

BULLETIN

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LIBRARY

THE MARITIME LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

In an article in Saturday Night entitled "Canada Needs Better Library Facilities." Miss Janet R. Keith points out that only about one out of twenty rural people and eight out of twenty town people in Canada have ~~LIBRARY~~ service. She describes how regional libraries serving units of about 40,000 people with an annual budget of \$25,000 could provide the wide range of reading, constant supply of new books and well-trained librarians which constitute good library service. The need of improvement of municipal libraries and of more facilities for library training is stressed, as well as the desirability of having a National Library as a depository for all books published in or relating to Canada, as a research centre which would make rare volumes and manuscripts available to scholars, and might carry on activities such as photostatic reproduction, compiling of a union catalogue for Canada, and co-operation with UNESCO in international loans.

The library situation in Canada also gets attention in the Toronto Star Weekly, Jan. 18, 1947, which says (in part):

"Canada is reported to have gained an important position in UNESCO on which Canadian cultural leaders are represented. At the recent meeting of the executive of UNESCO in Paris, Canada's delegation occupied a leading place.

Canada's role in this international cultural organization would be more effective if her own cultural services were better developed. The Dominion's educational services are not as well organized and distributed as they should be nor are they extended adequately to the population. An example is the public library service. Canada is said to have fewer libraries for its population than any other literate country. Only about twenty of the public libraries of the Dominion come up to minimum international standards. The school services as well as the adult education movement are hampered in their progress through the lack of library service.

The chief reasons for Canada's lack of libraries are insufficient funds and a low ebb of public interest in the service. Only two per cent of the nation's wealth is estimated to be spent on public schools and even less than this is spent on libraries...

The inadequacy of public library services in Canada is all the more deplorable when it is considered that 90% of the people leave public schools in their early teens. It is estimated that only one in ten persons goes beyond the ninth grade in school. Lacking publicly provided books as well, most people in this country have inadequate opportunity to broaden their cultural horizon."

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The attraction into library work of capable and enthusiastic young people is essential to future development of libraries. The libraries already established have not enough trained librarians, and many more will be needed when the extension of libraries which we fervently hope for will come about. Librarians who have anything to do with young people can do their bit in this regard--first, by being the kind of librarian, efficient and cheerful, who excites admiration and a desire "to be just like Miss Black" Then if they have teen-agers as part time help in the library, they can teach them elementary processes and give them enough variety in their jobs so that they will get some idea of how many interesting things there are to do in libraries. The opportunities in the field of library work should be pointed out. Books that might be helpful in this regard are Alice Keliher's LIBRARY WORKERS, a brief survey of the work of librarians, and WITH A HIGH HEART by Adele De Leeuw, a story for young people about county library service.

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The Public Library of Victoria, B.C. has been presented with the first typescript copy of the new novel REMEMBER ME, a story of a Canadian soldier in England and Normandy. The author, Edward F. Morde said in his letter accompanying the gift: "The library has given me so much of my education that I am especially and sentimentally attached to it. I almost lived in it back in the dark thirties when time was about all one possessed. Anyway I have so much to thank the library for that I take this opportunity to do it."

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An invitation is extended to all working in or connected with libraries to join the Canadian Library Association. There is provision for institutional members, and individual members including librarians, library trustees, associate members (Friends of the Library etc.) We are still far from the goal of 2000 members representing all types of library interest. There are now 302 individual members and 98 institutional members, with 6 individual members and 8 institutional from the Maritimes. If this does not include you or your library, you are urged to become an active part of this organization which is working for the improvement of the library situation in Canada. Application forms may be obtained from :

Miss Elizabeth H. Morton, Secretary,
Canadian Library Association
74 Stanley Avenue, Ottawa, Canada.

BOOKS-----THE FRANCHISE OF THE MIND

by

Dr. J. J. Tompkins, in the Maritime Co-operator

I assume that our co-operative movement, if it is to live up to its possibilities and responsibilities, must base its program on the economic, intellectual and moral development of its members. We used to say that it was based on Justice--one of the prime requisites of any society--and on Charity, which in this case meant the practise of the works of mercy, when and where called for. Charity in this connection means helping people to help themselves.

To take on a program of economic intellectual and moral development means a large and comprehensive order--and requires an educational agency not confined to individuals or even groups and a fund of knowledge not usually carried around in one's hat.

This is where books and libraries and librarians come in to the co-operative picture. I believe that libraries should be more concerned than they are at present with this aspect of development but first of all that people should be more concerned with the role of the library in the diffusion of knowledge and the encouragement of co-operative enterprise.

The fruits of the mind and spirit must become the common property not of intellectuals only, but of men and women everywhere. This can be done only if education is universally shared and scientific progress made available to all through books and libraries.

The late Wendell Willkie made a rather pertinent statement when our several countries were in the midst of war. He declared: "Unless Britons and Canadians and Russians and Chinese and Americans and all our fighting allies---find the instrumentalities and the methods of co-operative effort after the war, we, the people, have failed our time and our generation."

" We must establish beyond any doubt the equality of men. And we shall find this equality, not in the different talents which we severally possess, nor in the different incomes which we severally earn, but in the great franchise of the mind, the universal franchise, which is bounded neither by color, nor creed, nor by social status. Open the books, if you wish to be free. "

But before the books can be opened, they must be made available and accessible to all through some system of library service.

We are reminded too, of the recent statement of David Lilienthal, chairman and designer of the now famous Tennessee Valley project: "The peoplecan no more build this region without books than a great dam can be built without a solid foundation in the earth. Books give one man out of his experience and skill, power to teach his neighbours how to build up the region's soil--out of which grow not only grasses and woodlands but a freer and more humane community."

CLASSIFICATION PROBLEMS

The classification of Canadian books confronts us with a problem that has received much diversity of treatment. Librarians have no uniform rules to follow in deciding whether books with a Canadian slant, which are not taken care of in the classification scheme, should have some mark to indicate that characteristic. We asked some Maritime librarians for their opinions and practices in this matter and present their contributions, which we hope will lead to further discussion of the question.

Miss Estelle M. A. Vaughan of the Saint John Free Public Library reports: " We have tried various schemes, but now the Canadiana is separated only by the classification numbers. We did put a small "c" on the books written by Canadians, not on Canadian subjects, but in the course of time that was dropped. We use 819 for Canadian literature-

- 819.1 Poetry
- 819.3 Fiction (we class fiction as the Library of Congress does)
- 819.4 Essays
- 819.5 Oratory
- 819.6 Letters
- 819.7 Humour
- 819.8 Miscellaneous

In our Reference collection we shelve Americana and Canadiana together; it is so difficult to separate them. We use the Toronto Public Library classification for Canadiana as when we started to re-catalogue, Dewey was inadequate."

Mr. M. P. Boone, Acadia University Library tells of his experience with Canadiana in different libraries:

" At the Ontario College of Education Library, the Dewey Decimal Classification was used, and all the Canadian material was put in its normal place in the system and shelved with the main collection. At the University of Saskatchewan Library there was a special collection of Canadiana called the Shortt Library. This was classified by L. C. the system which the Univ. of Saskatchewan is using at the present time. Over the call number the word Shortt was typed in order to keep this collection separate from the main collection. All the other Canadian material was shelved with the main collection.

Here at Acadia we have two special collections of Canadiana, the Dennis Collection (chiefly Canadian history) and the Logan Collection of Canadian Literature. These two collections are classified by Dewey and there is a letter "A" placed above the call number. This was done to keep these collections separate from the main library collection when the whole library was classified by the Dewey system. Our library is now classified by the L.C. system (with the exception of the material that remains to be reclassified). The Logan Collection and the Dennis Collection are to remain in Dewey. Unfortunately when the Dewey catalogue was first started, the 5x12.5 cm. cards were used, so, of course, we can not interfile the two catalogues. This is a real problem since we have to have material on Canada in two separate catalogues.

As you will no doubt be aware, our problem is what to do with current accessions of Canadian material, since the Dennis Collection is a closed collection. As a result our later material on Canada is placed in L. C. and shelved with the main collection. However, we still put Canadian literature with the Logan Collection.

Personally, I would prefer to see the books on Canada and by Canadians classified in their normal place and shelved with the main collection. Of course, special collections by their very nature have to be treated differently. If the Canadian material is distinguished by some distinctive mark, it seems to me that it makes a problem in shelving. I do not think that people will use the catalogue nearly so much to find material if special material is shelved in special places in the Library, and I for one am a firm believer in the use of the catalogue for locating material in the Library. Of course the preceding statement presupposes open stack privileges for the students."

From Dalhousie University, Miss Mary Fraser and Miss Dorothy McKay report:

"At Dalhousie University the policy for cataloguing books by Canadians, books about Canada and books published in Canada is not very clearly defined and over a period of years it seems to have been a somewhat changing policy. For a number of years it had apparently been the practice to put everything in the above categories in "Canadiana". The ordinary classification scheme was followed and in addition the books were marked "Can", indicating a special collection. But before that policy was adopted they received no special treatment, hence many earlier Canadian books are found shelved with the general collection. It has been felt for some time that neither practice was satisfactory, and the procedure in recent years has been to disregard the Canadian angle, except in the fields of literature and history, and to classify and shelve these books with the main collection.

Unnecessary division into collections separately shelved tends to interfere with the smooth functioning of the library's service and is to be avoided as much as possible. Rather than being all-inclusive should not "Canadiana" in a general university library be historically important because of its early imprint or because of its value as source material? Would it be feasible to adopt some definite date, possibly 1867, as a demarcation point?

At Dalhousie we are fortunate in having a small but valuable collection of early Canadian books and pamphlets, and material of this nature would always be the basis of what should accurately be called "Canadiana".

We are interested in hearing what treatment is given Canadian books in other libraries, so that by pooling our ideas we may work out some really satisfactory method of procedure."

These librarians seem to agree that making a special collection of Canadian books is undesirable, and to a certain degree I agree with them.

The Prince Edward Island Libraries at the outset adopted the practice of marking all books by Canadians and about Canada with a "C" and shelving them separately. This sometimes kept apart books which would be better together; e. g. Stephen Leacock's "My discovery of England." would not be with other books on England. Generally it does not matter what country the author of a practical ^{book} such as one on radio or dressmaking comes from; but in other cases it might add to the interest or usefulness of a book if one could tell at a glance that it was written by a Canadian. I am thinking of subjects that might be affected by our climate or culture or system of government, such as gardening, rural school-teaching, social work, etc. And for me books like Robert Fontaine's The happy time and E. M. Richardson's We keep a light have an added flavor because they deal with life in Canada. Ordinarily their classification would not indicate this to the reader. I wonder if a compromise

could be made—having "C" added to the classification number for books such as these, and the books and shelf-list cards placed in the main collection

We would be interested in having the views of other librarians on this subject. If you will send them to the Editor, the discussion can be continued in the next Bulletin.

Dorothy Cullen

WHY ASK FOR A NATIONAL LIBRARY

reprinted from the Ontario Library Review.

Canadian librarians everywhere are pressing for a National Library in Ottawa. To the world in general this may seem to be no more than evidence of a normal professional ambition. What could be more natural than that librarians should wish to see in Ottawa a great new library building, teeming with books—and, incidentally, with well-paid members of their profession?

Actually, Canada's librarians are much more altruistic than they probably appear. They are convinced that they are asking NOT MERELY FOR SOMETHING NEW BUT FOR SOMETHING THAT IS VERY NECESSARY. They are deeply concerned because things are not being done that, in their considered opinion, only a National Library can do.

In this atomic age books have suddenly become more than ever vital to the welfare of a nation. "The war" in the words of Luther H. Evans, Librarian of Congress, "has demonstrated beyond question that knowledge PRECISE KNOWLEDGE, must be the basis of all Governmental policies and private programs; that knowledge has become so extensive and complicated in our modern world there can be no hope of controlling it except in terms of great research libraries giving a highly responsive service at all points where programs are developed and policies decided."

Acting upon this conviction, the Library of Congress is planning, both for itself and for other great libraries in the United States, the systematic acquisition of printed material from all the world's nations upon a scale never before dreamed of.

As an emerging world power, Canada has a corresponding need for books, and for more extensive book collections upon which to build. Ottawa teems with libraries, but their interests are specialized, and they operate in virtual independence of one another. It is high time that it became someone's business to assess these collections, and supplement them in a great new National Library. WE NEED TO MOBILIZE THE BOOK RESOURCES NOT ONLY OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL, BUT OF ALL THE NATION'S MAJOR LIBRARIES; so that one single agency will be in a position to see where we are weak and where we are strong, and be able to say instantly where any information that is needed may be found.

Even these few words suggest another major function that could be performed by a National Library—a centralized information service. Many offices now answer questions, but they are limited in their resources or in the fields within which they are qualified to speak. A National Library could act as a central clearing house, whose business it would be to know where specific data of a hundred kinds could be secured most easily and authoritatively; and in the process it could answer many routine questions from its own files and so save the valuable time of technical agencies. Such a clearing house would be equally valuable to the man in the office next door, and to the citizen at the other end of the Dominion; once instituted, the convenience and usefulness of its services would be instantly apparent.

Any number of more specialized functions spring to mind. To quote only one example, Canadians are still without any regular or complete history of the publications of the various departments of their national government. The existence of such a list should be taken for granted, for without it many a valuable report fails to reach more than a fraction of the people who could make good use of it. A National Library, which would receive as a matter of course copies of all official publications, could produce such a list as a routine measure.

Nor must we forget that the influence of such a library would be felt literally from coast to coast. More than five million Canadians are still without library service of any sort, and although the actual organization of local library services is a matter for the provinces, a central clearing house for information and advice would assist greatly to keep the whole situation in proper perspective. Furthermore, just as the larger provincial libraries add greatly to the effectiveness of local libraries by standing behind them when occasion arises, and giving them the benefit of their specialized personnel and great stocks of books, so a National Library could take its place as a court of last resort for the nation's libraries as a whole.

Every important nation in the world except Canada now has a National Library. Some of them have been functioning for centuries. Even though Canadian librarians may be "interested parties", surely their crusade is in the interests of the nation, as well as their own. In any event, if they are wrong, they are wrong in good company.
