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The President's Letter

Public Archives of Nov.
HALIFAX, N. S.

Milwaukee Conference

On Sunday morning, June 22, we arrived in Milwaukee to attend the A. L. A. Conference. Over 2,000 librarians were there to listen, to talk, and to learn. The streets seemed to be full of people flying along with programs under their arms and badges shining in the sun. The weather was ideal, fine and not too hot, which made for outside comfort, and the food being excellent everywhere, there was mellow contentment within.

Most of the meetings, and all of the public assemblies, were held in the Milwaukee Arena. The displays arranged by the A. L. A., the publishers and the library supply houses were colorful and attractive. A number of children's books and Vice-President Wallace's superb little book, The Price of Free World Victory were selling briskly. Then one wished that the Wartime Prices and Trade Board didn't hold the purse strings so tightly.

There were several meetings of Canadian librarians, too hurried to be completely satisfactory, but it was interesting to meet librarians from all over the country, about thirty-five altogether. At the last meeting plans were started for the next A. L. A. conference to be held in Toronto. The ghost at the feast was the possibility of restricted travel by that time.

The chief speeches have been published in the July A. L. A. Bulletin. Dr. Charles H. Brown, the President and Chairman, had a ripe wit which lightened his remarks. In his presidential address Dr. Brown stated:

"In order to attain a permanent peace we must first win the war. A statement has appeared in one of our professional periodicals that 'Libraries do not fight in a war'. But this is a total war. All of us must fight, not for the glorification of our profession or our libraries, but because our work is essential. Food, books, or even tanks or planes would be useless in achieving victory without the aid of other instruments, but all are necessary in varying degrees."

This was the note of all the speeches and discussions of the first conference since the United States entered the war: Libraries and

the war, wartime policy, the importance of books in a democracy in war and peace.

One of the interesting speakers at the conference was Edgar Ansel Mowrer. As one of the most thoughtful American foreign correspondents, he had pointed out as early as 1933 that Hitler meant war. Now working with Archibald MacLeish in the Office of Facts and Figures, Mowrer discussed the whole problem of censorship in "Informing the Citizen in a World at War." A clear speaker, looking a little like Abraham Lincoln, he said:

"... books can't win the war. But maybe - in fact, surely - books could decide what sort of war we are winning. For that will depend upon the kind of peace we get. And since we are going to win this war - the kind of peace we get will, if we are competent, to a considerable degree reflect the kind of peace we want. Creating a desire for the right sort of peace is a task that can be perhaps more effectively accomplished by books than by any other medium. For radio memories and newspaper headlines fade quickly, while impressions from books remain, if the author is worthy of his craft.

"The peace we finally get in going largely to be determined not only by what books are going to be written - for many kinds are going to be written - but by what books are going to be most read by the right people. Here is where the handlers of books emerge with unrivalled influence."

Tuesday morning everyone got a big lift when Robert J. Blakely, of the Des Moines Register, gave what was perhaps the brightest speech of the conference. Mr. Blakely was young, a fluent and vigorous speaker, and a man of ideas as well. In introducing him, President Brown said he was associated with a newspaper which had played a vital part in moulding public opinion in the Middle West to a broad understanding of world affairs. After covering the issues of the war, Mr. Blakely stressed the need for better and more simply written books, for better librarians and better personnel in every democratic institution, for better library service for men in the armed forces and for minority groups, for more men in the library profession. "What we need", he said, "is good will, and the intelligence to implement it. As St. Paul said, "We must be all things to all men - if we can convert them". The temptation is great to quote indefinitely, but this is not the place. Do, though, read the whole thing or you will miss a jewel.

Friday evening Archibald MacLeish, distinguished poet and Librarian of Congress, gave a speech "Toward an Intellectual Offensive." It was sad to have to leave the conference without hearing it, but Nova Scotia was too far from Milwaukee for people to stay who had to be back on Monday, so there was no alternative but to depart and sigh. Perhaps next year in Toronto ... One of the interesting points brought out in the published speech, however, was this:

"Wars are won by those who mean to win them, not by those who intend to avoid losing them, and victories are gained by those who strike, not by those who parry.

"The city of learning - or so it seems to me - can be defended in this war only as the city of freedom can be defended: by attack... And unless we are ready now or very soon to bring the battle to our enemies and overcome them - to strike down ignorance where ignorance appears - to fly our flag of truth and reason higher than our enemies can cut it down - we cannot win this war within the war on which the outcome of the war itself depends."

Marion Gilroy

Mount Saint Vincent School of Library Science

Since 1938, Mount Saint Vincent College has been offering courses leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Library Science, conferred on those who have successfully completed thirty semester hours of work. The aim and ideal of the School is to attract and develop women capable of becoming leaders in the library profession. It offers a basic one-year general course in library methods and techniques, and gives such training as will fit students for professional service in public, college, and school libraries.

The requirements for admission are:

1. An approved Bachelor's degree from a recognized college or university.
2. Reading knowledge of French or German. A knowledge of both languages is strongly advised.
3. A reasonable facility in the use of the typewriter.
4. The possession of personal qualifications, such as, ability to make contacts, accuracy, reliability, responsibility, and the spirit of service that will make for success in library work.

There are probably those who wonder why another library school is needed, where applicants are to be found, and where, when trained, they are to be placed? These are but some of the questions on which we also pondered before we notified the Board of Education for Librarianship of the American Library Association of our desire to qualify for accrediting. We think that we have satisfactory answers to these queries.

In a report to the Carnegie Corporation on library schools, Dean Williamson advised the filling of existing schools to capacity before establishing new ones, unless there were a lack of training agencies in certain areas. Surely such a lack exists in the Maritimes! But why should we, the youngest of the colleges here, be so rash as to undertake the work? Though the College is young, the Community of which Mount Saint Vincent is the Mother House will in 1949, celebrate the centenary of the arrival of the first four Sisters from New York. Some two thousand have followed in the footsteps of those pioneers and houses of the Order are now to be found in provinces of Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and the State of Washington. The Sisters are laboring in some eighty-eight educational establishments of various types, in seven hospitals, and in about the same number of charitable institutions and social service

centres. In all these, books and libraries are playing an increasingly important part and the demand for properly trained people to carry on this work has grown proportionately. The cost of sending away, to widely scattered library schools, the large number required was prohibitive, and in these war times, impossible. So it seemed wisest to make an enduring investment in a school of our own which could continue to train the members of our Order as they were needed. Already two other Religious Orders in the Maritimes have sent Sisters here for the course. Thus we have two sources of supply where only those best fitted will be chosen to prepare for definite positions awaiting them.

Furthermore, we have a third source from which to draw students since there is an increasing interest in the work among our own graduates and those of other colleges. Certainly the future holds exciting possibilities for librarians especially in Canada where little more than the seacoast of the library has been explored and the few blazed trails point the way to new territory, new outposts, where horizon follows horizon. Few other social agencies, it would seem, can anticipate so widespread an opportunity for general expansion or so great a development of educational services in the days ahead as can the libraries if they make ready now. We feel it is a privilege to help to prepare leaders in the movement.

Mr. Charles E. Rush has described the librarian of the future as "an interesting composite, having many of the qualifications of a sociologist, psychologist, teacher, historian, bibliographer... With changing conceptions of values and objectives there must come a more competent leadership, exhibiting strength of character, intellectual curiosity, enthusiastic vision, forceful personality, administrative ability and freedom from prejudice and tradition".

It is a far cry from the training necessary to prepare this paragon to that outlined by Melvil Dewey in the establishment of the first School of Library Economy at Columbia College in 1887. Instruction was condensed into a single quarter, and an opportunity for a two-year apprenticeship was offered to those who could afford the time. As an excuse for the brief training, Mr. Dewey remarked that many librarians have started careers with only the help gained by visiting some well-run library for a day or perhaps a week, or by attending the meetings of some library association! However, among admission requirements he stressed good moral character, sufficient natural fitness, ability, and education to take the course creditably.

Three years later, in 1890, Dr. E. C. Richardson, anticipating Mr. Rush's paragon, gave as his idea of the necessary equipment for a librarian, a knowledge of all mechanical details from A. to Izzard; a wide knowledge of languages - Latin, Greek, Hebrew; English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, at the very least, with a practical knowledge of at least a dozen more; a thorough and cosmopolitan knowledge of Encyclopedia, Literature, History and Bibliography; and a thorough business preparation!

Today library training is still in its formative stage, and in the present critical period the nature and objectives

of library schools are undergoing searching examination. It seemed wisest for us to chart a middle course between the traditional form and pattern and the research type of study. We also decided on qualifying as a Type II rather than Type III school, requiring a B.A. degree as our first entrance requirement. There seems to be a strong movement on foot toward a four year undergraduate course of unified and carefully outlined work on the principle that by this spreading of library courses, students would not be rushed through their training, but would rather gain perspective and a lasting discipline. We, on the other hand, feel that though a degree does not always guarantee a satisfactory general education, the basic preparation of four years in a liberal arts college is desirable for students who wish to acquire the two outstanding qualities of a librarian - a knowledge of books and people. Since the Sisters will largely have to get their training through summer schools, they will have the year between for practice, experimentation, and study; so that the unavoidable spreading of the courses will be to their advantage.

A frequent criticism is that library training has savored too much of the vocational school and apprentice class, offering too little of a true professional teaching agency centering on creative and reflective thought. It has turned out what Archibald MacLeish calls "mere check-boys in the cloak room of culture". We realized that if we were to avoid this "dry-as-dust" training, we would need to broaden our scope, emphasize fundamental subjects, apply principles rather than difficult procedure, adapt learning facilities to the needs of individuals, and offer opportunities for intellectual growth. By so doing we hope to prepare librarians who realize "that a library is not an end in itself but a means to many ends, and they must be ready to offer leadership in adapting and integrating the functions of the library with those of other educational and social agencies. Such a career demands the fullest possible development of personal ability and social understanding."

All accredited library schools are now affiliated with degree granting colleges and universities. In 1936, Mr. Munn repeated this criticism: "In all too many cases, the connection between library school and university is one of official recognition only; in few cases has the library school become part of the actual fabric of the university." But here is where the small college has the advantage. At the Mount there is close integration between the library and the various departments; and students in the Library School have constant opportunity for translating theory into practice. They assist with the actual cataloging, classifying, and filing of the College and Academy libraries; prepare exhibits; answer reference questions and make bibliographies not merely for the Faculty, but for other libraries; give book talks to Academy pupils; and have a variety of experience in circulation work and book selection for the public in the Mount Lending Library which supplies books and a reader's advisory service to children, young people, and adults of the surrounding villages. In this way the big gap between library school, and active, efficient library service is partially bridged. Moreover, attendance at lectures, musicales, dramatic performances, and a variety of social functions

which form an important part of life in a small college is also an education, giving an appreciation of the Fine Arts, and a training in the amenities of life.

By all these means, we hope to educate the librarian of the future, who, to quote Mr. Rush once more, "will be measured by the degree with which her library provides intellectual stimulation and liberalizing culture, looking to a better understanding of life's problems and joys. Her most important duty will be to live helpfully." We trust that she will be a lifelong crusader in the war on ignorance, boredom, narrowness, prejudice, and various forms of "tyranny over the minds of men."

Sister Francis de Sales

Mary Catherine Macdonald

The Maritime librarians who attended the M. L. A. Conference at Antigonish during the summer of 1937 will remember well our gracious hostess, Miss Mary Catherine Macdonald, then librarian of St. Francis Xavier University, and will regret her passing at Antigonish on the 25th of last June after more than a year's illness. Miss Macdonald had been associated with St. Francis Xavier since 1919. We quote from an editorial in The Halifax Chronicle: "It was Miss Macdonald who knew the students as no other member of the university staff ever could. It was to her they came for guidance and assistance in the reading and research which forms so large a part of the years spent in study at the university. Out of her deep understanding and wide culture Miss Macdonald occupied a truly vital part in the life of a great university."

Not only in her home town and in the library she served so faithfully will Mary C. Macdonald be greatly missed; she will long be remembered and regretted in those circles of the Maritimes where the members of her profession meet for conference. She joined the M. L. A. in 1935, and thereafter she did not miss an annual conference until her illness came upon her. She always gave hearty expression to her interest in the organization, and in its quarterly Bulletin, to which she was an occasional and valued contributor. The memory of her strong, sincere life devoted to happy endeavor in the service of education will long remain with us.

A New Library at Sandy Cove, N. S.

On Tuesday, July 28, a new public library in a new and beautiful building was formally opened at Sandy Cove, N.S. The suggestion that this village have a library of its own came first in 1935 from Miss Treeman, a New York lady who was spending the summer at this favorite seaside resort. Miss Treeman died that same year, but a librarian of Philadelphia, Miss Emily Taylor, took up the project and during her annual summer visits pursued it with enthusiasm and success. The library was first kept in private houses, but as it continued to grow the people of Sandy Cove decided to give it a home of its own, and a suitable building was erected by Balfour Specht of Barton. Mrs. B. F. Moore,

librarian of Moncton Public Library, writes that she visited the library and was thoroughly charmed. The school is next door, she says, and both buildings are on a hill overlooking the water. The library has 1400 books, is well furnished with easy chairs and small tables, has an open fireplace, and is open to the public two days a week.

It is reported that Barton and Plympton, both in Digby County, also have public libraries.

Notes and Personals

Miss Nora Bateson and Miss Marion Gilroy attended the A. L. A. Conference at Milwaukee in June.

Rev. Sister Francis de Sales, whose article on the Mount St. Vincent School of Library Science appears in this issue of the Bulletin, also attended the Milwaukee Conference.

Dr. G. R. Lomer, McGill University Librarian and Miss Grace Reynolds, a member of his staff, have compiled the following: Preliminary List of Names for The Directory of Canadian Libraries. Though 1725 names are listed Dr. Lomer writes that in all probability the compilers will proceed to make a complete list this winter, and that an annual list, not possible now, would be ideal. The work was undertaken under the auspices of the Canadian Library Council.

The Editor of the M. L. A. Bulletin, Mrs. Mary Kinley Ingraham, on August First completed twenty-five years of service as librarian of Acadia University.

Mrs. Berdia F. Moore, librarian of Moncton Public Library, writes: "We keep busy. Last month 101 army service men took out cards." Mrs. Moore writes further that the Library gives these soldiers more than book service; it helps them to plan trips, to find apartments, and to take advantage of cultural opportunities in the city.

Miss Jean C. Gill, Librarian of the Legislative and Public Library at Charlottetown, P.E.I., writes us hopefully about her work. The circulation is not so large as heretofore, doubtless because a general library has recently been established at the R.A.F. Airport, and also a Recreational Library at the headquarters of the Canadian Legion. Miss Gill early in the summer had on display in the Library under her care twelve war maps prepared by the Foreign Policy Association. The public showed great interest.

There were 35 responses to our request in the last issue for a vote ratifying the constitution of the Canadian Library Council and for the appointment of Miss Nora Bateson as our representative. All voted in the affirmative on both issues.