



## Supplementary Services to Local Libraries

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THE STATE OR PROVINCIAL library or library extension agency often carries on a variety of programs and offers many services. The purpose of this paper is to describe certain of the supplementary services directed toward other libraries, characteristic of state library agencies. In this sense, the state or provincial agency is a "library's library" in that it may supply books, bibliographic services, and reference assistance to libraries rather than directly to individuals. Only in a very general sense is there any clear pattern of such services common to most of the agencies.

The National Plan for Public Library Service and the Public Library Inquiry both stressed the importance of the state agency and the supplementary services which it might offer. It is probable that these two studies are still having a direct and potent influence on state and provincial library programs.

Perhaps the primary reason for the disparity in supplementary services offered by state and provincial library agencies may lie in their development in response to needs expressed by already established public libraries rather than in anticipation of, or as the originator of, a system of libraries. Although its development has been encouraged in many areas from the state or provincial level, the public library, as R. D. Leigh has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> is primarily a local institution in origin and support.

Occasionally, the impact of strong personalities (Melvil Dewey in New York and J. L. Gillis in California, for example) enabled the state library agency to gain strength and to expand its range of services at a fairly early stage in its development. However, in many areas, the agencies are still struggling to clarify their programs and to enlist citizen and legislative support.

For the purposes of this article, the primary areas of supplementary

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services offered by state library agencies to other libraries were defined broadly as follows: reference services and inter-library lending of materials; advisory and consultative services; publication in the general area of librarianship, and the collection and dissemination of statistics about libraries; administration of grants-in-aid, and performance by the state or province of such services as processing for local libraries; maintenance of state historical collections (not ordinarily archives); and miscellaneous services such as placement or referral services and development of legislation affecting libraries.

This article is based largely upon the replies to a questionnaire circulated to fifty-five state and provincial libraries and library extension agencies in the United States and Canada. Replies were received from fifty of those organizations. It was presumed that only one of those not replying, New York State Library, would have reported quantitative data sufficiently large to affect materially the totals. In a few instances data for that library were located in its publications.

Accepting for the moment the hypothesis as to the origin of state library extension and supplementary services expressed above, it seemed none the less possible that rational, step-by-step planning of the state or provincial library program in many areas might be in progress or might have been completed within the past five or ten years. In the compilation of the questionnaire used in this study, it was assumed that most states and provinces either had established standards of library service or had, implicitly, if in no other way, accepted the *Post War Standards for Public Libraries*.<sup>2</sup> Any state or province, having recognized certain standards, might logically then study the present performance of its libraries to determine wherein the standards are and are not being met. Such surveys were known to have been conducted by several states and to have proven useful in the third step; namely, the laying out of a program designed to rectify the discrepancies noted between standards and performance.

The questionnaire upon which the bulk of this report is based, then, included a question asking if there had been a comprehensive survey including public libraries within the last ten years and a question asking whether a written program of library development had been formulated within the last five years. Using the grouping of states set up by C. B. Joeckel and Amy Winslow,<sup>3</sup> (modified to break the southern group into southeast and southwest, and treating the Canadian provinces as a single category) the following table summarizes the replies to these questions.

*Supplementary Services to Local Libraries*

TABLE I

*States and Provinces (by Region) Having Had Comprehensive Surveys and Having Developed Written Programs for Public Library Development*

Region	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Canada
Number of Replies	6	5	5	10	7	3	6	3	5
Number of Surveys	4	3	2	6	5	1	2	1	1
Number with Written Programs	4	4	3	4	5	3	5	1	2
Program Developed by 1. Library Agency			3	2	2		2		1
2. Library Association		2	1			1			
3. Both	4	2		3	3	2	3	1	1

I—New England

Connecticut  
Maine  
Massachusetts  
New Hampshire  
Rhode Island  
Vermont

II—Middle Atlantic

Delaware  
Maryland  
New Jersey  
\* New York  
Pennsylvania  
West Virginia

III—East North Central

Illinois  
Indiana  
Michigan  
Ohio  
Wisconsin

IV—Southeastern

Alabama  
Florida  
Georgia  
Kentucky  
Louisiana  
Mississippi  
North Carolina  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Virginia

V—West North Central

Iowa  
Kansas  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Nebraska  
North Dakota  
South Dakota

VI—Southwestern

Arkansas  
Oklahoma  
Texas

VII—Mountain

Arizona  
Colorado  
Idaho  
Montana  
Nevada  
New Mexico  
\* Utah  
\* Wyoming

VIII—Pacific

California  
Oregon  
Washington

Canadian Provinces

Alberta  
British Columbia  
\* Manitoba  
Nova Scotia  
Ontario  
\* Prince Edward Island  
Saskatchewan

\* No reply, or received too late for inclusion.

As is evident from the table, twenty-five states and provinces report comprehensive surveys including public libraries within the last ten years. Thirty-one report written programs developed in the last five years. The indication is, of course, that in at least six areas programs are being or have been formulated without a formal or comprehensive recent evaluation of library performance as compared to any existing standards. The questionnaire did not attempt to discover anything about the quality of the surveys reported or the effectiveness of the programs of development. The report that library services, facilities, and needs have not been evaluated on a comprehensive basis in twenty-three states and provinces, and the absence of programs in seventeen such areas raises some questions as to the clarity with which the state and provincial agencies and library associations see the objectives of the services in which they are engaged, as well as to the effectiveness and vigor with which they are applying themselves to the solution of problems and realization of objectives. The indication may be that higher value is placed on the worth of intuitive and general judgments of existing library services and needs than upon the accumulation of objective data as a method of determining needs and developing programs to meet those needs.

Undoubtedly, some agencies and associations have well-defined objectives but have not yet been able to muster the support to bring about surveys out of which state and province-wide programs of service and future development can be built. It does not seem probable that analyses made more than ten years ago, the close of World War II, and programs that may have been developed more than five years ago and have not been revised, can still be completely attuned to present conditions and needs in any area. It is known, aside from the questionnaires on which this article is principally based, that some states having had neither a study of services, facilities and needs nor having a program of development are attempting through their legislatures and other means to achieve these.

The provision of library materials, printed and in other forms, through a planned program of inter-library loans from a state agency to local libraries can be of great importance either to supplement the local resources, to provide limited service where there is no local library, or to demonstrate the value of library services. Virtually all (48) of the agencies which replied to the inquiry form stated that they lend books as a regular and publicized service. There is somewhat less unanimity as to the range of materials thus made available.

### *Supplementary Services to Local Libraries*

The following table summarizes the responses to the section of the inquiry dealing with this topic.

TABLE II  
*Materials Loaned by State Agencies to Local Public Libraries*

Type of Material	Number of Agencies Lending
Books	48
Government Publications	35*
Periodicals (General)	32
Foreign language materials	27†
Films	19‡
Genealogical materials	18§
Sound recordings	13
Art reproductions	13
Law books and periodicals	10
Embossed and "talking" books for blind readers	8

\* One library specified "reference use only" and two indicated that only a limited collection is maintained.

† Five libraries indicated limited collections.

‡ Eight libraries lend films only on library subjects.

§ Two libraries specified "reference use only" and one indicated a limited collection is available.

Because the data gathered were quantitative, no conclusions as to the quality of the materials loaned may be drawn. No pattern as to the availability of materials from state agencies according to regional grouping is discernible; variation is the rule.

The provision of materials through inter-library loan from state agencies is more commonly in response to requests for specific titles or for material on specific subjects than through loans of collections of material. However, some thirty-three agencies lend collections of books, often pre-selected, ordinarily in addition to filling author-title or subject requests. More often than not, loans of collections are made to community groups where there is no local service or to the local public library if one exists. Though replies were somewhat difficult to interpret on this point, it seems apparent that a surprising number (19) of the agencies will lend materials directly to individuals who live in areas served by local libraries. The purpose of working through the local library, ordinarily, is to insure that the central agency does not substitute for it and thereby undercut local support.

The unique function of the state agency in the inter-library loan program often is to supply the more highly specialized, ordinarily more expensive, books rather than the items which are likely to be in heavy demand throughout the state. The majority (41) of the agencies replying stated that they emphasize the expensive items rather than the popular ones. For reasons not disclosed by the questionnaire, however, twenty-three agencies indicated that they buy popular materials in some degree. Of those, six either emphasize the more expensive materials or buy popular items only of certain types (for example, books used in adult discussion groups). In some instances, the term "more expensive" doubtless includes research materials of one type or another. However, it seems safe to assume that for the most part the phrase encompasses technical books, university press books, and other interpretative works which it would be uneconomical for any but the large public library to purchase for its own collection. Where these materials are held in a central collection available to all, they are more apt to be used a sufficient number of times to warrant their cost than they might be in the local public library.

As an extension of inter-library lending of their collections, twenty-one agencies reported that they maintain or have access to a state or regional union catalog. Only six of the replies indicated that the agency itself maintains such a catalog, the remainder rely upon one of the regional catalogs (Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center, for example) or on catalogs in other agencies, primarily state universities. Through the union catalog, it is often possible to locate unusual items sometimes generally classified as "research" materials. That this is an important function no one would deny. However, to the public library, a union catalog is ordinarily more than a device to insure the existence or preservation of esoteric materials; it is a useful tool to be called upon virtually every day to locate items which are in more or less common demand by serious readers. In this sense, the function of the union catalog maintained by the state extension agency is often quite apart from the function of the "scholarly" union catalog. Some central finding device, such as a local, state or regional union catalog seems essential to any system of libraries. The high cost of establishing and maintaining such devices undoubtedly has limited their incidence.

That primary importance has long been attached to advisory services, in addition to the provision of supplementary materials by state and provincial libraries, is seen by the fact that forty-seven of the fifty respondents answered that such advisory services are given to

### *Supplementary Services to Local Libraries*

local libraries. All forty-seven give advisory and consultant services to local public libraries and library trustees. Next in numbers, thirty-one agencies advise and assist correctional, custodial, and penal institution libraries located in different parts of the state or province. The inquiry did not request information as to how many state library agencies actually administer these libraries. It is believed that advice and assistance, as well as supplementary book and materials service, in all but a very few instances, are given by means of inter-agency cooperation rather than through administrative controls.

Local school libraries are the recipients of the third most widespread state advisory service, twenty-five respondents having indicated that this assistance is given. While seven of the eight state library agencies which are divisions in state departments of education give advisory services to local school libraries, an even larger number of agencies, (18), separate from departments of education, also offer this service. While the extent and quality of the services given by the seven could not be compared with that of the eighteen, it would appear that the separate status of the majority of state library agencies does not preclude their offering direct advisory assistance to local schools.

Seventeen states and provinces reported giving advisory and consultant services to business and other special libraries, although these might usually be assumed to be private libraries—a few also advise private school libraries—and the extent and quality of the service could only be learned through much closer analysis than was made. College libraries receive limited advisory services from state agencies in sixteen states and provinces. A few states reported giving advisory services “to anyone who asks for it.”

Numbers of positions in state and provincial library agencies assigned chiefly to advisory and consultative services ranged from one-fourth of one position to twelve, the highest numbers being found in the southeastern, New England, and east north central states. These groups of states, plus the west north central states, show also the highest correlation between recent statewide surveys and written programs of library development. Whether there is a further correlation between this latter fact and the prevalence of state library consultants may be conjectured, and would really require further information and study.

An attempt was made to learn something of the real extent of advisory and consultative services by asking for the annual or biennial appropriations for travel for this purpose, as well as the numbers of

persons actually engaged in advisory work. Sizes of states and numbers and types of libraries to be visited affect greatly any judgment as to adequacy of travel funds. In the small New England states, annual amounts range from \$625 to \$5,000. In the Middle Atlantic states, amounts reported ranged from \$1,200 to \$5,700, but no answers were received from New York State, which is one of this group, and probably has the largest appropriation of all.

Travel funds for the five east north central group range from \$1,700 per year to \$12,000. In the west north central group, one agency has \$340 per year, while another may spend any amount within the total budget found to be needed for travel. In general, however, consultant travel funds for this group tend to be low, around or under \$1,000 per year.

In the ten southeastern states, consultant travel funds tend uniformly to be higher than in other areas, and all states report special appropriations, none lower than \$1,500 per year, with one state having \$10,700 available for this purpose. Another reported \$9,000 for travel which is assumed to cover cost of operation of a large number of state-owned bookmobiles recently acquired.

Despite the large areas and scattered libraries in southwestern and mountain states, amounts for state library consultant travel tend to be low, and, in a few states, non-existent.

Pacific states allow annual consultant travel expenditures as follows: \$5,532; \$3,043; and \$2,263. Canadian provinces reported a range between \$2,500 and \$4,000 per year.

Methods used for giving advisory and consultative services was the subject of another series of questions to state and provincial library agencies. The form also asked the agencies to rate in order of importance and effectiveness the different methods used.

Forty-eight respondents give advisory services to librarians and others interested enough to come to the state library agencies for consultation, and the same forty-eight carry on such services through correspondence. Forty-six agencies make field visits by library consultants. Next in prevalence are the use of printed aids such as manuals, guides and lists, and the holding of workshops and other meetings for in-service training purposes, both techniques being employed by forty-three agencies. Eight agencies have special appropriations for the financing of such workshops and group conferences. Local surveys are made by the state agencies of twenty-eight states and provinces, presumably with recommendations for action based on find-

### *Supplementary Services to Local Libraries*

ings. A small but growing number of states (10 with 1 additional planned) use short-term local demonstrations of library service.

Twenty-five different regional state library service centers are reported by six different states. These centers most commonly lend materials and offer advisory services; in a very few instances they process materials for neighboring local libraries. All states with such centers believe they have materially improved the quality of services the state agency offers, and two states regard these centers as being of first importance as a means for improving services to local libraries.

Central processing of books and other library materials is done by eight states and provinces, and can properly be regarded as a form of direct financial assistance to local libraries.

Forty states and provinces regularly issue one or more publications. In some instances, these are either biennial or annual reports. Thirty-two agencies issue publications which are of more than annual frequency, and the impression is that to some extent these publications perform the functions of a general library news bulletin for the state or province.

There is almost a universal annual collection of statistics from public libraries, with forty-seven agencies replying that this is done. Fourteen agencies collect local school library statistics; seventeen collect college library statistics; and eight collect from business and special libraries. Forty-two agencies compile and publish the statistics each time they are gathered.

The principle of financial aid from the state or provincial level appears well-established in twenty-eight out of fifty areas reporting. The New England, Middle Atlantic, and southeastern groups of states, and the Canadian provinces show the highest proportions of states within groups as having these subventions, and in the most substantial amounts. The most common type of grants used (23 out of 28 reporting such grants) is the annual supplemental support grant.

Maintenance of collections relating to the history of the state or province is a widely accepted function of state and provincial library agencies. Thirty-four of these agencies state that they maintain such historical collections, frequently as one of several such collections in the state, but occasionally as the major source of historical information relating to the area. Related also to the provision of historical materials pertaining to the state or province, fifteen agencies reported that they maintain extensive back files of local newspapers.

Notwithstanding the indication in the National Association of State Libraries statement, *The Role of the State Library*,<sup>5</sup> that an integrated

state library should include the archival function, only ten agencies report that they administer the state's archives.

Several years ago, when the number of librarians exceeded the number of positions available, state and provincial libraries probably played some considerable part in maintaining the structure of a career service for professional librarians. This was done both through the maintenance of placement-referral services, and, in states with legal certification, the administration of professional certification systems. Thirty-seven agencies reported that they operate a referral or placement service to aid libraries in locating professional personnel.

A study now being made by the Committee on Certification of the Library Extension Section, Public Libraries Division, American Library Association, indicates that 18 states have some type of mandatory certification.<sup>4</sup> Thirteen states reported some type of voluntary or permissive certification. Mandatory systems are in some instances tied to the administration of state grants-in-aid, although some reported that "the scarcity of librarians in this area and the low salaries paid" prevent the strict application of the certification laws.

Modern effective library legislation is essential for the public library to make its full contribution to the community, the state, and the nation. Consequently, the state or provincial library agency may do its most important work, regardless of the stage of development, in advising on legislation affecting libraries. Virtually all (46) of the respondents stated that they supply advice to their legislatures, and forty-five supply such advice to their state or provincial library associations on pending or needed library legislation.

The strategic location of the state or provincial library agency near the source of legislation and normally with access to bill drafting services cannot be overlooked. Through discovering the areas in which laws are needed and supplying advice at appropriate times, the agency can be effective in advancing and strengthening the legal bases for libraries over a wide area.

Asked which two or three services were believed to be the most effective in assisting and stimulating local library improvement, twenty-seven states and provinces rated field visits and other consultant services in top place. Another twelve states and provinces mentioned field visits for consultative purposes among those methods regarded as most effective.

Top importance as a method of local assistance and stimulation was assigned by two states to "demonstrations and assistance in organizing local libraries," closely related to consultant work. Two states rated

### *Supplementary Services to Local Libraries*

the operation of regional state library service centers as the most effective of the methods used. Two New England states rated the provision of state bookmobile service at the top in importance; three other states gave top position to inter-library loans of materials and inter-library reference services (17 others mentioned inter-library loans and reference as being among their most effective services, while one state questioned "the value of supplementary book service to the small library [because] they neither use it as much as they should nor recognize the weakness of their own service, but frequently use it as an excuse to avoid combining with a strong library system. Our strong libraries use it and understand its value and place . . .").

Another method to which the responding agencies assigned a major significance is that of holding workshops for in-service training purposes. One rated it as of first importance, and eighteen gave it second or third place.

Somewhat surprisingly, only one of the states responding rated state financial grants-in-aid at the top in importance, although twenty-eight states and provinces have such programs. Six states report grants-in-aid as among their most effective means of assisting and stimulating local improvement. Judging by the use of state and federal financial aid to stimulate local improvement in other fields of public service, it appears either that the amounts of library aid have usually been insignificant, or that the conditions of the grants have been such as to serve only as a subsidy to library units too small and lacking in co-operative relationships with other libraries to effect noticeable improvement.

The making of surveys, and the operation of a placement referral service for professional librarians were each rated first in importance by two states, with second or lower rating given by two states for each of these services. Mentioned as having secondary importance were "printed aids and publications" by four states, and one state mentioned "development of legislation."

Asked to list major services not covered by the inquiry form, respondents added the following: development of standards; financial aid for students to take professional training in librarianship; distribution of state publications; contract payments to metropolitan libraries to extend certain special services to neighboring areas; group leadership training; extensive provision of subject bibliographies; and development of publicity materials.

A final question, "Are there any services to local libraries, which you do not now perform, that you believe your agency should per-

form"? brought answers from almost every state and province. Services most frequently desired were: expanded field service, with specialization (for example, specialists in work with children, young people, schools) of consultant personnel; financial aid, both in the form of cash grants and provisions of services such as centralized processing; more in-service training programs through workshops; provision of a wider range of supplementary materials, with film service most frequently mentioned; regional state library branches for direct local service. Other programs suggested as desirable were: more publications and printed aids for advisory purposes; demonstrations; public relations programs; storage centers for little-used materials; improvement of personnel by such means as certification and placement; union catalog, legislative reference; and surveys.

If as has been said the key to local library development in the states is the existence of a strong and effective state library agency, and the body already in existence with the greatest ability to turn that key and unlock potentials is the state library association, this list of desired services, as well as the strengthening of the useful existing ones, should furnish some immediate goals for association and state library work. In addition, under modern conditions, it is believed that a logical, step-by-step plan of procedure, as suggested in our introduction, is strongly indicated as being needed. This plan would include agreement upon public library goals, establishment of standards, objective evaluation of present library performance against established modern standards, and, finally, a positive and strong, even bold program for development, which will correct deficiencies found in the evaluation. In order that both standards and program may have continuing usefulness, it is essential that a procedure be set up whereby they may be kept in step with changing conditions and trends.

Important to the improvement of services to local libraries is securing citizen and governmental support. The indefinable but demonstrably important quality of leadership, both in the state agency and in the state library association is essential and will accelerate by decades the achievement of the indicated improvements in state services to local libraries.

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### *Supplementary Services to Local Libraries*

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