The Institute was soundly based on the belief that collection development is the central function of librarianship. A library by definition is a collection of materials. To bring together a collection which furthers the objectives of the institution and meets the needs and purposes of the library's clientele is the primary purpose of the librarian. While it is true that modern librarianship gives great and proper emphasis to reader services, the success of these services depends in large measure upon the quality of the collection around which they are built.

One of the speakers, Elizabeth Nesbitt, drew attention to the aptness of the figure of "building a collection" with its connotation of an architectural construction. Such a construction is planned, it is orderly, and its results are functional. This idea became, in a way, the theme of the conference.

It was generally agreed that if a collection of books suitable and satisfactory for its purpose is to be created over a period of years it must be carefully planned. The heart of a plan is a selection policy worked out by library board, head librarian, and professional staff working together and recorded in a written statement. A broad and comprehensive statement can be the basis for all selection and rejection, whether of purchase or of gift. In speaking of rejection the point was frequently made that the negative aspect of selection is as important as the positive aspect; negative, of course, being the items decided against or refused. It was suggested that in many cases the excellence of a collection will be determined not so much by what is added but by what is rejected or discarded.

All book collections, like a house, have a foundation, a main frame structure, and a set of partitions. The foundation is made up of the timeless and universal "classics"—those basic books without which any collection would be incomplete,
regardless of the subject or character of the library. Upon this foundation rests the main structure, called by the Institute speaker the "standards." These are the books that are on their way to becoming classics or just miss being so for one or another reason. They are more numerous than the classics and round out and give variety to the collection. Within the main walls are the partitions--the specialized materials which give uniqueness to a collection and which reflect the special or specific interests of the institution or its readers. Then there are the "stepping stones"--those books which lead to an understanding of the "standards" and the "classics."

As for its functional character, the point was frequently made that a collection is adequately so only if its development is based on community and individual needs, the needs of the maturing child and the adolescents going into adulthood, and on the adult's multitude of purposes. Someone called these the felt needs of the community. But this raised specific questions. How does the librarian find out "felt needs"? How can a librarian identify purposes and community requirements?

The community survey is a proven method of getting the kind of information which would help to gauge the requirements of the community and no comprehensive development plan should be formulated without it. A community survey does not necessarily call for original research upon the part of the library staff. Data covering population characteristics, economic conditions, schools, town planning and other facets are usually available and these may be adequate for background knowledge. To this collection of information the librarian brings his interpretative skill.

This led to a consideration of what some called the art of librarianship, an art which is based on an extensive knowledge of materials, a thorough understanding of the processes of communications, and a sensitivity to the needs and problems of all kinds of people in all kinds of situations. The uses to which this art is put are likewise the ways of education and are, in turn, derived from the educational function of the library.

When the librarian becomes an educator he must take on the responsibility of the teacher. Accepting these responsibilities means that the librarian must take that lonely way of individual judgment. This personal judgment will determine
what books he buys, rejects, and eventually makes available to his readers. This is the kind of book selection which is based on more than public demand for the best seller. This is the book selection which goes beyond reliance upon lists of "best books" or simple numerical formulae.

The Institute further brought out that good book selection is based on a sound grasp of existing limitations. For example, the medium-sized library cannot, as it was said, meet the needs of the trained intellectual or the advanced scholar. On the other hand, it can meet the needs of the man of intellect in the community, the 10 per cent or more who know how to read, how to use books and other communications media, and who rely upon their use for their work or pleasure.

Another kind of limitation was highlighted by LeRoy Merritt who reported upon his recent study of book selection practice in public libraries all over the country. His research revealed that it was only those libraries serving a population of 100,000 or more that consistently secured all of the 60-odd "outstanding" books selected each year by the American Library Association. This suggests that, whether we like it or not, the smaller libraries do not possess the resources necessary for them to acquire completely adequate collections of books, films, recordings and related materials.

Also underlined during the Institute was the realization that the librarian serving as selector must be courageous besides being skillful and perceptive. He must have courage to choose the books he does not approve of but recognizes as being necessary for the well-balanced collection. He must also have the courage to resist those who would limit his choice.

It was clearly evident from the information presented at the Institute that the censor is ever present in our communities. The librarian, Paul Bixler reminded us, is in the forefront as the defender of the community's fundamental liberties. In the market place of ideas, he said, the librarian is the honest broker, and he must carry out his duties fearlessly and without favor. The librarian as the selector, the builder, and the protector of his library must, more than most, keep clear the objective of the "right to know."

The Institute also turned to some rather specific problems of collection development. One of these had to do with where to purchase books. It was revealed that 80 per cent of Amer-
ican libraries customarily buy their books through the wholesaler, a number which has doubled in the past 20 years. Apparently libraries have found that handling at least the bulk of their materials through one jobber facilitates the acquisition process and simplifies the various procedures in connection with book order and purchase. By and large the profession has been well served by its suppliers. There is every reason to believe that it may continue to expect a high degree of professional responsibility from these commercial establishments.

There is a limit, however, to what can be expected, and asked, of the commercial book houses. These enterprises exist to make a financial profit, and in the long run their decisions must be based on this transcendingly important factor. That their purpose is profit does not mean that they cannot be of great help to the library profession, but it must be remembered that it does affect their thinking and their actions.

There are certain costs that are unavoidable in connection with selecting, finding, and securing books. These costs must be paid whether directly through the use of library personnel or indirectly through the use of commercial supply houses. Each library must decide for itself, and should frequently reappraise its decision, as to where these costs are best met, whether from the personnel budget, or from the book budget.

The attention of the Institute members was brought to matters affecting the acquisitions of periodicals and documents. They were reminded of the tremendous growth of periodical and document literature not only in their bulk and cost, but in the increasing use that is being made of them in most kinds of libraries. The purchase of periodicals particularly can consume a large share of the book budget. Great care is needed to keep the periodical subscription list balanced with the book acquisitions as well as being balanced within itself.

In the discussion of the role of the periodical subscription agent, the evidence presented in the Institute clearly established the many advantages of the agent's services to libraries. At the present time these agents provide essential services to libraries and can do so at less cost than most libraries are able to themselves.

As for government publications and other public documents the Institute learned that these are not nearly as difficult to choose, acquire, and to use as many librarians seem to feel.
Selection tools are available, and, once acquired, documents may be cataloged and indexed or arranged as would any other addition to the library. Moreover, documents have proven to be an exceptionally good device for strengthening collections inexpensively and they are appearing in an ever increasing number of subject areas.

Attention was paid during the Institute to the role of the state agency in providing assistance to libraries and especially to the smaller libraries. It was pointed out that the state library is both father and mother to other libraries in the state. In the better of these state institutions help is provided along what was called the growing edge of library problems, including suggestions for new services and particularly materials for new or poorly covered subject areas. Several members of the Institute testified to the tremendous value of this help to the smaller library.

Recognition of the necessary and desirable services of the state agencies did not diminish the realization by some members of the Institute that there were several dangers inherent in the kinds of assistance now provided by state agencies. It was pointed out that the smaller the library, the smaller the staff, and the greater the distance from a large library system, the more the supplementation that was necessary. As some could see, it might reasonably be asked whether the state agency in this instance was merely providing a crutch to maintain a bare subsistence level in inferior institutions. Does this kind of help nurture that which will grow or is it merely keeping alive something that should never exist in the first place?

There is another way of looking at it, however. That is to envision all the libraries of the state as one great statewide cooperative system. Thus, the resources of the state are used to alleviate inequalities in the library service which is rendered to various sections of the state.

The Institute finally turned to two perplexing problems arising from the change in the nature of material available to libraries: the paperback book, and audio-visual materials. Early in the Institute the position was taken that books are here to stay, "books" meaning the more familiar hard-cover. The two speakers discussing paperbacks and audio-visual aids took the unequivocal position that these were here to stay also. While each form has its limits and its disadvantages the important matter is that both can materially enrich library col-
lections. Full acceptance of paperbacks, films, recordings, pictures, and filmstrips in our libraries is based on the realization that the book, in its traditional form, is not sacred. This one-time heretical notion was acknowledged without emotion. It was recognized that books can and will be changed, expended, and replaced. As libraries have successively, and successfully, absorbed clay tablets, the codex manuscript, and the printed book, now will they, with equal facility, usefully adapt to their needs the newer materials.

The Institute closed with the recognition that the challenge of collection development belongs to every librarian and his response to it the principal measure of his professional success. After all the only reason people come to the library is to use a book, whatever the form that "book" might take or whatever the use might be. If the library is to mean anything in our society, it must fulfill those requests with precision and understanding.