

## L S A : A POLITICAL SCIENTIST'S VIEW

Phillip Monypenny

In my career with state libraries, I begin to feel rather like James B. Conant in his empyrean reviews of education in the United States. I would imagine that Conant is one of the most disliked men in America. He is constantly speaking on matters to which other people have given their entire lives but to which he has devoted a few years of study. I am probably the second most disliked person in the United States since after a few months of experience with state libraries and public libraries I have begun to speak as an authority on matters to which other people have devoted a lifetime of endeavor.

The reason for my being here, as you people know very well, is that I am currently the director of a study of library services in state government, sponsored by the American Library Association and financed by the Carnegie Corporation. Even before I started on this project, I began reporting on its progress. I fear that in all too many cases I have been repeating my reports to some of you patiently seated here. The consequence is that before my data are in I am gratuitously giving conclusions, which, as a conscientious social scientist, I should reserve until I have had a change to complete the study.

Let me put in an aside, however, about the habits of librarians and the method of my project. As I said earlier, I have been appearing before one gathering or another of librarians, ever since the project began. If I could have anticipated this, if I had been better briefed on some aspects of the library world at the outset, much trouble and expense could have been avoided. They, my three associates and I, instead of scouring the country by train and plane, auto and bus, into the remote fastnesses where state capitals lie, could have converged on the monthly meetings which librarians hold to make speeches at

---

Phillip Monypenny is Professor of Political Science, University of Illinois, and Director, ALA Survey of State Libraries.

each other. There we could have waylaid our quarry and completed our interview schedules with a minimum of expenditure and very great convenience.

About some of the very general conclusions, however, there can be no doubt. I am impressed at the outset by the significant responsibilities of state government in the promotion and development of public library services, of school library service, and possibly even of college and university library service throughout the state. There is no other means except through the effort of state government to develop the legislation necessary to build more adequate local library units; there are no other financial resources which can mitigate the limits which dependence on the local property tax places on local library units; there is no substitute for a state agency to provide the advice, technical assistance, and moral support which local library staffs will need in the effort to transpose themselves into a new level of library service. In all of these areas, including the development of a legislative program, the state agency responsible for public library development is a most necessary part of the picture. The state library associations, no matter how well led, cannot provide the staff for these jobs which require continuous activity. Indeed, one of the important activities of a state library agency may be the care and nurture of a state association to alleviate the isolation in which so many librarians, and library units, live and work. One of our most significant conclusions, therefore, is apt to be that further library development along the lines laid out by the library profession itself will require increased staff and activity for library agencies in state government, and more state participation in the financing of local library operations. To give at least a passing glance to the topic of this talk and of this conference--the Library Services Act--the beefing up of state agencies, the increased status and resources of state agencies, may well be one of the most important results of the Act.

In this dependence for future development on participation and assistance by the state, libraries are not unique. Always excepting the large metropolitan areas, in all fields--welfare, health, highways, education--progress has been dependent on enlarged state activity in the oversight of and assistance to local units. It seems to me that the state level of government is and must be an important level of government in the whole library field, both in promotion and in financing.

I shall approach the question of the effect of the Library Services Act upon state and public library development indirectly by reviewing the general situation of public library pro-

grams in the states against the background of the standards by which the library profession tends to measure those programs. It is from the standpoint of where public libraries are in relation to where we should like them to be that accomplishments under the Library Services Act must be measured. In the account which follows, I can claim only the most superficial authority for what I have to say.

I myself, at this point, have been in perhaps half a dozen states. I have had only inadequate opportunities to consult with my associates who are working in other states, so that what I have to say here reflects less the national survey in which all of the information has been carefully organized than it reflects my own experience in recent weeks, in a number of states, including the states in which some of you people are currently working.

Granted, then, that what I have to say is impressionistic and is by no means based on an exhaustive review of data. I shall put my remarks in their most unqualified form for the purpose of provoking you to such indignation and discussion as may develop at this session. Incidentally, I shall test the impressions which I have been collecting by recording them in a rather explicit way for your criticism, and for my own.

The talk which was made by Lowell Martin on the first evening of this conference has made my task here much simpler than it would otherwise be. Out of his much more extensive experience, he has summarized a body of material into a set of conclusions with which, on the basis of my own limited experience, I could not possibly quarrel. It fits my own observations too well.

Ever since the Public Library Inquiry which was carried out by my predecessor in this project, Robert Leigh, who largely shaped the outline which this present project is pursuing, there has been in the minds of people in the library field an awareness both of the weaknesses of existing programs and of desirable directions of future development. I must say that as I travel about, talking with people, my awareness of the depth of thought and the degree of innovation which went into Mr. Leigh's study and its conclusions are increasingly impressive to me. He anticipated a great deal of the development which has taken place in recent years, and his fundamental criticisms are as valid now as they were at the time that his survey was made.

Incorporating, therefore, by reference what has been said by much more experienced and distinguished scholars than I, we might begin by saying that public library service in the

United States is characterized by vast multiplicity of service units, many of which are extremely small in size both in terms of populations which they serve, present budgets, the financial resources of the area which supports the service, and in terms of the size of library staffs. There are considerable areas of the country which are not getting any library service directly, except on a mail-order basis from a state library agency.

Over the years since these criticisms were first made, there has been relatively little change in the number of units, relatively small progress, except recently in New York, in associating these small units into larger systems with larger resources. There is even the threat of increased numbers of units with the spread of urban populations beyond the limits of existing governmental units. Overwhelmingly, as one looks across the country, one sees the coexistence, side by side, of a few very strong municipal systems and some strong county systems in each state, together with vast areas of the state in which there are to be found only the smallest of units and the smallest scale of financial support. Indeed, it was not until I began this state library survey that I appreciated the minute scale on which these so-called libraries operate. Whether one can call an institution a library which is open 45 minutes a week or two hours a week is a debatable question. Certainly the picture which most of us have of a public library scarcely admits the extension of this term to such very limited operations. Yet in state after state, taking the number of units alone, and not considering populations served, one would find anywhere from one-third to two-thirds of the units which have budgets of a few hundred dollars a year, no trained staff, a book stock of a few thousand largely obsolete titles, and no more than a few hours of service a week.

In assessing the general situation of the public library, we should also be aware that the users of the library have been described as being to a very large degree children, women, and others who presumably are not too much a part of the serious world and whose influence in securing funds may be more limited than that of other groups within the society. Finally, we should note that a good part of the uses of all public libraries has been in the area of relatively undemanding recreational needs. This is, of course, much more characteristic of very small units than it is of our larger municipal libraries. In all these respects, we clearly have a general picture of library development in the country with which we have no particular right to be satisfied. The questions which I am going to raise today bear on the extent to which the Library Services Act has been



an adequate instrument for achieving the purposes which librarians in general, especially those interested in public libraries, have in mind for the future in the United States.

Before I begin this part of the discussion, let me say a few words about the adoption of the Library Services Act as an accomplishment of the organized library profession. One of the criticisms which <sup>are</sup> made in earlier studies, such as Leigh's, a criticism supported by superficial contact with people in the library world, is that libraries have been far too remote from the active processes of decision within the political and governmental units of which they are a part. This comment is made by many state librarians in reporting the activities and the attitudes of librarians and library trustees in local units in their own states. The picture which one has of the library as a quiet, secluded place for study, for scholarship, or for the pursuit of the arts and sciences is not one in which the frantic competitive world of politics seems to have much part. However, anyone who has read the hearings, as I have, of the Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee, which held hearings on the original Library Services Act and on its extension last year, will get a striking impression of the competence of the library profession in lobbying and in deploying political forces in a competitive situation. The skill exhibited on those occasions would be remarkable for any of the many far more experienced groups who are in the business of influencing governmental policy in the United States.

Mrs. Carrier of Mississippi and Miss Krettek of the ALA Washington Office have been telling me at lunch something of the further background which went into the passage of that Act. I have read a good many Congressional hearings and followed secondhand through the Congressional Record a number of battles over new legislation. I think I have never seen such a display of sheer technical mastery as evidenced in these Library Services Act hearings. Quite clearly, the preparation and briefing of witnesses had been worked out to the last possible degree. The persons chosen were chosen magnificently well to represent a particular segment of society, to represent stages of state development in the provision of library service, to appeal to the members of Congress to whom they were speaking in terms of their acceptability as exponents and representatives of very highly cherished interests in American life. Their statements were pithy and to the point, and it seemed to me to be the ultimate triumph that, at the hearings on the extension of the Act, over 30 members of Congress testified before the committee in favor of its extension. This is political

skill of a really remarkable order which, again, can be equaled by very few professions in the United States.

So we have something of a paradox. At the local level, libraries and librarians often seem to be unsure and somewhat inept in finding support and reaching the interested public, and in moving the offices of government to give them a reasonable allocation of local resources. At the national level, where in general the competition to determine legislative and administrative action is far more highly developed, where there are persons of the highest skill able to employ very great sanctions in their efforts to influence legislative and administrative action--at this level, which is the supreme test of one's political competence and know-how, the American Library Association and the library profession have produced practitioners as skillful as any that there are.

Of course, this display of interest in and support of library service was accomplished not alone by the direct action of people in Washington. The people in Washington were supported by state libraries and local librarians, in all parts of the country, who stirred up influential persons to make representations to their own Congressional delegations. The whole campaign was conducted with what seems to me to be a miracle of logistic skill, getting the right person in the right place with the right statement at the right time. Again, just as in outlining some of the current deficiencies in the library scene, I introduce this high accomplishment in the political arena for the sake of perspective, so that we can see not only what libraries and librarians are omitting to do in some matters, but how supremely well they have done in some other matters.

The only regret that I have in telling this part of the story is that it leads to the question of what was accomplished by this very great effort. As one looks at the Library Services Act itself, its provisions are by no means entirely worthy of the skill and the dedication and the statesmanship which went into its creation. In the first place, the sums of money which are thus made available for the support of library services in the state are relatively minor considering the whole scale of the national budget, considering the whole scale of the expenditures on the public library in the United States. This was a mere trickle of money to put into a field which is capable of really very considerable development.

In the second place, the Act as written and as renewed carries a limitation that library services are to be supported by federal grants only as they are available to populations of communities of 10,000 or less. Considering the long, drawn-

out effort to create a public awareness of the great need for larger areas with larger populations, with larger financial resources, to concentrate this new money and this new effort on the least profitable units in the country, units which are incapable in the long run of providing what anyone in the library field would regard as adequate service, is most unfortunate.

In the third place, the Act at adoption was temporary, was, of course, extended with rather evasive remarks about the extent to which, despite great accomplishments, it had not attained its objectives. I suppose I have no doubt that it will be extended again, and extended without difficulty. Enactment on a temporary basis was, however, very far from representing the kind of forthright commitment to participate in library affairs, financially and otherwise, which one might well expect from a level of government which has committed considerable sums into other areas of cultural and educational development.

Finally, in reviewing briefly the character and status of the Library Services Act, I should note that small as the total sum to be distributed was, limited as the purposes were which could be directly supported by the grants made available, these small grants, nevertheless, have virtually doubled the appropriation of a good many state library agencies in the United States, a fact which only underlines how thoroughly inadequate the state support of these activities has been and still is. The efforts which librarians have been making in our several states to have state budgets increased against that time when the Library Services fund may not be available have been largely unsuccessful. There have been only one or two librarians who have had in the last round of appropriations some limited acceptance of their purpose of becoming independent of federal funds in the future.

I will save until later my appreciation of the skill and ingenuity with which the staff of the Library Services Branch has administered what is apparently a rather cumbersome act. For the moment, let us simply note the great contrast between that which the Act provides and that which the library profession has held to be desirable trends and standards of development.

As Lowell Martin said so pungently in his opening talk, one of the activities regrettably supported by the Library Services funds is the demonstration of library service at wholly inadequate levels. We are organizing library demonstrations which consist of putting expanded book collections into a particular location, or putting into the operation trained persons,

recruited and paid by the state, who would otherwise have been unavailable locally.

With fifty thousand dollars' worth of books and a fifteen-thousand-dollar bookmobile as a dowry, these marriages of local units into larger service areas are being supported by state funds with a level of local participation which is not even close to a respectable fraction of the long-term costs of service. In Missouri, for example, the several regional libraries which have been organized are supported by a one-mill tax which will never yield sufficient revenue to support the present level of operation if state funds are withdrawn. Most of the regional units or the county units (which are the largest areas some states are able to achieve) have but one trained librarian on their staffs who must handle every responsible activity from book selection to negotiating with county budget authorities.

In a number of cases, the basic service being demonstrated is bookmobile service, whether administered by local units, state-supported regional centers, or the state agency itself. Bookmobile service, incidentally, provided a considerable part of the eloquent testimony which was given in support of the extension of the Library Services Act in 1960.

Bookmobile service is indispensable in some situations. Its limitations do not need to be stated in detail by an amateur like me. In bookmobile service, the amount of material which can be displayed at any time is acutely limited. Bookmobile stops may be for as short a period as 10 or 15 minutes in some of the less populated locations. What opportunity is there under these circumstances for readers to get careful advice on the materials which might be available in their field of interest? What opportunity is there to develop a reference service of any depth or any sophistication? The book collections, which are magnificent improvements over the obsolete, dusty, battered materials which all too often passed for libraries in library collections in too many locations in too many of our states, at best consist of a few thousand volumes selected from the current publishers' output to meet some sort of middle level of reading needs.

Normally, there is heavy emphasis, in the demonstrations supported with Library Services Act funds, on children's books, simply because these are not otherwise available either through the schools or in the homes of children whose parents are likely to be unaware of the possibilities in this very attractive area of publishing. The number of books per person, the amount of time per client the librarian can spend with the using public, the attractiveness of facilities which are available to the



using public--all of these in many of these demonstration operations are well below the standards which we would have thought to be standards of desirable library development. Yet we are attempting to persuade people by these substandard operations that they should lend their support, political and financial, to the provision of services at an expanded level. Is the new service to be at the level of that which is demonstrated? If it is not at the level of service which is demonstrated, how is the public to be reconciled to the greater cost of a satisfactory operation as compared with the cost and the burden of the demonstration which was made to them?

In some cases in these demonstration programs, bookmobiles make school stops simply because they reach large numbers of users and because the schools are often used as a channel of communication between those promoting community services and members of the community. And yet, if the experiment is successful and the new unit is transferred to local support, the professional staff of the unit would very quickly withdraw the service which was previously provided through the school stops, since among the canons of proper operation is the canon of not doing for the schools that which the schools can do for themselves. The current dogma is that public library resources must not be used for classroom work, must be used as little as possible for supplementary reading during school hours.

Finally, it seems to me, in reviewing what happens to the Library Services Act money, that the cost is being concealed. As we have said, staff, equipment, book collections are being provided to people in segments of the state with no realistic indication of what the upkeep costs of this kind of enterprise are likely to be on a long-term basis, when it is not a matter of merely providing for minimum needs over a relatively short period of time with no--or virtually no--capital outlay.

This is true in state as well as local operations. Our states are being permitted to make an appropriation of \$100,000 to \$200,000 a year to a state library agency which is able, with matching federal grants, to operate what is often a most impressive program. Clearly, the people of the state are not paying for this program in any direct way. Clearly, neither budget officers nor governors nor legislators are facing up to the cost of what these services will be. The critical decisions, therefore, which in the long run have to be faced, of what we are willing to pay for, who is going to pay for it--these critical decisions are being postponed, evaded in a general glow of good

will which is made possible because apparently free money is being fed into state and local operations. This is the black side of the Library Services Act. I think that it has to be stated bluntly because this Act is the major legislative accomplishment of the people interested in public libraries in the United States. In the sense of achievement which has come with that victory, we cannot afford to ignore the very limited front on which the victory was won, nor the disparity between what was won and the kind of program which will accomplish the previously stated long-run objectives for library service in the United States.

I shall be able to say nicer things about the Library Services Act program when I discuss my impressions of its administration. For the moment, however, I want to raise the question of whether the members of the library profession made the right decision when they decided to go to the federal government in an effort to increase the funds available for library programs. In raising this question, I am not thinking of the usual criticisms of federal aid programs.

I am not persuaded that they restrict local initiative; that they force local decisions in particular directions to nearly that degree which is urged by their critics. On the other hand, looking at the direction of national expenditure, at the direction of state expenditure, and at the direction of local expenditure, one finds that the thing which stands out in the United States is that the great and solid base of support for educational and cultural activity generally is not the federal government with its vast budget, its many billions of income and outgo; rather, it is the state governments which have increased their total expenditure--not so fast as the national government, but extremely fast--and have increased it above all in the areas of education and of cultural activity, areas in which federal expenditure is virtually trifling. The expenditures of the federal government in all the fields of education are impressive. They run to some billions, but, taking them apart, one finds that always there is a specific purpose which is being supported to the exclusion of more general purposes and a more general program. Congress has invariably attached a very specific set of conditions to its grants for educational purposes. There are grants for vocational education, the training of vocational educational teachers, the training of teachers in mathematics and science. There are contracts for specific kinds of research which are approved and developed by the agencies which have the funds to spend. There are also aggressions against individual conscience such as the "disclaimer affidavits" required of those who get fellowships under the National Defense Educa-

tion Act.

By contrast, the states in their dealings with higher education have been extraordinarily generous. The staffs of the universities and colleges have been free to develop programs which they thought educationally most significant. The institutions which started out with rather limited purposes, such as training schools for persons in agriculture and industry, have become great institutions, both graduate and undergraduate, supporting the most abstruse kind of research in science and in the humanities. If one looks at the simultaneous expansion of state support for higher education and for public elementary and secondary education, one cannot but be impressed at the flexibility of the state revenue system and the willingness of state governments, state officers, and state populations to devote very large resources to the business of education. This expansion has also come at a time when there are great other burdens on the states, particularly in the field of general public welfare, of mental health, and of highway construction. In general, then, one has the impression that for a long-term and relatively unrestricted support of educational and cultural activity, the states are more promising than the federal government.

Our reservations about the long-run reliability of the federal government as a source of support for library services are the more distressing since the job that is to be done is such a large one. The existing units of library service are small not only in terms of yesterday's needs. They grow smaller day by day. Tied to local support as library service is, the limits of the property tax limit the possibilities of the library budget. In far too many sections of our states, the maximum available tax in the largest unit of rural government, the county, yields too little money to pay the salary of a single trained librarian. Even in terms of population, many counties are much too small units to provide a clientele of adequate size for any but the shallowest kind of service. However, the belief of the leaders of library thought is that we must provide a more complicated kind of service, that is to say that we must be able to meet more specialized needs of a group of readers, more inclusive in terms of the total structure of society, than we have previously been reaching. We are driven to do this by the changes in the character of the information which is available in any field of interest, whether for pleasure or profit, and by the higher educational level of the population which must mean in turn that their requirements are higher than those of our reading population in the past.



Finally, we are asked to believe that library service is not merely a matter of having somewhere in the stacks or in the file cabinet information of an appropriate type. It must also be available quickly in a form in which it can be used. The library staff must include people who know specialized materials well enough so that they can render effective service to readers and users in locating it, even perhaps abstracting it and organizing it to suit the users' needs.

The library then takes its place among the informational resources of the community. It is perhaps the informational resource par excellence in that it is not limited to any particular type of use or any particular class of users, but attempts to reach all types of use and all classes of users.

If we set this as our goal, then very clearly what we were saying earlier about the size of the potential public for any given library outlet is critical. The appropriate size becomes of a wholly different order than that which might have been appropriate size for simpler purposes and less demanding uses of the past.

Another requirement which one finds widely stated in current library discussion is the need to take advantage of the technical facilities which are currently available for installing information, for retrieving information, for rapid copying of scarce material, for the transmission of information over long distances, and the like. Some very brave things have been said about the ways in which the libraries of the future may be mechanized with electronic and mechanical equipment so as to make more continuously available their vast resources and to make them available at a distance as easily as they are available to the person in the reading room or at the reference desk.

Quite clearly, we are thinking in these terms of far larger organizations than are current in the public library field today. We cannot begin to employ such complicated equipment; we cannot begin to recruit the necessary staffs to operate it unless we are dealing with very high volumes of use. The total budget for any one of these enterprises would be of a very impressive order, and it would have to be spread over a very large using public and over a considerably expanded financial base.

We should clearly be interested that our ideal state of development reach all parts of the population, in all the geographic areas of the country. We have already indicated that the extent of unserved areas in the United States is very uncomfortable in a country so urban, so industrial, with such high income levels. The factor of the sparse distribution of the pop-



ulation of some areas of the country is not likely to change. If anything, it is being exaggerated, by movement out of the open countryside and into the middle-sized towns. We are not likely to have depopulated areas, but only more thinly populated areas. At the same time, we shall have, in the metropolitan concentrations, a multiplicity of local government units of various types whose coordination has baffled all of the professional planners, and baffled those who would take local political leadership in an attempt to reduce the confusion of metropolitan government to a more rational structure.

Finally, in our discouraging inventory, one of the acute problems which affects every library administrator is the shortage of staff, the inadequacy of the present library training institutions to train enough qualified people to man the posts which are open, and the inability to recruit sufficient students to utilize fully the training facilities which do exist. Considering that this staff problem is really one of the very great problems of libraries apart from any question of reorganization or extension of local library services, considering that staff needs are cumulative and constitute a major handicap in program-to-program development, we must ask whether any steps in the development of library legislation are defensible which do not include some attention to staff development and to staff recruitment.

By these standards, what have we gained by the Library Services Act? On the surface, at least, the Act, with its limitation on population, tends to bolster existing units already too small for adequate service. These units are not capable of providing service within their present areas; they are certainly incapable of providing leadership for the extension of service in the areas around them. Another possible consequence in any expansion of the funds for library services is to make it possible for new units to organize which are destined by the character of their initial organization, the laws under which they operate, and the support which brought them into being, to be inadequate units again incapable of providing library service of the imaginative kind which we have been discussing.

In very few of our states is there any kind of birth control for new library units. State legislatures have been chary in granting any sort of discretionary authority over local government to any state agencies. They have apparently been most reluctant to grant such discretionary control over library organization. Yet, if the library laws, permissive as they are, let such units be organized, the state library agencies can scarcely withhold from them the supports they are giving to

other existing units, and the result is the further dissipation of resources and the perpetuation of a system of operation which is inadequate for contemporary conditions.

One of the uses to which Library Services Act money has been put is, of course, to buy books, to buy books which would have been beyond the wildest dreams of library staffs, both state and local, in many of our states until four or five years ago. The book funds of some state agencies have been multiplied many times by Library Services Act funds. These funds, made available in one form or another to local units, have, in turn, permitted manifold expansion of book budgets over what these previously had been. Until he engages in an enterprise of this kind, an outsider like myself is ignorant of the existence of libraries where a book budget may be \$20 a year, \$40 a year, \$60 a year, \$600 a year. That one should attempt, out of all the vast wealth of published material available today, to make a sampling with these minute amounts of money is inconceivable. These funds, therefore, have certainly been one of the great blessings of the Library Services Act for those agencies and for those local library units which have been able to take advantage of them. What can we say about the book purchases which have thus far been made possible? In some situations, in some states, the expenditure of money has brought the collection of the state library covering the population of an entire state up to about the level one might expect of a branch library in a middle-sized city, certainly no more deep in terms of the range of subjects and different kinds of interests which are represented in the collection. Expended on the local level either directly or indirectly, these book funds have, of course, gone to provide the most elementary tools, juvenile books of a decent kind, not the nineteenth-century sub-classics; minimal reference services, such as the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the unabridged dictionary, the Encyclopedia Americana, or, at the juvenile level, Collier's Encyclopedia. That these are victories and accomplishments is only an indication of the poverty which so largely obtained before these victories were won.

Having devoted so much space to the limitations of the library programs of the several states, despite the increased financing that the Library Services Act has made possible, let us look now at more cheerful things. One of these cheerful things is the Library Services Branch staff of the U. S. Office of Education, who are, I say it to their faces, a most ingratiating group of people.

The creation of staffs able and willing to work with state and local people is one of the real accomplishments of all federal

grant programs. The federal staffs, I think, are always utterly disarming. They are people of confidence and good will, of energy and dedication to their jobs, who are able to be of enormous assistance to the harassed state and local personnel in meeting various demands which are made upon them. There are some advantages which these people in federal agencies have over their counterparts in state and local government. They are considerably more detached both from the pressures of day-to-day operations which limit perspective and which tend to diminish invention and innovation, and from the persistent pressures of the various individuals, parties, or organized interests who are seeking to dictate the development of programs and the details of decision in individual cases. To have these people as a reservoir of information, advice, and counsel, of detached evaluation of the situation, is a great gain for those involved in state programs.

I am also impressed that this particular staff has administered the awkward Act with which they have to deal with a minimum of interference in state program-making and a minimum of restraint upon the sometimes devious expedients which state people must use in order to comply at once with the realities of their local situation and with the requirements of the federal Act. They have been extremely flexible about the allocation of costs by state authorities as matching funds under the Library Services Act. They have supported and built up the state staffs and state book collections and provided equipment, all of which have undoubtedly been of great service to the so-called rural areas, the particular province of the Library Services Act, but which are also available for part of the time for the benefit of the rest of the state. They have required a minimum of account-keeping and bookkeeping in order to permit the requirements of the Act to be met. Even the federal auditors, who in other programs can be extremely embarrassing in the questions which they ask after the fact about the handling of funds, have been understanding of the difficulties which the states meet in operating their programs, and have been willing to show considerable trust in the good will, the competence, and the integrity of the state officials in several agencies.

The Library Services Act money, aided by the professional support available through the Library Services Branch staff, has served to invigorate many of the state agencies which had previously been working along, year after year, with a substantially uniform level of appropriations despite an ever increasing cost of goods and services. The new money which



has come into these agencies has both permitted expanded staffs and given the present staffs the possibility of accomplishment, the chance of developing new programs, the excitement of moving out to new areas of service in their states. In consequence, some of the people have been able to build a new source of support, to get substantially increased appropriations, and this same increased support has been reflected in the local units in many of the states. To this extent, the Act has fulfilled one of the general purposes of those grants-in-aid programs, namely to concentrate more local support into the aided programs. Since the future development of library services in a state is likely to depend considerably more upon the energy and capacity of staffs at the state level, this new life for the state agencies is more than significant as an achievement of the Library Services Act.

Another aspect of the Library Services Act which is certainly an unqualified benefit is that it has provided money for experiment and innovation which would not ordinarily have been available from state sources. One of the unfortunate aspects of state finance is that money is appropriated for very particular purposes and that the possibility of innovation is checked by the disposition to base expenditure grants upon the previously prevailing levels and objects of expenditure. By contrast, federal grant money is relatively free. It need not be justified for expenditure in quite the same elaborate way that state appropriations must be. It is available not only to carry out existing programs, but to plan innovations and development. Those people in the states, therefore, who have had ingenuity and imagination--and there are many of them--have been able to use the federal money for experiments in modes of operation and types of programs which might be more rewarding than those which have been used in the past.

This characteristic of federal money in being relatively flexible in the purposes and ways in which it can be spent is one of the great advantages which have attended some other federal grants as well. For example, one of the limitations which one frequently encounters in state finance is a flat prohibition against spending state money for salary and expenses of people in various kinds of training programs--formal training programs, that is, which require extended absence from the job and enrollment in schools sometimes out of the state. By contrast, a portion of Library Services Act money has been spent for training purposes in many states and for scholarships for both present and prospective staff, and has to that extent both enabled the states to experiment with these different pro-



grams and added to the supply of persons who are available for such scholarships. This characteristic, I might say, of the Library Services Act money is shared with most federal programs. In a number of other fields, such as child welfare and training of public health personnel, the federal government has made money available which was normally not available from the state service.

Finally, the new money available under the Library Services Act has provided in the federal government itself a center for the collection and dissemination of information which is of very considerable importance in the evolution of library programs. This is one of the most ancient functions of federal agencies in relation to state, local, and even private agencies. The national government has, for over a century, been a collector of data in a variety of fields of endeavor and has provided carefully assembled information by which other governments and other agencies could plan their work and evaluate their activity. That this activity is now being carried on in the library field, a field which is characterized by fairly small units of operation, with information consequently difficult to secure and tabulate, is of very considerable importance, just as it has been important for a very long time in the general field of education. Undoubtedly as time goes by and the federal people become more skilled in the collection of data, their services in this respect will be of even more value to us.

In summary, therefore, one must admit that with all of its shortcomings as a legislative enterprise, the Library Services Act has achieved a considerable increase in assets, in personnel, in organization, and in finances that are available for library service in the United States. To return, however, to our starting point, there is nothing in the present Act which substantially or fundamentally changes the situation with respect to that library service. The reorganization of local service units is made no easier by the availability of demonstration funds under the Library Services Act than it was before that Act came into existence. The resistance to state coordination and control of local units may have been alleviated somewhat by the increased frequency with which the augmented state staffs have been in contact with personnel of local library units. However, the antipathy to losing one's identity in a larger organization has not diminished, nor has the habit of using the library as a sort of housekeeping game for many amateurs on boards of trustees and library staffs. The size of appropriations, although substantial in the light of miserable appropriations once available through many state agencies, is still quite inconsiderable

even in the best-supported state agencies. The big job, then, still remains to be done.

So far an enormous amount of the talent and skill of state staffs has been devoted to attempting to improve the library service provided through very small units by untrained or partly trained staffs. In fact, in some states the extension staff are virtually the professional staff of many local units. One of the reflections which occur to the outside observer as he moves about through the states is whether library service could not more easily be provided directly by the state than indirectly provided through state action in cooperation with local units. Is that not just what is being done in some of the states, such as New York, which have achieved a reputation for a considerable reorganization of local service? What New York has done, in effect, is to provide a new layer of library service on a so-called regional basis paid for entirely with state funds. The price of the additional resources made available to existing service units is their entering into cooperative agreements among themselves and with the libraries at the new regional centers. Financing of the new regional center, however, is entirely state financing. Instead of a direct contact between the local library staff and the state library in the capital, what you have is direct contact between local staffs and state regional staffs. In other words, for all practical purposes, the need for increased size of staffs and resources for the population served is being met rather by the reorganization of state service than by drastic change in the character of local units.

I think that we would be fooling ourselves, we would be inadequate to our duty, if we did not recognize that the great problem is before us; it is to secure a degree of public awareness of, support for, and willingness to pay the bills of a public library service which does not exist except perhaps in a few places at the present time. It would seem that what we ought to be doing is building up a kind of awareness which would make problems of structural organization relatively minor problems. When there is enough enthusiasm for the service, then the opposition of those who are currently active in and beneficiaries of the many small local enterprises will be insignificant and can be overcome. The most promising road, that of building around the strong units which already exist in our states, will be open. Admittedly, some states are much more fortunate than others in having strong municipal or county libraries scattered strategically all over the state. Those without them are the ones who will have to go to direct state operation of the intermediate levels.

So far the efforts to associate strong local units with many small units in the hinterland about them have been relatively unsuccessful, with the possible exception of New York and the further possible exception of Pennsylvania under its new program. Does not a solution perhaps lie in a far closer association between the state library and the municipal libraries in the development of expanded service areas whereby resources of income and staff are concentrated in the large units and made available to the sparsely populated countryside through whatever the most effective devices are, whether these are stations, branch offices, bookmobiles, or what have you? Again, the whole design of the Library Services Act tends to obstruct this enterprise if we are to construe "aid to communities of 10,000 or under" in its strictest terms. As the Act stands, one has to do some pretty elaborate bookkeeping and explaining to justify the necessary expenditure for building up the large units to the point where they may be able to extend their service to the less populated areas surrounding them. It is also worth noting that relations between municipal libraries, especially the large ones, and the state library agencies are not always either close or cordial. If there is not hostility, there can be a very large measure of indifference. In a few states, one is aware of common planning behavior for several types of libraries through the development of committees of state library associations. This is one of the more hopeful elements in the developing future.

In conclusion, then, the Library Services Act must be viewed as a very great landmark indeed in terms of what previously had been done by the library profession to secure increased support and public recognition of the value of public libraries as cultural and educational institutions. In terms of its fitness to the particulars of the situation which faces us, it seems in many ways a badly designed instrument. The great job of extending the awareness of the significance of library service, the role of developing library service to the point at which it intersects the needs of more individuals, more groups, and more activities within the community, remains to be done. When we are able to get the increased public awareness of what the library is, what the library can do, what the library is doing, then, I think, we shall be able to overcome the limitations of finance, of jurisdiction and organization, of administrative structure which at present hinder us. For the benefit of this audience, let me repeat once more that one of the firm convictions which I carry away from my study so far, an impression which I expect to survive the completion of the study, is that

the state library agency, however it may be organized, has the key role to play in the whole development of the public library program. I think that the prospects for the future can be measured in part by the strength and the degree of public support for the development and extension of the state agency programs. I should also like to repeat my impressions of the devotion to duty, of the enthusiasm and the sheer good nature of the many people who are on the staffs of these agencies who have been my hosts in many places and for whom I have the warmest feelings. I carried away from all of my visits the feeling that there is excellent work done by many people who get very little recognition outside their own immediate group of co-workers. This probably in the end is the strongest asset which the state library has. The state library agency, in turn, is one of the very strong assets in the whole developing picture of library service in the United States. The Library Services Act may have had its most fruitful impact in its strengthening the resources of and the public awareness of this agency.