipality or county).

E 2. The public library should be a local service because:

(*a*) Though it will embrace in great part materials of general and universal interest common to all well-provided libraries, it must also pay particular attention to the special interests of the locality (industrial and historical, for example) and be closely associated with local educational, cultural, and other activities, and related to local social conditions.

(*b*) The public must feel that the public library is an integral part of their own society. They are most likely to make the best use of its services and give it the fullest support when they have a sense of responsibility for its development and a voice in its control.

(*c*) The more remote the control of an institution is from those who use it, the more likely it is to be neglected.

(*d*) Library services provided by the state and not by local authorities are likely to become standardized. Local services are likely to

show wide and desirable variation in standards and in activity and to engage in fruitful experiment and extension of facilities.

(*c*) Library services provided entirely by the state are more liable to be subjected to undesirable political pressures and are more likely to suffer adversely in times of economic difficulty. In the case of local authorities the state library department can usually institute safeguards against local political pressures.

E 3. In territories where local government is not yet properly established local administration of library services may be impracticable under present conditions. In such cases it may be necessary to establish national or regional library authorities on the boards of which, however, there should be representatives of the towns and country districts to be served.

F 1. We believe, however, that the responsible local authority should be the largest consistent with geographical and other conditions which will nevertheless attain the advantages of local control, and that there should be the maximum co-operation with other libraries.

F 2. The small library, which has to rely solely upon its own resources, is inevitably seriously limited. Its book stock must be small; it can offer little to the reader whose needs are not met by materials of very general interest. It cannot afford to employ the qualified staff who alone can give efficient, individual service to the purposive readers.

F 3. Better service by the library serving the parish or other small or thinly populated rural district and by the small town library will result when these are associated with 'county' or 'central' libraries providing deposit collections, supplying the books required by individual readers and assisting the local librarians in various ways. But satisfactory service will usually best be secured when these smaller elements are integrated administratively into a larger unit combining the largest possible town with the libraries in a suitable, natural region. Such a larger, regional unit (comprising perhaps a geographical county or more than one county) can offer many advantages, including

(*a*) A large, comprehensive book stock.

(*b*) Frequent and considerable exchanges of stock at all the smaller libraries.

(*c*) Adequate supervision and, so far as possible, actual staffing by qualified personnel.

(*d*) Better facilities for meeting the requirements of individual readers.

(*e*) The services of bookmobiles to serve not only local libraries but also communities which can be served better by bookmobiles than by static book collections.

F 4. Nevertheless the advantages of the larger unit must be weighed against the disadvantages of weakening local interest by selecting, purely for administrative or financial reasons, regions which lack geographical or social unity or which are too large to remain 'local'.

G 1. We believe, too, that the local public library service should receive appropriate aid and encouragement from the state.

G 2. State aid should fulfil the following objectives, among others:

(*a*) It should encourage local authorities to provide the maximum possible local support. Consequently state grants should in general be related to income from local sources.

(*b*) Nevertheless state aid should, where necessary, be weighted in favour of local areas which, for geographical, economic, or other reasons are less able to make adequate provision from their own resources.

(*c*) It should encourage the formation of appropriate larger units of service—by the amalgamation of small areas, the development of joint schemes, the provision of regional services, etc. To this end weighted grants may be made (perhaps for initial periods only) to encourage a wider basis of service.

(*d*) State aid should ensure minimum standards of provision everywhere (the question of compulsory service is noted later) and to achieve this grants should be conditional upon the attainment of specified conditions, including minimum *per capita* expenditure, minimum fund for book purchase, appropriate standards of book selection, the employment and adequate payment of the necessary qualified staff, adequate facilities for the public (hours of opening, convenient service points, suitable buildings, etc.), and participation in inter-library loan services, etc.

(*e*) State aid must not, however, encourage local authorities to be satisfied with meeting the required minimum standards and no more. This will be avoided largely if state aid is related to local support but it must also be prevented by the periodical realistic revision of minimum requirements; and in suitable cases additional grant aid should be given to encourage new developments and pilot projects.

G 3. State aid should be on a continuing and well-understood basis. The minimum amount (or proportion) due to any local authority must

not be subject to prejudicial variation as this would make it impossible for any authority to undertake the planned development of its services.

G 4. State aid is best administered by a State Library Department charged with general and specific responsibilities for the promotion of public library services throughout the country.

G 5. This State Department should be directed and staffed by officials with such wide experience of public library work and such professional qualifications in librarianship as will ensure the respect of librarians and library authorities.

G 6. To ensure the fullest contact and co-operation the State Library Department should be advised by an Advisory Committee representing library authorities, librarians, and library associations.

G 7. The State Library Department should have the following duties:

(*a*) The formulation and periodical revision of standards and conditions of state grant aid.

(*b*) The apportionment and administration of funds available for grant purposes.

(*c*) Such inspection and inquiry as is necessary to ensure that state grants are expended for the proper purposes and that specified conditions are fulfilled.

(*d*) The collection and dissemination of appropriate information and statistical data regarding public library development.

(*e*) Giving advice and appropriate assistance to local authorities and librarians.

(*f*) The general promotion of the objectives of public libraries.

G 8. In addition to these matters the State Library Department should (unless these matters are being satisfactorily undertaken by other agencies):

(*a*) Make provision for the professional training, examination, and registration of qualified librarians (e.g. maintain a library school or schools), and for the training of part-time library personnel and clerical staff.

(*b*) Maintain an information bureau to provide information on bibliographical matters, on aspects of librarianship, etc.

(*c*) Undertake the publication of bibliographies, book lists, book selection guides, etc.

(*d*) Maintain or encourage the maintenance by other agencies of

such union catalogues as are necessary for purposes of inter-library lending.

(*e*) Facilitate the selection, purchase, central cataloguing, and preparation of books and the supply of forms, stationery, and equipment required by libraries and the binding of library materials.

H 1. We have referred to the need for state aid in promoting the provision of public library services by appropriate local authorities. It is also necessary, however, to give these authorities proper legal powers and impose on them legal responsibilities.

H 2. Therefore each state should adopt library laws which will include the following provisions, among others:

(*a*) Appropriate local authorities must be empowered to expend public funds for public library purposes.

(*b*) The amount of local expenditure should not be limited; local authorities should be able to expend as much as they are willing and able.

(*c*) The public library purposes for which funds may be expended shall be so defined as not to restrict development. Thus it should be legal to spend public money not only on books, staff, and maintenance but also on periodicals, maps, plans, pictures, gramophone records, films, and all other suitable forms of printed and other record, on the purchase or renting of land, and the erection or renting, equipping, and adaptation of premises, the provision of travelling libraries and bookmobiles, extension activities, etc.

(*d*) Local authorities should be empowered to enter into arrangements with other authorities for joint schemes for providing the whole or any part of the service, and to contribute to the cost of schemes for co-operation and mutual assistance.

(*e*) Each local authority should appoint a library committee directly responsible to the local council. The librarian should have the right to attend all meetings of the library committee (except on occasions when his own position and conditions of service are under discussion).

(*f*) Each local authority should have power to appoint staff who shall be employed in accordance with the conditions and regulations applicable with suitable variations to other local government officers.

(*g*) The use of all the services provided must be available to all inhabitants free of any charge whatsoever.

(*h*) Though each local authority provides services primarily for the use of its own inhabitants and those who work or study in its area, other persons, living outside that area, should be able to use those services if they wish—e.g. if they live in areas without public library service or if for any reason they find it advantageous to do so. They may be allowed to do so free of charge, or in accordance with arrangements made between the authorities concerned, or they may be asked to pay a subscription, but this should not be more than the average cost of the service to those living in the area of the library used. When adequate library services are provided generally in a country or region, however, they should be available to all, regardless of place of residence, without payment, and with a minimum of formality. In all cases such facilities should be extended to seamen and others who by reason of their employment may be unable to use their home libraries.

H 3. As soon as practicable, all appropriate local authorities should be legally obliged to maintain adequate public library services.

J 1. All public libraries should give users free 'open access' to adequate stocks of books for reference and for borrowing. Without 'open access' it is impossible for readers to select those books which will be of most value to them. A 'closed' lending library can exercise little educational influence, and experience shows that open-access libraries can cope much more economically with a much greater amount of library use.

K 1. Library staffs must be recruited from persons with a good general education and a sufficient proportion of all those who are engaged in library duties must be professionally qualified as librarians, having undergone suitable courses of training, passed appropriate professional examinations, and had the necessary experience of public library work.

K 2. Schools of librarianship, offering full-time and part-time courses, must be maintained and be sufficient in number to ensure the necessary output of qualified staff.

K 3. Library staffs must be adequately remunerated, preferably in accordance with nationally applied scales, which will ensure that non-professional staff enjoy salaries and conditions of service not less favourable than those enjoyed by other non-professional staff employed by local authorities and that professional staff enjoy rewards,

conditions, and opportunities not less favourable than persons with comparable general and professional qualifications and personal qualities would be able to obtain in other professional careers.

K 4. Moreover, scales of salaries should provide for the varying degrees of responsibility, specialization, and experience involved in the several positions found on the establishments of library systems of different sizes and types; and adequate opportunities for promotion and personal advancement must exist.

K 5. The number of staff employed by each authority must be sufficient to permit all necessary duties to be carried out completely and satisfactorily.

K 6. Where the above requirements are not met the service for the public as a whole suffers gravely. It is not possible to attract and retain personnel capable of giving proper service to readers or of developing and administering library services to the maximum public advantage. Moreover, the prestige of the public library service is likely to be assessed by the public in relation to the status of those engaged. Therefore if the status of the staff is low the status of the service will also be low.

L 1. The existence of a well-supported Library Association is essential. Uniting those who are concerned in library development it can co-ordinate the experience, ideals, and policies of its members and express them with an authority and influence otherwise impossible of attainment. It can undertake activities of common significance, safeguard both the interests of professional librarians, and the interests of the library-using public; it can present to the people at large the ideals and objectives of the services, maintain fruitful relationships of friendly co-operation and understanding with other national agencies concerned with the public well-being, and facilitate contact with the library associations of other countries through I.F.L.A.

M 1. Finally perhaps the most important factor in determining the state of library development is the way in which the functions of public libraries are understood by librarians and authorities and by the public itself.

M 2. If the accepted conception of the service is that it is a natural, essential element in the life of any civilized progressive community—as one of the fundamental 'human rights'—it will be supported by all men of goodwill. If it is not so regarded all progress will be retarded by

the prior necessity to prove and demonstrate and to persuade those whose support is necessary.

M 3. There is no doubt that public library development has depended largely upon the social outlook and educational progress of the country concerned. Equally it is evident that these can be promoted by the better use of library services. Therefore all those who seek to improve educational, social, and cultural standards will best further their own objectives by ensuring the full growth of public libraries.

M 4. It is especially important that school children should be brought into full contact with books and libraries and taught how to use them, that adequate libraries be maintained in schools and other educational institutions, including technical colleges, that full attention be paid to the particular needs of adolescents, and that the needs of adult students of all kinds are fully met. It is further emphasized that if the vital task of overcoming illiteracy is to be accomplished full free access to appropriate materials, through the public library service, is essential from the outset—and that if efforts to teach people to read are to bear fruit all who can read must be given every opportunity and encouragement to do so throughout life.

M 5. The development and the nature of public libraries is also shaped by economic and geographical conditions. Nevertheless where these are adverse they must be regarded not as excuses for failure to provide adequate public libraries but as reasons why public libraries are necessary.

NOTE: This Working Paper was submitted to the International Congress of Libraries and Documentation Centres held at Brussels in September 1955 and attended by representatives from forty-four countries. The document was adopted unanimously as a statement of policy, with the recommendation that it be sent to all library associations and governments with the request that it be given serious attention.

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