

Bulletin of the
MARITIME LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Vol. XIV No. 1

Fall 1949

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Prince Edward Island Libraries
Charlottetown, P. E. I.

BRIEF ON THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA

The Canadian Library Association - Association canadienne des bibliothèques presented a brief on the eventual character and scope of the proposed National Library of Canada to the Chairman and Members of The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, on August 18, 1949, at a public hearing held in the Exchequer Court of the New Supreme Court Building, Ottawa. The Association was represented by its President, Miss Kathleen Jenkins, Chief Librarian of the Westmount Public Library, Westmount, P.Q., Mr. H. Pearson-Gundy, Chief Librarian of Queen's University Library, Kingston, Ontario, Miss Cecile Saint-Jorre, President of the Quebec Library Association - Association des bibliothécaires du Québec, and Mr. J.D. Jennison, Ottawa.

The brief took a long-range view of the character and functions of the National Library and did not deal with matters already under the consideration of the National Library Advisory Committee appointed by the Government in 1948 under the chairmanship of the Dominion Archivist.

Recommending to the attention of the Royal Commission, the findings of a former brief entitled, A Joint Brief on a National Library, presented by five national associations in 1946, the Library Association's brief proceeded to discuss in some detail the nature of the collections, the services, the building site, the type of architecture, and the overall need for a National Library for Canada.

Library Service to Teen-Agers.

by Lillian Swim, Librarian, Truro Public Library.

Since so many articles have been written about Teen-agers and their reading within the last year or two, I do not propose to try to improve on those who are more expert in this field than I. However, it may be the lessons I have learned, will be helpful to others, and in such spirit they are offered.

First, perhaps some "definition of terms" is necessary. Whom do we mean by Teen-agers? I find, after some thought and observation of myself, that I use the term in describing two distinct groups,--distinct, that is, in their reading interests.--For the rest, all seems to be uniformity!

The first of these groups really presents very few problems. These are the oldish-thirteen, the fourteen, and the fifteen year olds. In Truro we encourage this group to continue to use the Boys' and Girls' Room, and we separate their section from that containing books for the younger boys and girls, with a movable book rack, on which we place the newer books they will especially enjoy. This separation is particularly important, as these youngsters are at that "touchy" age when they do not wish to be regarded as children. At the same time, it is not such a rigid separation that younger children find it difficult to progress to more difficult books in their reading. (We find this division of the room useful in another way, too. Since the Librarian's desk is close to the section devoted to books for the smaller children, it enables her to assist them in choosing the right book, without getting too far from the desk.)

The reading interests of these younger Teens seem to follow more-or-less stereotyped lines. Both boys and girls enjoy books in which dogs or horses play a major role; girls can never get enough of the "mystery" stories featuring the exploits of other girls; and boys want adventure stories with boys of their own age as heroes. Boys of this age are also interested in books about their favourite sports, their hobbies, and wild-life in forest and jungle. Girls are also interested in stories about girls following various careers, with emphasis on nursing.

As they reach the age of fifteen, or as they pass through their fifteenth year, both boys and girls show a change in their fields of interest. At this point, girls begin to want a touch of romance in their fiction; and boys begin to demand Zane Grey,--ostensibly for the western adventure, but perhaps they also are beginning to crave a little romance? Though they are more backward about admitting it than are the girls. At this point, we begin to prepare them for the transition to the main library, by expanding our resources in the Boys' and Girls' Room with a little judicious "borrowing" from the Main Library. As the reader exhausts this material, we promote him or her to the Adult Department, and then begins the problem.

At this point, there are those, perhaps, who are going to object to Zane Grey as an introduction to the Main Library. (Of course I am using this author as an example of a type.) But it seems to me to be a natural development at this age, and one not to be discouraged. For if it is discouraged, the risk is run of having the reader make the discovery at a later age when the job of "weaning" will probably be much more difficult, if not impossible. Of course, many of our Teens get lost at this point anyhow, but those in whom you have been able to instil some appreciation of such classics as Treasure Island, Tom Sawyer, Ivanhoe or Rob Roy, will sooner or later weary of the western diet, and be ready to be guided to something else. This same pattern holds for girls, but they run the additional risk of getting lost in Gene Stratton -Porter, and Grace Livingston Hill. However, here again, a previously instilled sense of values, is of great help in encouraging them not to dwell too long with this false and sentimental view of living.

Now we go on to the problem with which we are faced, as our childish Teens become Young Adults, and so join Group Two in my division of the Teen-agers.

Through somewhat bitter experience, I have had to establish a watchword which I must keep in mind at all times, when dealing with these youngsters, or I would tend to be too protective toward them. "Guide, but do not guard", This must go hand-in-hand with "Remember, they are adults". Of course, they are young, and this we must also remember, but I think there is a greater tendency to ever-emphasize their youth, than their age! And so, I put the emphasis on the latter.

While these young people were reading in the Boys' and Girls' Room, there was no need to watch their choice of book, except with an eye to interest value; but in the Main Library, this situation changes. While they demand, and should receive, adult fare, yet they need not and, indeed, should not, be plunged immediately into the starkly realistic writing which we are receiving from our better writers today. And the second-best fare is even worse. However, there are many books, best sellers of today and yesterday, which provide good reading for all ages and to these our young people should be guided.

Now, there are many ways of guiding the young reader to the books which will be most interesting to him, but please note that these all take the positive approach, not the negative. It is fatal to say "Not this book. You shouldn't read this at your age." This is guarding. Better to say "Are you sure you will find this book interesting? It is a best seller, I know, but it has such long descriptions in it! Personally, I think it could have been written in half the number of pages." Better, but still far from good. However, couple that with a reference to another book, with similar background, but which you can recommend, and chances are you will succeed in making the change. If you don't of course, you are in trouble. However, to continue

insisting would only be to whet the curiosity of the borrower, and make him more determined. Just what to do next, I quite frankly do not know, as I have always found that the other system worked, when it became necessary to use it, especially if a "man-to-man" voice is adopted.

But that method is only to be used in case of emergency. The much better method of a Young Adult corner in the library, is now the commonly advised solution. And how I would like to have one! But where? And since this question has no answer, I follow the method suggested by my predecessors. All books which we consider readable for these young people are marked by a gold star. This shows up on the shelves, and guides our young person to the books he is likely to enjoy and understand. This system, we are spreading to non-fiction as well as fiction. We find this a more positive approach, and when we couple it with published book-lists for young readers, it seems for the most part effective.

A most important factor in demand for books by these Teen-agers, is the use of the book as a basis for a movie. This can be turned either for or against you, depending on the use you make of it. I have found it best to publicize the fact that the book in the library, if the book is one for all ages, and to ignore it if it is one to read only by the older borrowers. Since the reaction of the older borrowers to a book on which a picture has been based is that they know all they want to about that one now, this does not harm the circulation of the book. On the other hand, Teen-agers, who want all the more to read the book after they have seen the picture, begin to trust to the fact that the Library will advertise the book, and cease to ask for those not advertised.

All of these procedures are, I hope, based on that guiding principle "Guide but do not guard." If a Teen-ager feels that he is being kept from certain books, he will either acquire them elsewhere, or cease to use the library, "because they keep all the good books away." But if he is kept busy with so many books recommended to him, then this feeling has no chance to grow.

Of course, by the time a Teen-ager is eighteen, he is a full-grown adult, and should be treated as such. By this time, he should be able to use his own taste for selection of books, and the part of the librarian is only to see that he gets what he is looking for, and is not fooled by the appearance of a book.

I find in looking back over these notes, that there is nothing original in them, and that the only thing at all new to most of you, would be the procedures which we use locally. I do hope that some of those may be of use to someone, and that the appended list of examples may also be helpful.

Besides the classic favourites, other favourite authors are:

Dogs and Horses

Farley, Walter
Rarom, H.V.
Hinkle, T.C.
Lathrap, West
Terhune, A.P.
Darling, E.B.
Kjelgard, Jim.

Mysteries

Bonner, M.G.
Evatt, Harriet
Simmons, M.I.
Coatsworth, Elizabeth.
Blyton, Enid.

Wild-life

Heming, Arthur
Roberts, C.G.D.
Johnson, Osa
Buck, Frank

Adult fare for the Teens.

Freedman. Mrs. Mike.
Helmericks. Alaskan series.
Russell. Victory in my hands.
Pierson, L.R. Roughly speaking.
MacDonald, B. The egg and I.
The plague and I.
Wells, K.M. The owl pen.
Stanwell-Fletcher. Driftwood
valley.
Merrick, Elliot. Northern nurse.
Davenport. Belvedere.
Forber. Mama's Band account.

Adventure

Ellsberg, Commander E.
Johns, Capt. W.E.
Haig, Brown, W.E.
Montgomery, R.G.
Pease, Howard.
Tharp, L.H.

Sports and Hobbies.

Harkins, Philip
Tunis, J.A.
Leeming, Joseph
Hall, A.N.
Boys' life magazine.

Young romances

The Lorimers
Walden, A.E.
Lawrence, Josephine
Bell, M.E.
Cavanna, Betty
Brock, E.L.
Benson, Sally
Thompson, M.W.
Runbeck, Margaret
Kiser, M.G.
Boylston, H.D.
Jacobs, H.H.

Books by Josephine Lawrence

Katherine Pinkerton
A.J. Cronin
Lloyd Douglas
C.S. Forester
T.H. Raddall
Richard Halliburton.

Keeping Young Readers Interested

by Mary Donahoe, Librarian, Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown.

Book Week naturally makes us reflect on that week of past years, what was done to promote children's books and interest. One week a year is not enough time in which to devote special attention to one of the most important features of library work; the effort must continue throughout the year.

Our teen-agers are the readers of the future. Their life-long reading habits and tastes are now being formed. What are librarians doing to help them? If left to themselves these

youngsters usually follow one of three courses: 1-Find a book that interests them, and read all they can get by that author. 2-Dilly-dally along reading only the syrupy stories. 3-Lose interest in books and drop off as library patrons. Every child has his own peculiar ability and taste which should be featured and developed. There are attractive books on every phase of living, but they may lie useless on the shelves unless librarians are thoroughly familiar with them. No librarian can be expected to read all the books for young people, but each one can have a knowledge of the type of story, the kind of materials, the special qualities of each author. Thus she can whet the appetite of the teen-ager and lead him to a fuller life. I am not now thinking of books that are used in connection with school courses. Unfortunately too often their use dampens the right spirit to such a degree that reading becomes a chore and distasteful burden instead of a pleasant pastime and guide to richer living.

Two phases of teen-age reading that I fear are almost wholly neglected are poetry and folklore. The latter is a necessity if one is to gain the fullest appreciation of literature; the former contains the music and beauty of living. Few children will discover them for themselves. Tell them something about how the story unfolds or point out poems you think might catch the fancy. In our small libraries it is possible to know each child individually.

Here are a few suggestions for arousing and sustaining interest - some of them old and tried, a few new and intriguing.

1. Book jackets displayed where the child can easily read.
2. Picture of book characters mounted on the display board or in the window over the caption "Who am I?".
3. Reviews of children's books clipped from magazines or written by the children themselves.
4. Photographs of well-liked writers and illustrators with interesting facts about each.
5. Advertising cards on which the child can write brief notes about the books he likes.
6. Notes about books addressed to individual children - "Tom, have you seen Pony jungle? It is full of mystery and adventure. Look on the shelf of new books".
7. News about the school or public library, new books, story-hour, book talks, book exhibits, hobby shows, additions to picture files.
8. Lists of books pertaining to current units of work, organized by problems, levels of difficulty, type of material or order of importance.

Let us give the children our best efforts and watch the developments.

Reference Corner

In answer to the question about provincial flowers in the Summer Bulletin, Mr. A.E. Millward, Director of the Canada Year Book Division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, kindly sent me a copy of Canada 1949, which had just come from the press,

containing a list of the floral emblem for each province. Quebec's emblem is the maple leaf. As to British Columbia, Miss Irene McAfee, Reference Department, Vancouver Public Library writes: "There is no official flower of this province. For years the Native Daughters of B.C. in the Vancouver area have urged that the dogwood flower be declared the official emblem, but as this flower is found only in the Southwest coastal area no support for it has come from other areas". Librarians may want to add to their copy of Canada 1949 the information, given by Mr. Millward, that the emblem for Newfoundland is the pitcher plant.

You are asked to send in any unanswered questions and let other librarians try their wits on them.

Wanted

Mr. Donald A. Redmond, Acting Librarian, Nova Scotia Technical College, wishes to obtain for personal files the following:

Canadian Library Council Bulletin, v.1 nos. 1,3,5 and any subsequent numbers; v.11 nos. 3,4,7 and any subsequent numbers in volume 11.

Library Quarterly: single copies or broken runs.

Mr. Redmond has 2000 book cards 2"x5" and 2000 pockets that he would like to dispose of. He would also exchange, accept as a gift or even pay for engineering material.

News and Notes

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Miss Isabel Abernethy, latley of the Reference Department of the University of British Columbia library, and a graduate of Toronto Library School, is in Halifax in charge of the Naval Research Establishment library.

Students at the Toronto Library School this year include Miss Constance DeMille, B.A. (Kings) and Miss Phyllis Scott, a graduate of Dalhousie University and for the past t^{wo} years an assistant in the Dalhousie library.

Mr. James Bell, Halifax, has joined the staff of the Dalhousie University Library.

Miss Shirley Elliott of Wolfville, who had been doing library work in the United States, has joined the staff of the Canadian Library Association in Ottawa. She is at present working with the Canadian Index.

Mr. Donald A. Redmond, formerly with the Canadian Book Centre is now Acting Librarian at the Nova Scotia Technical College. Mr. Redmond's thesis for M.S. degree in Library Science at the University of Illinois has been approved. The title is "Some College Libraries of Canada's Maritime Provinces: Selected Aspects".

and it is a study of the libraries of Acadia, King's, Dalhousie, Mount Allison, and University of New Brunswick.

Prince Edward Island.

Miss Gracie Campbell of the Prince Edward Island Libraries is on leave of absence attending McGill University Library school.

Local librarians of the P.E.I. Libraries gathered in Charlottetown for meetings on October 12 and 13. Attention was centred mainly on the routines of good housekeeping in a library, such as exactness in keeping circulation records, promptness in attending to "requests", and good order in magazines and pamphlets as well as books. A discussion on various types of children's books and their authors was also held. Miss Alberta Letts, special guest at the meeting, outlined the Annapolis Valley Regional Library system. Her audience was particularly impressed with the idea of a bookmobile to reach less populous centres. A feature of the convention was a visit to the new branch library building at Crapaud. Aid in financing this building was obtained from the Provincial government under a scheme whereby the government will match funds (up to a maximum of \$500) raised by a community for building or repairing a branch library.

Young Canada's Book Week

Lady Alexander will speak over the radio on Saturday, November 12, on the programme "This Week". She will speak in both English and French and will be preceded by Mr. Charles R. Sanderson, Toronto Public Library.

Bibliographical Centre

The House of Commons has passed a budget for the establishment of a Bibliographical centre at Ottawa. Already cards for the L.C. Depository Centre have been received. The Civil Service Commission of Canada will be advertising for staff this fall and we may see the centre established very soon.

THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR NEWS OF
LIBRARIES IN THE MARITIMES

Please send in items about your projects, staff, methods, gadgets. Editor.

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