



Governmental Action For Library Development

DAVID H. CLIFT
AND
GERMAINE KRETTEK

THE NATION'S LIBRARY SERVICE is clearly in need of bold and imaginative planning and action on an unprecedented scale. Two recurring themes run like a thread through all of the preceding papers in this issue—a thread that is often bright with the promise of opportunity and often somber with the realization of obstacles.

Experts in many areas of librarianship have, in this issue, examined the country's library service of today and predicted what it must be in 1980. They have looked at needs, problems, and opportunities and they have, in many instances, suggested ways in which the needs and problems can be met and the opportunities realized.

The matters they have dealt with require wide public and professional recognition if library service is to progress so that it can meet the demands of the society it will be serving in 1980.

Many roadblocks stand between our library service of today and the attainment of nationwide quality and quantity library service by 1980. The authors suggest a variety of areas for action. These include research within and outside the library profession—to identify problems and suggest solutions; a broad educational program to make the public aware of the advantages of superior library service; recruiting to the profession—to produce more librarians; improved library education—to produce better librarians; cooperation among libraries—to make resources go farther; development of the state library agency; metropolitan area library development; equalization of library service; the provision of more books and other library materials; the

David H. Clift is Executive Director, and Germaine Krettek is Director of the Washington Office, American Library Association.

development of a flexibility in library service equal to the requirements of a mobile population. Changes are inevitable, for without change there can be no progress.

As one looks at the country as a whole in terms of the changes which appear inevitable in the years ahead, it becomes obvious from the observations of the writers in this issue that the demands upon all libraries will be insistent, complex, and of such magnitude that library leadership must be positive, dynamic, and informed, and that comprehensive consultative assistance will be essential.

There is surely no single means open to librarians, educators, and citizens for the solution of the problems. The steps advocated by the authors in this issue cannot be taken singly and in comfortable and comforting order. Time—and need—will not allow this. History must be hurried up and the steps must be taken together on many fronts.

This paper will deal with one of those fronts to which many of the authors referred—federal and state legislation.

Howard points out that the federal government has been undergoing almost revolutionary changes in its role in the life of the American people. "The role of the federal government seems destined," he believes, "to be one of greater interest in the general welfare of the people, of great social programs and great scientific research." This evident greater interest is beginning to include a concern for library service, as witnessed by the enthusiasm with which Congress has followed the development and success of the program made possible by the Library Services Act.

Miss Thornton remarks upon the concern now being shown by the federal government, through federal aid, in higher education. Although the library has not yet had the kind of attention required by its importance to higher education, the developing trend of aid to these institutions seems certain to strengthen library service. Miss Graham sees federal support for public education aiding school libraries.

Henderson, after noting that library service meeting professional standards must be available to poor and wealthy communities alike, adds that "Equalization will have to be provided through state and federal aid in the interests of a high level, area-wide library service."

Greenaway states that "development of metropolitan and regional services will require the combined physical efforts of local, state, and federal government."

Brahm makes clear the strategic position of the state library agency and the heavier role it will play in the years ahead. He cites many

Governmental Action for Library Development

reasons for this, including the important fact that the state's financial resources exceed those of local government.

Federal legislation in many areas thus will become increasingly important as national resources are required to help meet national requirements. As the country's need for libraries and their services gains recognition, more realistic financing will become imperative. Resources in depth, a wide range of more highly developed services, modern buildings and equipment, and sufficient personnel, both professional and nonprofessional, will be required to such a degree that funds must be provided in rapidly increasing amounts at every level of government.

Problems involved in financing education—and we consider libraries, public as well as school and college, as a basic part of the total education program—are closely related to the fact that our population has grown more rapidly than the tax base.

In the early days of our history, real property accounted for 75 per cent of our wealth; today, real property accounts for only 25 per cent.¹ Thus at the present time, property tax represents only a small part of our total wealth. Yet local governments still rely primarily upon real property for their tax base, especially for schools and public libraries. It thus becomes clear that in order to provide the funds needed for adequate library support, new sources of revenue must be found in addition to the property tax. Greater flexibility in means of support must be obtained to achieve fiscally sound units capable of providing an effective library program.

At the state level many changes will have to be made in existing library laws to give legal authority to the developments already projected in terms of larger units of service, coordination and cooperation, expanded programs, and numbers of professional and other personnel, all of which require substantially increased appropriations.

To obtain current information on recently enacted state legislation, on plans for the next legislative sessions, and on long-range legislative requirements for library development, a questionnaire was prepared in May 1961 and distributed to the 50 state library agencies. Thirty-seven replies were received, indicating that many of the problems of institutions of higher education, school libraries, and hospital and institution libraries do not necessarily require legislation for their solution, but are primarily matters of institution and agency policies which involve budgeting approval, appropriations, standards, and regulations.

In the sessions during the first half of 1961, fourteen states (Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming) reported passage of laws to clarify, amend, or codify existing library laws; 4 states (Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania) passed grants-in-aid legislation. Other successful state legislation in 15 states related to authorization for state library buildings, establishment or expansion of cooperative services, enabling legislation, services to state institutions, certification of librarians, scholarship and training programs, and increased appropriations to meet the standards. Similar kinds of legislation are planned to be introduced when state legislatures next meet, with emphasis continuing upon revision of laws (1) to permit the establishment, improvement or extension of library services into larger units (county, multi-county, regional, and interstate); (2) to encourage greater coordination and cooperation; (3) to establish or increase state grants to realistic levels or remove financing limitations of various kinds. At the present time a total of 27 states out of the 50 have cash grant-in-aid programs to public libraries and three additional states have state grant-in-aid programs other than cash. State aid programs in 23 states are badly needed.

There is general agreement that for the next 10 to 20 years this legislative trend will continue. Legislation to permit interstate agreements as well as larger units within a state is contemplated by five of the states reporting on future legislative plans. There is recognition by several states of the desirability of developing legislation to clarify state library functions and unify state library services into a single agency. A number of states stress the need to strengthen facilities and improve service in libraries at all levels and in all kinds by providing intercooperation of public, school, college and university, and special libraries and by coordination of reference and research facilities.

It is encouraging for the future of library service that in the majority of the states, librarians and trustees are facing up to the realities of library service as it is today, are assessing in depth the needs of the next decade, and are planning the necessary steps to achieve quality service for all of our citizens. Most of the state legislative planning is being done through state library associations which represent the various types of libraries in the state.

To assist the states and the multiplicity of libraries within them

Governmental Action for Library Development

to attain their goals and provide the level of library service outlined in the foregoing chapters, federal legislation must also be developed. At the present time the nationwide gaps are shocking and, considering the dimensions of the inevitable demands of the future, will become increasingly greater unless within the next few years sizable national assistance is secured to back up local and state support.

A broad and far-reaching plan taking into account the fiscal responsibilities of all levels of government would seem a first step. The appointment by the President of the United States of a National Commission for Libraries should be sought to survey adequately the existing library situation, to study the needs of the future, and to outline possible solutions.

Until an authoritative study is made on a national scale, legislative plans will have to be based upon what information is available in relation to the standards developed to date. Study of "Libraries in the Sixties; ALA Goals for Action," presented in the introduction to the July 1961 issue, makes clear the current lack in personnel, books and other materials, and operating expenditures for school, college and university, and public libraries. Unfortunately adequate statistics and standards for state libraries, hospital and institution libraries, and the special libraries which also are part of the national library resources have not been developed at the present time although the needs of these libraries are equally great and must likewise be considered and met. Lack of these and other essential statistics emphasizes the need for the gathering and interpreting by the federal government of additional nationwide data on libraries. This gap in published data is a source of concern to many libraries as shown in a recent compilation of sources of library statistics.² A solution is being sought by the Statistics Coordinating Committee of the Library Administration Division of the American Library Association.³

The increased responsibilities of the Library Services Branch in assisting in the expanding library programs of the nation should also be recognized and additional staff and resources provided. Increased liaison between the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Office of Education, and professional library associations would help to bring about this essential development. Sufficient information may be lacking in many areas, but there is unanimity of opinion among the contributors that the greatest single need now and in the foreseeable future is personnel. This is borne out by a recent statement of the Bureau of Labor Statistics that "By 1970, as many as 80,000

trained librarians may be needed.”⁴ This is almost twice the present number of full-time professional librarians, is well under the number called for by the standards for today’s needs, and less than a third of the number that is estimated to be needed by 1980. And only once in 20 years have more than 2000 students graduated from our library schools in any one year.

Facing these figures and their implications realistically will take courage and untrammelled vision by every segment of the profession, but especially library administrators and their governing authorities, library educators, and all the national library associations. An aggressive, imaginative, and continuing recruitment program is essential, but it must be backed up by a number of elements. Professional responsibilities must be clearly defined and adhered to, status and working conditions of both professional and nonprofessional staff members improved, and salaries established and maintained at levels requisite to obtain and retain competent personnel. There must be a very considerable increase in scholarship, fellowship, and in-service training programs at all levels of government. At the present time 16 States are offering about 75 scholarships under the Library Services Act. Some graduate fellowships are available under the National Defense Education Act. Other grant and loan programs under various auspices are also available. The total number, however, is woefully inadequate in relation to the need. In an effort to supplement these opportunities, it is recommended that a federal scholarship, fellowship, and in-service training program be planned to provide the professional personnel needed to extend and develop library service across the nation. For example, a grant of \$1 million per year to institutions of higher education for the training of master’s degree students would provide 500 scholarships of \$2000 each. Such a program should necessarily have two parts. Additional grants should also be available for fellowships to increase the number and improve the quality of the teaching staff in library schools. Fewer than 20 per cent of those currently teaching in library schools have doctorates in library science. Only 129 doctorates were awarded by library schools in the 25 years between 1939–1959.⁵

Introduced in the first session of the 87th Congress is the Academic Facilities and Scholarship Act (H.R.7215) which would authorize grants and loans for building academic facilities, including libraries, and provide an estimated 40,000 undergraduate scholarship grants.⁶ Such grants will add to the pool of college graduates who may be recruited for professional library schools.

Governmental Action for Library Development

On July 31, 1961, the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare reported out a bill, S.2345 (Report No. 652) to extend and improve the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which includes a new Title X authorizing \$30,000,000 for school library resources and \$7,500,000 for training (\$5 million for fiscal 1962) and \$10 million for college and university library materials annually for a four-year period. The text of S.2345 is appended. Part B of the proposed title would authorize contracts with institutions of higher education for the operation of library training institutes. The enactment of this legislation could do much to relieve the current critical shortage of trained school librarians and supervisory personnel.

Part A of the new Title X would make available to state educational agencies grants for the acquisition of library materials and equipment and would authorize the establishment and/or improvement of state and local school library supervisory services.

Part C is essentially the proposal developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (A.L.A.) of matching grants-in-aid to college and university libraries for the purchase of books, periodicals and related materials, and the necessary binding.

This recognition by the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare of the importance of libraries in education is heartening. It is unfortunate, however, that complicating and divisive issues have made the enactment of such a substantive educational measure unlikely this year.

Another bill introduced aimed at improving the quality of education is S.2063 "to establish a President's Advisory Council on Education." Steps should be taken to insure the appointment of a librarian of stature on this Council if it is created. The library profession has not always been adequately represented on such national commissions.

In the public library field a number of bills have been introduced this year which are significant because their adoption would indicate further understanding by Congress of the basic educational role of tax-supported libraries which serve the general public. These measures relate to federal surplus property distribution (S.2119)⁷ and income tax regulations on charitable gifts (H.R.7481).⁸

None of these federal measures, however, will provide the assistance required to alleviate the many serious gaps and deficiencies which already exist in public library service and which will mount in light of projected demands.

A beginning has been made in relation to the library deficiencies

in places with populations of 10,000 or less through the Library Services Act of 1956 (Public Law 84-597). The legislation has been so successful in showing how the federal government can cooperate with state and local governments in remedying a serious lack that Congress took steps for its continuance in 1960 (Public Law 86-679). Even so, twenty-five million Americans are still without direct access to local public library service and countless additional millions are receiving only token service. The increasing growth of the metropolitan and fringe areas is presenting urgent questions which go beyond city limits and overlap state borders. These problems must be resolved.

A possible solution might be found through an amendment to the present Library Services Act to eliminate the population ceiling. The authorization would need to be increased correspondingly.

Quality library service can be made available to all only if a fair share formula of financial assistance is effected. A formula suggested by past study calls for 60 per cent local, 25 per cent state, and 15 per cent federal funds for public library purposes. On a \$3.50-\$4.00 per capita basis as suggested for library systems, this would entail an annual expenditure of some \$630 million instead of the present \$260 million.

Special legislation may be needed to help solve the problems of large metropolitan regions, which often cross state lines. A bill designed to facilitate agreements between states was introduced in both House and Senate early in 1961. S.464, granting the consent of Congress to interstate compacts between two or more states "for the development or operation of library facilities and services," was passed by the Senate on June 29, 1961. The House Judiciary Committee, however, refuses to grant such consent in advance and insists that specific compacts or agreements be drafted and submitted for approval.

A bill providing for cooperation among libraries in a state or region in connection with government documents distributed through the depository system is also pending in the 87th Congress. H.R.8141, "to revise the laws relating to depository libraries," was passed by the House on August 22, 1961. A companion measure (S.2029) has been introduced in the Senate.

In the documentation field, which is going to have a heavy impact upon the whole American cultural scene as well as upon library development, it seems essential that there be closer planning and cooperation between librarians and documentalists.

Governmental Action for Library Development

The problems involved in the organization, processing, and retrieval of information in the fields of science and technology have been considered in a number of legislative proposals in recent years, and it is probable that specific legislation in this area will be developed in the future. In 1960 a study of federal and nonfederal scientific information processing and retrieval programs was prepared by the staff of the Senate Committee on Government Operations.⁹

Various aspects of library service are included in a number of other measures currently under consideration by the Congress; i.e. the use of federal funds for the construction of library buildings as well as other community facilities; special postal legislation; the project for acquisition of foreign library materials under Public Law 480; legislation to implement the so called "Florence Agreement." Many of the appropriations bills include substantial items for programs and projects of the federal libraries.

A further sharing of tax support at the federal level together with greatly increased state and local support seems inevitable if we are to attain the goal in this century of providing all our citizens with library service of quality in proportion to their needs.

It is perhaps significant of Congress' recognition of the role of the federal government in helping to support the library needs of the future that it recently appropriated \$70,000 so that the U.S. Office of Education "may participate in the forthcoming Century 21 Exposition in Seattle, Wash., in order to exhibit modern library services and design."¹⁰ Based upon the premise that the patron, the man of the future, will be longer lived, with more leisure time, higher income, better education, wider travel experience, more varied interests, a stronger orientation toward international developments, and a greater awareness of new techniques and scientific advancements, Library 21 will act as a guidepost to dynamic library planning. Future legislation can take its cue from this bold and at the same time realistic approach to the library of tomorrow.

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DAVID H. CLIFT AND GERMAINE KRETTEK

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