COOPERATION BETWEEN TYPES OF LIBRARIES IN ILLINOIS TODAY

My responsibility at this conference is "to review all known main instances of such cooperation (between libraries of different types) in the past and in the present, with a critical evaluation of their results, to present a projection of what you think might be the next steps to take in this direction." Taken literally, then, my role has become one of historian, critic, and prophet. I will not attempt to fill these roles, for to do so would presume an exhaustive study on my part and assure an exhaustive afternoon on your part.

I will, however, attempt to fulfill this assignment in some degree. Let me begin by telling you what I have done in preparation for this meeting. Through Illinois Libraries, I have reviewed library literature for references to Illinois library cooperation. A questionnaire was mailed to over 500 librarians in the state and personal conversations were held with several librarians. With the above as a basis I shall report on the literature search and the questionnaire, report in some detail on certain cooperative programs as defined by this program, and offer some comments.

A review of periodical indexes was made in an attempt to identify activities between various types of libraries which could be classified as inter-library cooperation in Illinois. None were found which truly cut across library lines. This is, of course, not conclusive evidence that nothing has been done—it is only an indication that nothing has been written which was then indexed. Often, however, library literature does not adequately represent projects or activities which are truly working and innovative.

In a second attempt to identify projects within Illinois, a search through Illinois Libraries was made. It was both an interesting and frightening task to
review the past forty or so years in Illinois libraries—frightening in that it raises many questions as to what has been accomplished in this state and in the profession. This review of literature then did not produce tangible leads to projects which cut across library lines in the interest of better library service. There were, to be sure, several articles on school and public libraries working together, but these were the familiar song and dance routines which go something like the following: teachers come to tea at public library; children’s librarian speaks to teachers; public library has story hour and summer reading program; and teachers do not tell anyone (school librarians or public librarians) about assignments. Thus in perusal of the periodical which should reflect Illinois librarianship and library development, no good clues were found which would direct one to interlibrary activities.

The second step to gain information was a questionnaire. In early August 1968, a questionnaire was sent to over 500 libraries in Illinois. It was sent to all public libraries, selected school libraries, all university and college libraries, and selected special librarians. Two hundred and ninety-six returns were received. The questionnaire was very brief and was designed only to lead me to interlibrary experiences. Five questions were asked and followed a brief cover letter which stated the purpose of the questionnaire. The five questions were:

1. Check the type of library you represent. (Various types were listed with a space to check the one applicable.)

2. Has your library participated in any joint activity with another library during the past ten years?
   Yes or No

3. If yes, identify the other type(s) of library(ies) involved:
   Public     College     University
   School     Special     Other

4. Characterize briefly the key action involved. (For example, “shared staff,” “joint reference selection,” “joint periodical pool,” etc.)

5. Have you made any efforts to discuss or to plan cooperative activities with other librarians without success? Yes or No. If yes, what types of activities were being proposed?

One hundred and seventy-five of the questionnaires returned answered “no” to questions two and five. No activity between their library and another library was in force and none had been tried the past ten years. This was a flat “no” to both questions.

Several of the respondents indicated cooperation between their library and an agency of the same type. This is especially true in relationship to the new public library systems. Many public librarians checked the questionnaire to indicate that they, a public library, cooperated with another type of library and identified that as a library system. This is an interesting situation in which the members of an organization indicate their gratefulness for the cooperation the
system was established to generate and hold up their cooperative spirit as an emblem of achievement when the other party on the line is, in fact, their creature. This fact may well indicate a barrier to interlibrary activity if our basic structure lines are not clear and understood by librarians.

Examples of cooperation with other libraries of the same type are what could be generally expected. Some examples of cooperation between public libraries follow: host to library laboratory; host to district meeting for State Library; book exhibits; loans from the Illinois State Library; exchange of mysteries, science fiction, westerns, etc.; amnesty days; courtesy cards; shared lists of periodicals; essay and general literature index responsibility; exchange of gifts and duplicates; exchange of ideas; and periodical meetings of librarians.

There were two activities noted as having been discussed or tried between public libraries without success: a community card program between six neighboring libraries (three libraries are doing it) and reciprocal cards between four suburban libraries.

From the questionnaire, college libraries in Illinois appear to be cooperating the most with one another. A sampling of their activities follow: union list of serials for twenty-eight college libraries; equal access to resources of another college; joint periodical list; regular delivery schedule between two campuses; teletype network; supplying of photocopies for mutilated periodicals; exchange new accessions lists; cooperative purchasing; and shared staff and materials. No school librarians responded to this question with examples. However, it is known that some school systems have cooperative programs with other school libraries of the nature noted.

Let us turn our attention to the examples of interlibrary cooperation revealed on the questionnaire.

1) Public library and school library cooperation. There are no startling revelations or challenging stimulators among the actions identified. Here is a sampling of responses:

- reserve shelf at public library for school assignments
- public library visits by schools
- library instruction to classes
- classroom collections to schools
- joint amnesty day
- cooperative book return
- joint periodical pool
- shared cataloging tools
- provide junior high with paperbound *Reader's Guide*
- help high school students with research
- shared staff
- shared administration and operation
- joint book selection meetings
- regular exchange of lists of periodical holdings and new book acquisitions
- attend library meetings together
- borrow reference books from one another
- informal discussion group of librarians within area
joint facilities
(This only in one instance and in that it is one of common administration with more than one administrative board.)

an Articulation Committee composed of "administrations of public library and local schools (public and parochial); key library people (public and school); representatives of teaching staff"

exchange of bibliographies
bookmobile to schools
participate in career day
publication of local library directory
school librarian helped to catalog our books
joint National Library Week program
joint use of film collections
joint radio program

2) Public libraries and colleges and universities. Again the following is a quick identification:

interlibrary loans
National Library Week cooperation
cooperative exhibits
honor university library cards
share staff—small college and small public library
joint reference selection
joint use of quarters (new junior colleges)
microfilm pool of local newspapers
joint use of LTP reports
joint purchases of certain collections
(such as essay and general literature indexed items)
cheaper non-resident cards for college students

It is interesting to note that one public library indicated extensive cooperation with its neighboring university library—but that university listed none.

3) Public libraries and special libraries:

interlibrary loans
 sends specialized material to special library—receives general materials

This is not a long list of activities but it does represent the activities reported. You can see that there is some interlibrary activity in practice. There is probably more which did not come into evidence during the survey but what was given is representative enough to show clearly the present patterns.

Answers to the last question provided indications of activities which were tried but failed. Only a dozen replies indicated that overtures had been made in a certain direction to no avail. They included:

reciprocal use of a school film collection by a public library (which loaned theirs to the school)
schools wanted to use our films but policy did not permit
improved conversation with schools on assignments
extension of borrowing privileges to junior college students via an
area common library card
complete cataloging of public library books in the school library
and vice versa, cataloging of school library collection by the public
library
joint acquisition and service policy statement between libraries of
several types (failed because of suspicion on part of schools and
special libraries)
shared use of reference materials
tried to arrange a liberal interloan with a special library but to no
avail
tried college library to exchange shelflists with the public library but
insufficient funds

And these final three frustrated plans of a junior college librarian:

tried to get a joint book catalog between several junior colleges but
staffs didn't want it
tried (junior college library) to join the processing center but they
couldn't cope with a college—only small public libraries
tried to work with LIBRA, but they, naturally, wish to cooperate
with institutions like themselves—small four-year liberal arts colleges

Two activities which have cut across library lines and are representative of
what activity has been taken included the establishment of an association or
organization for discussion and action and a cooperative effort between a school
and a public library. An Articulation Committee has been formed in one
city with the following purpose: to establish communication channels and
lines for action between public and school and special library programs. The
committee includes the following representation: the director of the public
library, superintendent of public schools, chief administrator for parochial
schools, a representative of the school principals' council, school reading
specialists, two special librarians, and department heads from the public library.
This group meets twice a year and committees, when needed, are formed to
achieve certain action. Although the public librarian feels discouraged at times,
he believes that it is a worthwhile project and one which is productive. It has
opened up communication with school officials and three top school admin-
istrators have become library conscious.

The public librarian would like to see a coordinated selection policy for all
publicly supported library units within the community. This has not been
achieved to date because of suspicion or uncertainty on the part of the school
officials. While the school board could impose such, the public librarian hopes it
will come about through mutual trust and understanding.

Another example of interlibrary cooperation referred to above has been
used for many years as an example of public and school cooperation—I refer to
the relationship between the Evanston Public Library and the Evanston elementary schools. I am reporting on it in some detail because it offers, I believe, some interesting lessons in cooperation. The boards of the Evanston Public Library and of the elementary school district have had a long, interesting relationship—referred to quite often as a cooperative system.

Although this cooperative system was formally organized in 1921, classroom collections had been provided by the Public Library as early as 1896. Each classroom was allotted three-month loans of twenty books which school boys transported between the Public Library and the schools in small carts. Teachers were enthusiastic about this opportunity for encouraging good reading habits. At this time, the schools were providing only general reference books. Marian Lindsay, the librarian of the Public Library, believed that school libraries should be maintained by the Public Library to provide greater book strength through interchange of books. Public demand for more library service for adults, as well as children, resulted in the establishment of deposit stations in two schools. These stations, which were open one afternoon and evening each week, provided books for children and adults.

In 1918, the Mother’s Clubs established special memorial library rooms in honor of school principals in two elementary schools. These libraries stimulated interest and desire for a separate library in every elementary school. In 1921, the Juul law, a state law which reduced the Public Library budget by one third, made it impossible to continue library service to the schools. The board of education was fully aware of the value of school libraries and was ready to accept the library board’s program for cooperative financing and service to the schools.

As the first step in this cooperative plan, the two boards jointly employed a trained and experienced children’s librarian who was to devote half time to supervising children’s services at the Public Library and half time to supervising school libraries. As a member of the Public Library staff, she administered the children’s department and selected and purchased all children’s books. As an employee of the school board, she was given the right of a supervisor to enter classrooms to talk about books and give instruction on the use of the library.

An outstanding development of Public Library and school cooperation was the establishment of centralized cataloging. A specialist was employed to catalog, classify, and maintain a master shelflist of all books acquired by the schools or the children’s department of the Public Library. This method of cooperative cataloging provided a uniform system of cataloging. With the exception of two schools, library books were placed in classrooms and serviced by the classroom teacher. The supervisor visited each class once a month.

When the Boltwood Intermediate School opened in 1924, the first full time school librarian was employed jointly by the two boards. The school board paid two-thirds of her salary, while the library board paid one-third. This librarian, who had both teacher and library science background, assigned classes to a weekly period in the library for instruction in the use of books and catalogs and book appreciation. This experimental step in cooperation between school and library boards was highly successful.

Several new school libraries were established within the next few years. In 1926, the Foster School garage was turned into a library. The new Haven
Intermediate School, built in 1927, had a special library room with a full time librarian. In 1928, Willard School established a separate library room. In 1929, an itinerant librarian was employed to assist the supervisor. This same year school library cards were replaced by juvenile public library cards which could be used in the school library, the main library, or a branch library.

This same year, the two school boards (prior to the present District 65, there were two elementary school districts) agreed that the school library rooms which could be used as community libraries would be provided in each new school. By 1933 this plan had been carried out, and thirteen of the fourteen elementary schools had a separate library room. Each class was assigned to at least one library period each week. Six librarians, with education and library science degrees, served these schools.

By 1939, the staff included nine librarians, the number increasing as new schools were built. The Public Library paid one-third of the salary of most of the school librarians, as well as one-half of the salary of the supervisor. In May, 1945, the library board revised the policy concerning the relationship between the library and the two school boards. Through the growth of traveling branch service and the opening of a separate north branch (a south branch had been established many years earlier), the schools no longer served as branches, and school librarians devoted their entire time to school library service. Therefore, the two boards agreed that the schools would pay the full salary of the school librarians. The following quotation, from a statement by the library board at that time, indicates the philosophy of service to school children:

We do not, in any way, wish to alter the fine spirit of cooperation and mutual agreement that has so long been enjoyed by the library and the schools and which has worked to produce so many benefits and advantages. Because of the mutual understanding of the School Boards and the Library Board on the necessity for and value of our past cooperative venture in the joint operation of the libraries concerned, we feel, in adopting this permanent policy, that the School Boards of Districts 75 and 76 and the Library Board should go on record in expressing their wish and desire that no action be taken in the future that might endanger or lead to its dissolution.

Since 1945, there have been many areas of continued cooperation between the Public Library and the schools; i.e., book selection and purchasing, cataloging and a union shelflist, processing, interlibrary loan, registration of all children providing a common borrower’s card, and delivery service which makes it possible for children to return library books at any agency. The coordinator or supervisor, whose salary was until this year shared equally by the school board and the Public Library, supervises the librarians in the twenty-one school libraries and the materials center as well as the children’s department of the Public Library.

Greatly increased enrollment in the schools and changes in policies of school administration have affected the Public Library’s role in the cooperative plan. Prior to the employment of a special school personnel director, the director of the public library, together with the supervisor (or coordinator) of
school libraries, initiated contact with and interviewed all applicants for school library positions. The school business manager has assumed responsibility for budget planning and purchase of equipment, etc. With increasing school library development and expanded material purchasing assisted by the various federal programs, there was a gradual shift from a coordinated operation to separate but physically adjacent operations.

Today Evanston has a cooperative system although very different from that envisioned by Marian Lindsay in the 1920's. Was separation of the technical process and the shared staff necessary? It appears that the separation of certain operations of technical processing came about because of the inability of the Public Library unit to respond to the increased load of school materials, In part, there was a non-acceptance by the Public Library of the plan to shorten catalog entries for certain children's material.

The last of the shared staff was the coordinator. The nature of this position has changed and I feel it is an important change since a full time, high level coordinator of children's services is needed, just as the schools need the undivided attention of their supervisor. Cooperation still is done on some fronts—such as the technical processing of school materials is done at the Public Library by a school staff with shared resources; there is a single charging system throughout the Public Library and elementary schools giving the child fewer routines and rules with which to become familiar; delivery service between all units permits free interchange of books; and our children's librarian attends all school library staff meetings and vice versa. Evanston is increasing its effectiveness through a true cooperative program which is still developing as the old dependency and not too clearly defined program is retired.

There seem to me to be certain problems—possibly inherent—in the profession which can stifle us. There were clear and distinct indications that "size of library" and "distance" will still serve as an argument or excuse for lack of action or inaction. This is an age-old problem which apparently logic and positive and constructive examples cannot solve. These excuses were used time after time as a reason for "no" replies—but, perhaps, it is encouraging that persons felt compelled to excuse their negative reply. Perhaps cooperation has become a mode, if not a manner, and with it, at least in the vocabulary, we have hope.

Other barriers which could be enumerated can be summed up in one word—and that same word notes our greatest resource—"people." This means that we are either in great shape—or we really have problems. So many of the problems enumerated come back to the people involved: the school librarians who would not cooperate; the board which vetoed the idea; the public librarians who did not want to serve students. If we are to utilize our greatest resource, we are going to need to achieve an orientation to total library service. All types of librarians, library school faculty, library trustees—all who are concerned with the library universe—must be oriented to service and to each type of library's primary purpose.

If we are deterred by such things as "distance," "size," "reciprocal borrowing" and so forth, perhaps our basic problem is people. Only one person mentioned this in his reply and his complaint was "lack of help keeps us from
doing things like this.” I suspect he was referring to cooperative activities but the meaning is unclear, as are many of our arguments or protests against inaction or ignorance.

There are, I think, some commendable and profitable activities going on in Illinois. We seem unable, though, to make relatively simple relationships. Many of us fight reciprocal borrowing today—and hope to dip into those troubled waters with someone else’s toe—we will start with a pilot program and build gradually. We are unable to accept the testimony and experiences of others in our own state and region—or even experts from New York. Just as we are unable to accept and apply the experience factor of others in this regard, we are unable to accept the usefulness across types of library lines of such things as union lists of serials, interlibrary loan, centralized periodical pool, and so on.

We seem not only to lack imagination but to lack a certain enthusiasm or initiative. The single activity which was noted with the most frequency as an interlibrary activity was interlibrary loan. The interesting fact in this regard is that in over 70 percent of those replies noting public library-system cooperation it was interlibrary loan which was held up as the example of service. As a profession we have had the mechanics of interlibrary loan for some time. Why have we not noticed it? Did we lack the imagination to tap the source or, did we need a simpler method? My library certainly did not engage in interlibrary lending until pushed to the brink by a patron—but now we are the tenth busiest user out of a field of twenty-eight in our system’s interloan business.

Finally, there was a definite categorizing of libraries and library users in the replies to the questionnaire. Libraries were thought of as a certain type and any service given was given to a type of patron. In enough instances that it could be considered a pattern, there was evidence that a student belonged in a school library or a university or college library. When he came to the public library he came to alien ground and there was philanthropy involved in the service, if any was given.

Are we unable to think in broad service patterns? I realize the facts of life and the necessity for a certain definition in relationship to our source of funds but, do we not need to define our roles also in terms of broad service patterns rather than in a limiting way? Somewhere, somehow, we must achieve an orientation to service.

If librarians tend to categorize they also tend to shy from responsibility. And this is, it seems to me, a barrier. Several persons noted specific examples in which a project was not started or failed because someone did not accept responsibility—including, evidently, the person making the charge. It appears that we are either on such tenuous ground or made of such weak material that we are unable to exercise a leadership or coordinating role. I seriously question the life expectancy of a state plan which is dependent upon a group so oriented to leadership or commitment roles.

I was asked to comment upon possible next steps toward a state plan, and I will make only two comments in this regard. The first refers to the legal structure for library service within Illinois and the second refers to our positive resources in Illinois. I am confident that attention must be given to the legal structure of library responsibility in Illinois. I am not referring alone to the place
of the Illinois State Library in the state structure. I have always maintained that the structure of library service in a state need not be a determining factor in the character of that service. However, I would list the legal structure as a barrier to the development of a state plan for two reasons, the number of groups—official and otherwise—which serve in various capacities the official state organization and the lack of comprehensive or total responsibility within one agency or compatible agencies. Let us look at the public library pattern. We have a legally constituted Advisory Committee to the Illinois State Library. In addition to the official Advisory Committee, we have an Advisory Council with several subcommittees, each concerned with a part of the federal Library Services and Construction Act. Indeed, the Title III subcommittee was formed expressly to be concerned with the type of library cooperation I have discussed. We also have the Illinois Library Association’s Library Development Committee which has served a variety of functions, and served them admirably. With the library systems we begin a new series of committees or groups working in various advisory capacities to the state agency.

Is it impossible for the state agency to communicate effectively and to act responsively to so many groups and is it necessary? The existence of so many groups when not adequately informed or directed can create misunderstanding and misadventures; and it has done so.

It seems to me that as a corps of professionals we librarians should not need to seek such unions or multiply with such indiscretion the number of groups which purport to represent special interests or serve special purposes. I feel that instead of creating or building a strong central unit through our legal advisory committee, we are merely constructing temporary supports. There is also the fact that responsibility for library service for schools, public libraries, junior colleges, and universities is lodged either in separate agencies and coordination is at best tenuous, or statutory responsibility is lacking or hazy.

I would encourage the State Library Advisory Committee to assume an aggressive leadership role in state development. This unit is the only group with legal implication and is the group with authority over the Title III funds. This Advisory Committee could coordinate activities within the state; it could consolidate the activities and work of its own state library agency; it could begin to build that agency to the point where the staff and the services command the respect not only of the library community but of the entire state. I believe this is the group that needs our support and our active help—this is the group that could make a difference in Illinois library service.

We have a great deal going for us in Illinois which should prove of help in our attempt to develop a comprehensive library plan. We have:

- three accredited library schools
- a fairly substantial professional membership association
- active special library associations and a fairly complete series of local or regional library groups
- a developing public library system which could provide a key to coordination and encouragement (But a word of caution here. We—the profession—have organized the state into public library systems and, for
the most part, we are pleased at our performance. It appears that this will offer a convenient channel for communication and for action. It could, however, also be a barrier to development. While we recognize and admire the abilities of those who have been attracted to our system staffs, the official groups in the state must remember that these are not the only librarians in the state and efforts must be made to work with the public and school librarians—on the local level. This is where representa-tive librarianship is—and this is where support for future state programs rests.)

excellent library resources among our universities, special libraries, school libraries, etc.

a group of concerned librarians who are willing to help and have the abilities which could make a difference in state development

a library climate which was able to accomplish legislation and aid for public libraries in a remarkably short time

Certainly we need a comprehensive plan for library development in Illinois. From my observation and study we have not taken advantage of the opportunities we have had, and we need not be either overly impressed or depressed by our past. We need to have prime concern for the future.