

LIBRARY

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Should we ask for a National Library?

Mrs. F. L. West, Sackville, N.B. writes (in part)

" My copy of the Bulletin for Winter, 1947 has just come to hand, and I am so glad of your comments about our library situation in Canada, and would be glad if I could do something to improve it. As a beginning I am dropping a line to our member of Parliament... He too will wonder what to do; but I believe that the cultural state of the Dominion is mentioned occasionally in the House, and I think this is the time to push the matter..."

(A commendable practical contribution to the effort to obtain a National Library.-Ed.)

Classification of Canadian Books

Miss Jean C. Gill, Charlottetown Public Library, says:

" I really think that the Prince Edward Island Libraries' arrangement of marking all books by Canadians and about Canada with a "C" is very good... What do you think about just considering the books that have a Canadian background and disregarding the author's origin? If there must be a change I like your suggestion of having "C" added to the classification number, and the books placed in the main collection. I have a feeling that our patrons like our arrangement (separate shelving of Canadian books.-ed.) and derive much enjoyment browsing over the collection. Perhaps it is because they are familiar with this arrangement."

Public Archives of Nova Scotia
HALIFAX, N.S.

NEWSPAPER TREASURE IN THE MARITIMES

By Elizabeth Homer Morton, Executive Secretary, O L A.

Treasure hunting in the Maritimes has been a favourite occupation for generations so it quite in keeping that I should follow the road of many others, but on a different type of treasure hunt. During my visit to the Maritime Provinces in 1945, I was collecting material for a rough check list of newspapers published in the Maritime Provinces before Confederation, to supplement information in the "Union List of Newspapers."

Eastern Canada has had a longer history than the rest of the Dominion and is particularly rich in the local and regional newspaper. Unfortunately many such files have been lost in fires, such as the bound volumes of "The Yarmouth Herald," partially destroyed in March of 1944, when a fire broke out in the Yarmouth Public Library. This loss highlights the need to microfilm existing papers of historical interest. The Nova Scotia Archives has a broken file of "The Yarmouth Herald" and search will now need to be made to see if the missing issues exist elsewhere and may be photographed to complete the run of the newspaper.

During my time in Nova Scotia I had little time to check the holdings of the libraries but Miss Gilroy assured me that she could procure fairly satisfactory lists, not only of holdings within the province but of some collections in the United States.

In New Brunswick I was fortunate in obtaining a list from the Historical Section of the University of New Brunswick, of the library's holdings, some of which are of unique interest. The Legislative Library has a few files in its stacks. The greatest wealth of New Brunswick newspapers is in St. John in the libraries of the New Brunswick Museum and of the Free Public Library, both of which institutions have lists of their holdings which are kept up to date. I was not able to visit Sackville but understand that there are newspapers of interest there as well as in The L. P. Fisher Memorial Library at Woodstock, which has subsequently sent me a list.

When I arrived in Prince Edward Island I was referred to the Public and Legislative Library in Charlottetown for newspaper holdings. Miss Gill very kindly gave me an evening of her time and we explored the lower regions of the library and composed a rough working list. This is the newspaper collection that I really had an opportunity to examine most thoroughly because I had more time at my disposal. Most of the files are incomplete and it will take careful search to discover whether the missing numbers may be obtained. It is to be hoped that there are private holdings on the Island or that copies may be found elsewhere in the Dominion or the New England States. Incomplete though the collection is, an evening spent in its examination brings to light much interesting information about the Island's history, its people and the controversies which have moulded its public opinion.

It is to be hoped that when actual photography begins there will be great public interest in the preservation of this newspaper treasure. The Rockefeller Foundation has placed the sum of \$15,000 at the disposal of the Canadian Library Council, who have directed the Canadian Library Association to look after this project of microfilming a selection of historical Canadian newspapers towards the end of making more easily available to students of Canadian affairs the background of our historic past. There is no better depository of local history than the expression of current popular feeling in the local paper. Canadians, according to Professor John F. MacDonald of the University of Toronto, have made a greater contribution to journalism than to any other of the literary arts. It is only fitting that the early history of this contribution should be preserved. With the use of microfilm these early papers may be made available to anyone interested in Canadian life.

THE HALIFAX CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

By Charlotte Murphy

A little boy about nine years old ran up the dark stairway to the library and walked up to the librarian.

"How long can I keep coming here to get books" he wanted to know. "Until you are grown-up" he was told. That was too vague an answer because he then asked how old he would be then. The librarian told him he would be sixteen and almost finished High School. He seemed satisfied and went off to get his books. In a few minutes the librarian looked up to find the same little boy standing at the desk.

"Do you have many new books every year"? he asked.

"Oh yes! Hundreds", was the answer.

"Well the little boy sighed" I guess there's no use trying, I'll never be able to catch up."

It was for this little boy and hundreds of children like him that the Junior League of Halifax opened the first Children's Library in Halifax eight years ago, and the league members are determined that the little boy never will "Catch up."

In 1937 the Junior League had just transferred support of the Social Service Index to the Community Chest and were looking about for a new project. We felt at once that there was a definite need for a children's library as the Citizen's Library had little to offer the young reader. Consequently, in that year, a reading room for children was opened in rent free quarters in the downtown area. There were story-telling periods and little plays but at first there were few books. The budget that year was \$75.00

In a matter of months it became obvious that the real need was for a lending library so up went the budget and more books were bought for the young readers. While the League planned and schemed to raise more money, Lady Luch turned her back on the young project.

In 1939 the building was burned and discouraged leaguers salvaged what books they could from the water-soaked ruins in the middle of winter. The building was renovated and the books went back on the shelves until early in 1940 when the building was sold and the library was without a home in a war-crowded city. The books remained in storage until 1941 when the League was able to rent space on the second floor of an old building. These cramped quarters have served as "library" ever since and the fact that the old floor sags so that shelves must be fastened to the walls, and that there is no running water and that the dark stairway is not an attractive entrance certainly does not discourage the young patrons.

By the Fall of 1946 the number of children using the library had reached 600 and the circulation was about 12,000 books a year. Of course the budget has soared too. Operational expenses for the previous year were over \$1,200 and raising that amount was becoming somewhat of a strain on an organization of young women. The library, we knew, was not reaching nearly enough of the city's children and we felt that Civic aid might be secured for the expansion of the service. A publicity campaign was launched and in November of 1946 the City Council had voted to provide an annual grant to the Library until such time as a new civic library was built when ours would be incorporated into it.

The publicity was directed, not only to the citizens and the civic authorities but also to the children through the schools and through the Home and School Associations of the city. Children literally flocked to the Library **until today**, we feel sure that some must be turned away unless new quarters are found very soon. There are now 1,319 current borrowers and the circulation figure for the month of February was 1,946 books. This jump in circulation is a strain on the floor as well as on our collection of 2,700 books. But with the prospect of a new home for the library and financial aid from the city we are confident that The Halifax Children's Library will continue to provide the best in books for children until the City is ready to assume this responsibility.

HOW THE LIBRARY IS OPERATED The Library is operated by a Chairman who is elected from the League Membership every year, and a committee of her choosing. The same person can and often has, served for two years but no longer. It is her responsibility to order books, instruct the volunteer workers in their duties, see that the library is kept clean and all records are up to date. She reports at intervals, as required to the League. The library is open every afternoon from 3. P. M. to 5 P. M. and on Saturday morning. It is staffed by two or three volunteers from the League membership. It is their duty to charge books, in and out, do any necessary mending jobs on books that come in and to see that the days quota of overdue notices are sent out. Others who are not able to give their time during the day, help with cataloging combing the shelves for broken and soiled books, backing the jackets of new books with heavy brown paper to make them last and the several other tasks that go with the operation of a good sized library.

The children "joining" the library must have a card signed by parent or guardian assuring their willingness to be responsible for the books their children borrow. The child then pays a five cent fee. There is no further cost to the child no matter how long he or she continues to use the library. The annual loss of books we consider very small. In the worst year the loss was 103 books which figure compares very well with other children's libraries. The large majority of the children using the library come from the poorer sections of the city, this necessitates keeping the library in the downtown area and makes it harder than ever to find suitable new quarters.

VANCOUVER CONFERENCE

The Canadian Library Association will hold its general annual meeting and conference at the University of British Columbia from June 24, to 26, 1947. The general theme of the Conference is "Canada in Books."

Pre-conference trips have been arranged for June 23rd for those wishing to visit the Fraser Valley Union Libraries, the Provincial Library Services at Victoria, and the Bibliographic Centre at Seattle.

The Conference ends in ample time for delegates to proceed to San Francisco to take part in the American Library Association Conference which opens on June 29th.

In purchasing tickets, delegates are advised that the fare to San Francisco with stop-off in Vancouver and Victoria is the most economical. The railways expect to announce special summer rates early in the Spring.

The convenor of local arrangements is Mr. E. S. Robinson, of the Vancouver Public Library. Pre-registration conference slips may be obtained from Mrs. P. Peron, 74 Stanley Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario.

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U N E S C O Conference

Miss Margaret S. Gill was chosen to be an alternate delegate for Canada at the U N E S C O Conference in Paris and was present throughout the Conference except for three days, when she visited Geneva to take part in the discussions of the International Federation of Library Associations, which plans to hold a Conference next May in Oslo, Norway.

There were ten nations present at the Meeting in Geneva and included in the discussions was the library programme proposed by U N E S C O. This programme is to be released shortly and it is hoped that Canadian librarians will make a careful study of of the various situations.

Miss Gill will be happy to discuss any of these items with you. It is hoped to have discussions on U N E S C O at the Vancouver Conference of the Canadian Library Association.

We read in the papers...

The Maritime Cooperator

Reserve Mines The Peoples' Library was voted \$150 from the surplus of the Reserve Mines Consumers' Co-op at its eighth annual meeting held in December. The Library is regarded by the people as serving a real educational function in the neighborhood.

School Library at Reserve Mines (By "Visitor" in Maritime Co-op.)

All the grades from Grade 2 up have their regular library hours in the bright, well-equipped, well-stocked library with every type of book suitable for children of school age. Besides school topics and related subjects, there are books on vocational guidance: "Shall I be a nurse?" "Shall I be a doctor?" There are even recordings of such classics as Christmas Carol by Dickens and the Count of Monte Cristo by Dumas. Learning is made easy in such an atmosphere which has none of the staid formality of the classroom: and one could easily understand that the children eagerly awaited their library sessions and took home a great deal of enthusiasm, but also books. It's Dr. Tompkins' way of getting the parents interested. The children take home such interesting books that the parents are reading them and learning too.

The Bulletin of the P. E. I. Libraries

The Branch Libraries at Alberton and Souris have been moved into more convenient quarters. In Hunter River a building from the Mt. Pleasant airport is being fixed up to become one of the finest branches of the Prince Edward Island Libraries.

A new list of books on Education has been prepared. Each teacher will receive one. A special effort will be made to place the books in the hands of teachers; as a beginning most of the books on education will be recalled from the branches and kept in a special collection at Headquarters from which they may be readily sent out to teachers with their school collections or on special request.

The Canadian Red Cross Junior, Jan. 1947.

This issue contains an article on the Prince Edward Island Libraries "A library isn't a luxury." It describes the branch libraries which cover the Island almost "like the dew", the annual exchange of books, the way books are made available through a request system, the use of books in schools, the part played by the Library in Adult Education, and new projects such as the film library.

News Notes

Mrs. Berdia F. Moore, Librarian of the Moncton Public Library writes: Miss M. E. Condon, who was in the services, returned to her former position as assistant librarian last September. Since then we have had a staff of three.

Fluorescent lights have been installed, and a neon sign over the library entrance with PUBLIC LIBRARY in lights and GOOD BOOKS WELCOME YOU in letters over the lights. Partitions were removed between two rooms upstairs and we now have an attractive reference room which is in use most of the time. There is also a small office on the second floor for the librarian.

A Story Telling Club with a membership of 200 boys and girls was started in October. The stories are told to groups of forty to fifty children on Saturday afternoons by voluntary story tellers. On March 1, recordings of "Peter and the Wolf" were played, preceded by the narrative. Through the kindness of the Teen Towne members, refreshments of cookies and chocolate milk are served.

Members of the Library Board, headed by Mr. H. Button, the President, interviewed the City Council and presented an estimate of expenses for this year and requested an increase in our grant, which was approved. We are to receive \$10,000. This increase will enable us to make necessary improvements to the building and to give better library service to the citizens of Moncton.

The Lay Library at Amherst purchased more than 400 new books during 1946, it was reported at a meeting at which officials of the library board were elected. The library has over 800 readers.

The establishment of a regional library in Annapolis County was the chief topic of a meeting of the Middleton District Farmers' Association held recently. Keen discussion followed talks by Guy Henson, Director of Adult Education, Henry D. Hicks, M. L. A. Bridgetown and Councillor Harry Parker, Victoria Vale.

Miss Mary Fraser of the Dalhousie University Library is attending the Library School, Columbia University, taking advanced work in library science. Also at Columbia is Miss Barbara Murray who had been at Dalhousie University Library for the past year; Miss Murray is completing the course for a B. L. S. degree.

Miss Hilda Gifford, at one time a member of the staff of Dalhousie University Library, is now with the Baker Memorial Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. During the war Miss Gifford worked in the Naval branch of the Censorship Department, Ottawa.

Membership in the Canadian Library Association from the Maritimes has reached these figures: Individual members--12, Institutional-13.

The Truro Public Library Committee anticipate re-opening the library at an early date and will require the services of a qualified librarian. Anyone interested in this position may make application to H. M. Cox, Sec. Library Committee, Truro Public Library, Truro, N.S., stating qualifications and salary expected.
