



# The School Library Movement in England and Wales

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A DISCUSSION of the school library movement in England and Wales will be clearer if some preface is given about the background of the English educational system.<sup>1-6</sup> Scottish education has developed on its own parallel but independent lines. Until recently it was correct to speak of two systems within English education itself. There was, in the first place, the old "grammar school" tradition,<sup>7, 8</sup> stemming directly from the main Christian European tradition. This derived, further back still, almost uninterruptedly from Rome and the Athens of Pericles and Plato. In contrast to it was the recent "elementary" system—the schools first established by individuals and societies, and nationally organized under the "elementary code" set up by the 1870 Act, which for the first time made a system of education available (later compulsory) for all whom the "grammar school" tradition had not touched.

It is important to realize how very different these two systems were. The grammar school tradition (and under the term "grammar school" are included the independent schools mainly for boarders, which came to be known as "public schools" because they drew their pupils from the country as a whole and not from a particular district) was "European" in that a great part of the teaching was based, like that of nearly all comparable schools on the Continent, on Latin and to a less extent Greek, and had a common general aim. It was *for a minority*. Even after the great expansion of grammar schools that followed the Renaissance and Reformation these schools never reached more than a minority of the boys. It was *for a governing class*—no doubt, not planned consciously so, though in fact, these schools supplied all the professions and the leaders of national life. Finally, it was a

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*masculine* tradition—little serious attention was paid to the systematic schooling of girls.

The grammar school enshrined and preserved a tradition of learning for its own sake,<sup>9</sup> as a part of what now would be called the “Christian way of life,” reminiscent of the phrase “godliness and good learning” written into the deeds of many old schools by their founders. This tradition of “good learning” was greatly emphasized in the Victorian period and extended to a wide array of subjects never contemplated by the founders of the schools, but which were brought one by one into the curriculum: modern languages, history, science, geography, and art. These were placed side by side with the established classical studies. Thus the teaching work of the school was immeasurably widened and enriched, and the standard set in the older subjects extended to the new. Meanwhile the national system of public examinations,<sup>10</sup> developed in the first half of the present century, promoted a high level of attainment throughout the range of school work, despite certain drawbacks. Also important was the great extension of school life outside the classroom — in games, clubs, societies, and other activities. Furthermore, the last hundred years have been marked by the rise everywhere of girls’ grammar schools based on the same ideals as the boys’.

The early elementary schools<sup>11</sup> and the education acts which regulated them never contemplated an extension of this grammar school type of education to all other school children. Their aim was a much simpler one: to make sure that all children reached a minimum standard of literacy (“to read, to write, and to compute”). Part of the driving force behind the movement was philanthropic. Another motive was provided by the extension of the franchise—“we must educate our masters,” as it was put in 1867. About then came the warning of the Austro-Prussian War, when the “better educated” Germans defeated Austria. There was also the social and economic reason, namely that the system of society which had grown out of the Industrial Revolution was unworkable with an illiterate population.<sup>12</sup> An “elementary code” was drawn up, stating the conditions under which children should be taught from the ages of “not less than five” to “not more than thirteen” which was raised by 1939 to “at least fifteen.” Hundreds of schools were added to those which had been hitherto provided by voluntary effort, and great hopes were entertained by well-wishers. If the early results disappointed observers like Matthew Arnold, much was nevertheless achieved. But the classes were very

large (ninety was not unknown, a figure reached again in some cases during the Second World War), and methods of mass-instruction had to be employed, with very little adjustment possible to the needs of the individual child.

With the new century new winds began to blow, and these affected the whole attitude toward education, both in elementary and in grammar schools. There came a new sense of the child himself as the center of educational thought and effort, and far more serious attention was paid to child psychology. The opening of wide new horizons with the introduction of new subjects into the curriculum of the grammar schools has already been mentioned. The same was happening within the elementary schools; and the conception of learning as inquiry as well as instruction was beginning to influence teaching methods. In both traditions of education—that of the grammar school and of the elementary school—the new spirit was beginning to make obsolete the old methods of pure textbook and class instruction and the conception of knowledge as fact to be remembered;<sup>13</sup> though it took a long time for this to be generally recognized and the natural corollary drawn.

Before turning to consider this new situation and the ways in which the school library offers the means of dealing with it, it is necessary to say something about the reorganization of English education which began with the Act of 1944<sup>14</sup> and which is still in progress.

This Act was passed by Churchill's coalition government in the last year of World War II. At that time the president of the Board of Education, as the Minister responsible for education was then called, was R. A. Butler, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Butler Act created a "Minister to promote education in England and Wales." In its reorganization the Act followed the lines of the great Hadow Reports<sup>1, 3</sup> and provided free and compulsory education for all in three stages: "primary,"<sup>15</sup> for children up to eleven; "secondary," from eleven onward; and "further," or education after leaving school. The term "secondary," which had hitherto denoted a *type* of education—the grammar school—now denoted a *stage*<sup>16</sup> of education, of three alternative kinds: (1) grammar, giving, as hitherto, the more "academic" form of education; (2) technical; and (3) modern,<sup>17</sup> providing for all the children not embraced in (1) or (2). Of the children from eleven to fifteen years of age the secondary modern schools provide for about four-fifths, the actual proportion varying according to the geographical area. These children had previously been in-

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cluded by the three or four top classes of the old elementary schools.

But while an Act may change the whole face of organized education, it cannot by a stroke of the pen remake buildings and equipment, especially at the end of an exhausting war. What is even more important, it cannot rapidly change teachers and traditional methods. One immensely important thing it did do; it made possible for the first time over the whole field a sense of national unity and common purpose.

Before discussing the school library movement, one must again look at its historical background. Many books on the history of English education have something to say about books and even libraries in schools at an early date. School libraries still in existence go back uninterruptedly to the middle ages, and perhaps earlier still. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries some schoolmasters were aware of needs on which we are still laying stress: the need of books for reference, of books for general reading, of books to supply information for exercises in composition.<sup>7</sup> Much more recently, and specifically in the early days of the elementary school, there are similar references to the need for collections of books. The Cross Report<sup>18</sup> says: "There is room for much improvement in reading . . . accordingly the establishment of class libraries is strongly to be recommended."

But a school library movement in the effective sense is really a product of the inter-war years, and especially of the 1930's. In the early years of this century a typical grammar school library consisted of two parts: a collection of books, and often a very good one, on the subjects studied in the Sixth Form (the most advanced work); and "recreational reading," mainly though not entirely of fiction, for the younger members of the school. There was no definite guidance available on its administration and management.

In the 1930's the position rapidly changed. In 1934 the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust set up a strong committee to inquire into, and report on, the provision of libraries in secondary (i.e., grammar) schools and to make recommendations. Its report<sup>19</sup> marked an important stage in public recognition of the case for school libraries. In 1934 also the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters, the professional organization of men-teachers in grammar schools, set up a small committee to consider the organization of grammar school libraries. This committee produced in 1937 the *Guide for School Librarians*,<sup>20</sup> laying special stress on sound technical practice. In 1935 the Board of Education, the predecessor of the present Ministry of

Education, arranged a week's course for forty grammar school teachers on the organization and use of libraries in secondary schools. It was an experiment, but a most successful one, and it was repeated yearly until the war. In 1936 appeared the first English periodical devoted to school libraries, the *School Library Review* (now the *School Library Review and Educational Record*); and the same year saw the preliminary moves which led in 1937 to the almost simultaneous foundation of two separate organizations of teacher-librarians—one independent, the School Library Association, the other within the Library Association, the School Libraries Section of the Library Association. At the outbreak of the war, these two organizations, which could not fail to be in a sense rivals, included as members some 350 to 400 grammar schools.

The war naturally checked further advance. There was in fact some falling off in membership, not unnatural considering that many schools were evacuated—some in two or three sections—and there was wide disorganization of education. But a good deal of thought was being devoted to the problem of the school library and its place in education, especially in view of the situation likely to prevail after the war. In 1941 the School Library Association set up a small subcommittee, which drew up a "Draft Report."<sup>21</sup> Immediately after this the two associations collaborated in producing a further report, to cover the field of elementary education. While this was in preparation the 1944 Act was passed, by which English education was transformed, as has been already described. The "Joint Report," as it was called, was issued in 1945 as *School Libraries in Post-War Reconstruction*.<sup>22</sup> This covered much wider ground than the 1943 "Draft Report," and included appendixes headed, "Training in the Use of the Library and in School Library Administration," and "Relations between the School Library and the Public Library System." It came immediately to be regarded as an authoritative exposition of progressive opinion on the whole question of school library provision and use. It was reissued, without change of text, but with a new introduction and with a commentary, in 1950, as *School Libraries Today*.<sup>23</sup> But by far the most important result of the collaboration of the two associations was their union in 1946 as a single association—the present independent School Library Association.

The chief immediate problems which confronted the united association lay in the wide new field opened up through the enlargement of the secondary stage of education by the Butler Act. They particularly

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involved helping the "new secondary schools"—the secondary modern schools—in what was virtually unexplored territory. Very few of the predecessors of these institutions, the old elementary schools, had anything which could be called a library, though in some areas the public libraries had done what they could to provide small loan collections. Practically no elementary school had ever had a library room; most were seriously overcrowded, for many schools had been damaged or destroyed, and no building had been done for six or seven years; very seldom had grants been made to elementary schools for library purposes, and there was almost no tradition of "library work."

In the Building Regulations appended to the Butler Act it was laid down that every secondary school to be built in the future was to be provided with a library room, minimum dimensions for which were given. This clearly implied a policy of the Ministry that every secondary school, secondary modern no less than grammar, should have its library. It was a revolutionary change in view of what has been said on the "two traditions," but, so far as premises were concerned, it was a very distant objective and could not affect the hundreds of schools still housed in their prewar elementary school buildings. However, the importance of this official recognition of the need for libraries in all secondary schools could not be overestimated.

The first action taken by the School Library Association was to issue a short leaflet<sup>24</sup> giving suggestions for the organization and use of a collection of books as a library, when housed in a room which could not be spared from class teaching. This leaflet was followed by others dealing in a simple way with problems likely to be common, with special regard to the new secondary schools. The most encouraging feature of the postwar growth of the Association has been its large membership in these schools now standing at perhaps eight hundred. The principle of financial grants, even though they are rarely adequate as yet, is at any rate becoming recognized by local authorities; and the body of experience of library use in these schools is constantly growing. Few of these schools take the public examinations used by grammar schools; their curriculum is much more elastic, and much interesting experimental work is being done.

The movement as a whole has had in the meanwhile the close interest and sympathy of the Ministry itself, shown in various ways. Local administration of education is not carried out by the Ministry, but by Local Education Authorities locally elected; and while these must conform within broad limits to certain general conditions (e.g.,

the Building Regulations previously mentioned), they have very considerable local freedom. There may, for instance, be a Ministry regulation on the provision of a library room, but there is no definite instruction that such-and-such (or any) grant shall be provided for initiating or maintaining a library. Authorities, therefore, vary astonishingly both in their general policy regarding the provision of school libraries and in the funds they supply. This freedom is jealously guarded.

On the other hand, the Ministry could not permit public policy to be disregarded, and it has, through its Inspectorate, a means of influencing and educating local opinion. The way in which the movement extends is by a mixture of encouragement, example, and persuasion. It is a comparatively slow way but perhaps the most effective one in the end. The local branches of the School Library Association help to keep local opinion alive to the need.

In 1947 the Ministry resumed the short courses on the organization and use of school libraries, on the general pattern of those held before the war but with significant changes: (1) some half of the teachers attending them have come from secondary modern schools; (2) the stress has shifted from organization and technique to educational uses. The courses now last ten days, and they have been repeated yearly. Some had wondered if the very different traditions of the grammar school and the secondary modern school might not make the instruction somewhat incoherent, but the reverse has proved to be true. The two groups of teachers have learned much from one another.

In certain cases it has been a practice of the Ministry to make some financial grant where a voluntary organization is doing work of value to public policy but is hampered through lack of funds. Until 1948 the Association depended solely on the unpaid services of officers and others who were themselves fully occupied as teachers, and on its income from members' subscriptions. In the years after the war expenses rose considerably, especially in paper, printing, and travel. The Association was growing, and office work was becoming greater than spare-time administration could cope with. In 1948, and since, the Association has received grants from the Ministry which have made it possible to rent a modest office in London and enjoy the services of a full-time business secretary. The grant is neither automatic nor permanent, however. It has been, and is, invaluable in helping the Association to surmount the great difficulties of its recent expansion.

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It would be well now to pause and take stock of the present situation and deal with points of view prevailing on certain special aspects, i.e., (1) the educational uses of the school library; (2) its stock; (3) its organization; (4) the school librarian—his work and training; (5) library premises; and (6) libraries in primary schools. This may show what trends or tendencies can be detected.

*Uses of the Library.*<sup>25-28</sup> An agreed doctrine seems to have emerged on the contribution which the library can offer to the educational work of the school. This contribution may be summarized as follows:

(a) The library makes it possible to enrich and broaden the ordinary teaching of the classroom by providing additional material of all kinds for illustration and reading, in or out of class.

(b) It provides a collection of quick reference books such as are needed for answering straightforward informational questions, or for checking facts.

(c) It provides material of all kinds to foster and develop personal and active interests, from simple games or hobbies, notably making, collecting, doing, watching things, to a wide range of pursuits which may be termed cultural in the best and fullest sense, for example those of music, art, and politics, in the upper forms of a grammar school. What is common to all is that, at different levels of taste, intellect, and experience, such interests are taken up by the child on his own initiative, are active, and can be pursued with some persistence. Far too much of the pleasure of adults is passive—having things done for them or watching other people doing things. The provision of this “active interest” material, with regard to the all-round development of personality, is one of the most valuable services a school library can render.

(d) The library makes it possible to organize instruction in the use of books and of a library as sources of information. The effective and critical use of books, and of the printed word generally, is a difficult and very precious skill. It does not come by nature, and if it is not learned, in however small a degree, at school, it is not likely that it will be learned afterward. However, such instruction should not be given *in vacuo*, but always with a definite objective in view. Some even say that none should be offered unless the need for it arises out of a particular piece of work in hand;<sup>29</sup> others feel that there must be some definite syllabus of training if the ground is to be systematically covered. Both emphasize the need for purpose to be felt



in any teaching provided, and feel some distrust of disconnected questions of a quiz type. It is common ground that "library instruction" must not on any account become a new "subject" in the curriculum.

(e) It is agreed that for older pupils, working at an advanced level, some special introduction to the use of the library for their particular line of study is advisable; and that this is most appropriately given by the teacher in charge of the subject, and not by the librarian, since he cannot be a specialist in all departments. The school library provides the opportunity to apply this instruction in work connected with the curriculum at almost any stage—in simple answers to straightforward questions, checking of facts, using books as sources, constructing simple paragraphs based on information collected, estimating the usefulness of a book for a particular purpose, judging alternative sources, and writing of individual or cooperative essays, as in so-called "project" work. The use of the library in such a way has been common in the upper forms of grammar schools, and secondary modern schools are tending to follow that pattern. Such work cannot be done without an adequate collection of books, always available.

(f) Finally, the library provides opportunities for children to exercise a variety of useful responsibilities connected with the administration of the library, such as supervision, day-to-day routine, craft work, lettering, service on committees or as representatives of classes. Many schools have developed strongly this side of school library activities and call perhaps in one way or another on ten per cent of the pupils. This does much to make the library felt as the common possession and concern of the school.

*Bookstock.*<sup>30, 31</sup> From what has been said concerning the uses of a school library, certain general principles follow about its stock. As it is often put, a good school library should cover the whole expanse of human achievement, knowledge, and imagination, so far as it comes within the capacity of the pupils who use it. Its book selection, therefore, requires work in two dimensions. Horizontally, it must cover the full extent of subject-matter; but vertically, it must provide, throughout the subject areas, for each level of age, intelligence, and taste. A grammar school, catering for children working up to university level, will require a much wider "vertical" range of books than a secondary modern school of the same size, whose pupils leave mainly in their sixteenth year.

No very definite estimates have yet been ventured on the optimum size of a school library. It has been conjectured that for a secondary

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modern school of five hundred to six hundred pupils the minimum "basic stock" may be about one thousand volumes; for a grammar school, sixteen hundred.<sup>21</sup> Basic stock is defined as the lowest figure on which *all* the uses of the library described above might be attempted; it is a bare minimum figure.

Whether there is a maximum useful size, beyond which a school library need or should not grow, has hardly become as yet a matter of practical importance, except where new schools are being planned and it is necessary to have some idea what stock is ultimately to be provided for. Figures suggested have been six thousand for a secondary modern school and ten thousand for a grammar school; but many grammar schools, especially the larger ones, and the public schools have considerably more. It must be admitted that as yet there is little definite information on which to form an opinion. This writer feels that ten thousand may prove to be well below a useful maximum for a grammar school that makes good use of its library. Certainly in all too many cases libraries which were expected to be big enough for all anticipated growth have proved to be too small. This question has of course a most important bearing on planning.

This is not the place to discuss the principles of book-selection in detail; but it is worth while to call attention to the need which is experienced for two special types of books. These are: (a) books for backward or retarded readers, written in simple language but with an adolescent or adult appeal;<sup>32, 33</sup> and (b) good books for intelligent but non-specialist readers on important subjects of human concern, notably religion, philosophy, art, science, social and political problems. Such books can be of inestimable value in broadening the outlook, whereas specialization may tend to fix it too narrowly.

As teacher-librarian at Aldenham School since 1924, it has been a particularly interesting experience for this writer to watch the different patterns taken by boys' reading. Some boys confine most of their reading to recreational fiction (the typical "lower school" reading fifty years ago); some to "work" (books used purely for study). Some tend to read several books by the same author in succession, i.e., "chain-reading"—a practice common among younger boys but not unknown among older ones (e.g., one Sixth Form boy read six Trollope novels—not the Barseshire ones—in as many weeks); or two boys share one another's reading, exchanging books as they finish them. The most interesting experiences have been with "interest" reading of books of information or imagination not read in connection

with school work, thus throwing light on a boy's personality. As bearing on this, a dozen miniature orchestral scores, the gift of a parent who was moving house, were put into the library, about 1934. The expectation that they would not be used was immediately proved mistaken. A considerable collection of orchestral scores has now been built up systematically and has always had a clientele of users, who take them out for musical society meetings, radio concerts, gramophone recitals, or for use at home in the holidays. Such interest corresponds with the noteworthy growth of public interest in music, and knowledge of it in the last twenty-five years. The same applies in a lesser degree to painting and architecture. Similarly there are always groups of boys concerned with farming and various branches of nature study, especially bird-watching. Sport as such plays a much smaller part than it did; and this also seems true of poetry, though there is a good deal of reading of plays. The popularity of music probably is directly due to the work of the British Broadcasting Corporation. It may be, with the development of television, that the visual arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, and architecture) will overtake music in their appeal; it will be interesting to see. Meanwhile the various art books published by the Phaidon Press and Skira Color Studio can help to fill the gap.

This writer has for the last ten years or so, made use of the bookslip method for issuing books and has sometimes, at conferences of teacher-librarians, illustrated boys' "reading lives" (i.e., the reading a boy has done during his school career, as indicated by the books he has borrowed from the library). This has been done by putting up his actual bookslips, arranged in three columns—Work, Interest, Fiction—term by term throughout his time at school. One gets in this way a vivid picture of many different types of library use.

Observation of such reading leads to a number of conclusions. Here are some: (a) Children in a school cover an immense range of interests and needs. There is scarcely any subject that does not find its "fan." (b) Although a need cannot be met unless the material is in the library, often the first intimation that a need exists comes when a book that meets it is put into the library. This is a matter of great importance in the framing of a policy on book-selection. The point is well brought out by W. J. Scott.<sup>34</sup> (c) The old distinction between "work" and "not-work" has long ceased to have a real meaning. Very often the same books serve either end, according to the purpose for which they are used. (d) The provision of books to satisfy personal interests

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is one of the most valuable services in education that a library can possibly render, both in helping to build up the child's personality as a whole, and perhaps in laying the foundation for a worth-while leisure interest for the adult to come. (e) The library never caters to a majority of the children in the school in the sense that most children will ever read any particular book in it; it caters to a whole series of minorities, some of perhaps half a dozen pupils, some of just one. Probably the largest of the minorities thus served (apart from works of popular fiction) is no larger than three or four per cent of the school; but added together they are impressive. It is in this provision for minorities that the library approaches most nearly its chief function in education, and perhaps the chief function of education itself—it is dealing with the individual boy or girl, according to his need. To exclude books within the grasp of pupils on the ground that they are of little interest to the majority of pupils is to run counter to one of the chief services the school library can render. It is easy to be bemused by the "big number" and the pressure of statistics, but the only thing that really matters is the child himself. For this reason, if for no other, there is justification for regarding the school library as one of the most wonderful of the new educational tools.

*Organization.*<sup>35</sup> The importance of using tested technical methods is now fully recognized. Most school libraries now use Dewey's classification, though commonly with minor modifications; a number use the Cheltenham system, devised for the well-known school library at the Ladies' College, Cheltenham; a few use the Bliss arrangement; and one, at least, the Library of Congress scheme. Naturally public library practice has had much influence, but it has become clear that technical methods suitable for public libraries are not always best for school conditions (for example, some grammar schools use the book-slip method of issue familiar in college libraries and many schools use the book card to be signed by the borrower, rather than the reader's ticket and book card common in the public library). Choice depends largely on local conditions, e.g., whether or not there is always someone on duty whenever the library is open. A good deal of use is made of pupils' help.

An interesting innovation made in the last few years by a few county libraries (where the library is not autonomous, but is controlled by the Education Committee) is the appointment of School Library Advisers. The original idea came from the "Joint Report"<sup>36</sup> which called for the appointment of experienced school librarians to

fill such posts. The advisers appointed have in fact been members of the county library staff.<sup>37-39</sup> They have done an immense amount of good work, especially in helping to make the secondary modern schools in their areas familiar with simple but sound administration, and with help in the choice of books.

A special aspect of organization concerns the library within the school. The commonest way of bringing pupils into contact with the library and of giving instruction and practice in its use is the establishment of "library periods."<sup>28, 40</sup> These are periods, usually of forty minutes each week in which a particular class is assigned to the library. There are many uses to which such a plan can be put. It is generally conceded that it is of especial importance in the first two or three years of a pupil's school life. But the system raises difficult problems when the library is also needed for work or reference by other classes, or for private study by advanced pupils. There seems to be no solution completely satisfactory with a single-room library.

*The School Librarian.*<sup>28, 41</sup> Here once more the situation is best understood in the light of past experience. The school library movement in England did not arise out of the public library system, but in the educational system itself, and among teachers. For about a century, and especially within the past fifty years, there has grown up in the grammar schools a tradition of voluntary and usually unpaid service of one kind or another to the school outside the classroom. One field of this service has been games; another, school societies or clubs, camps or expeditions. Other activities of educational value have been encouraged as schools widened their conception of the purpose of education. One is responsibility for the school library.

But as libraries grew and views of their function broadened, it became clear that they could not be properly administered in the teacher's spare time. Time for administration was necessary. Two factors outside the control of the school, however, complicated the situation: that of the eligibility of personnel for pensions, which required full-time teaching; and that of the school staffing ratio. The first was solved by a generous interpretation of the term "full-time teaching"; but the second was not met so readily. The more time is allotted to the teacher-librarian for library administration, the more class-teaching has to be done by his colleagues. The only alternative is more generous staffing of the school, and this is expensive and not easy. The position is somewhat less difficult in grammar schools, where there has been a tradition of more generous staffing, than in secondary modern

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schools. A full-time librarian is rarely appointed. What can be said is that the nature of the problem is fully recognized.

It is generally felt in schools which take their libraries seriously that the present situation is unsatisfactory. There is a strong case for a very considerable increase in time allotted to library administration, probably amounting in the larger schools to the equivalent at least of a teacher's full time. But even if an increase in the staffing ratio should make this possible, it is unlikely that the whole time would be given by one member of the staff. Here another factor enters. It seems clear that the principle of the teacher-librarian is most congenial to the English school library setup and is not an unfortunate necessity imposed by the economic situation. The educational advantages of the principle are real—the intimate knowledge of the school and the classroom which can only be gained by service as a teacher in them; the familiarity which the teacher-librarian gains of the needs of both the library and the classroom; and the closer integration of the library with the general life of the school. These advantages seem so solid that there seems little likelihood of radical alteration in the policy, except perhaps in the very large multilateral or comprehensive schools that one or two authorities are building. The number of schools with more than about seven hundred pupils is comparatively small.

The solution most likely to be adopted, if a more generous staffing ratio is obtained, will probably be to appoint one member of the staff as teacher-librarian, with one, or perhaps two, colleagues as assistants, each with some portion of his time allotted to library administration. A younger member of the staff, for instance, could be designated as assistant to a senior, which incidentally would help to insure continuity of practice on succession; or the library might be divided between a senior and a junior library, one person being in charge of each. In any case there is a strong tradition growing up of pupil help. Whichever type of solution is adopted—that of the full-time librarian or that of the teacher-librarian—something has to be surrendered.

The need for systematic training of school librarians<sup>42</sup> has long been felt. The short courses of the Board of Education were not designed to meet this need, but to lay down general lines of sound practice which could be followed up in administration. The "Joint Report"<sup>43</sup> contained an appendix dealing with the problem. It suggested three types of courses: (a) a short course for all university students in the use of books and a library in personal study (This is not, strictly speaking, relevant here, except to emphasize by implication the need for

training in library-use at school.), (b) a general course for teachers in training, which would cover the educational uses of the school library and its application to the needs of their own subject, and (c) a special course for teachers wishing to be teacher-librarians. The last would treat all branches of the school librarian's work—technical, administrative, and educational. Since this report was published a good deal of thought has been given to the training of the teacher-librarian, and there is now a strong body of opinion in favor of postponing the last type of training until the teacher has had some practical experience of teaching in a school with a good library. The various conferences, lectures, and courses now being held are designed for practicing teachers. Only one is of any considerable length, viz., a ten-week course held in the summer term in the Homerton Training College at Cambridge.<sup>44-46</sup>

The School Library Association set up in 1948 a special subcommittee on training and qualifications to survey the whole field and to make recommendations. These would be too long to detail here, but the greatest stress is laid on the educational aspects and uses of the school library, and especially on personal experience and some piece of original inquiry.

On the question of a certificate or diploma, the present general view is very difficult to assess; probably it has not yet crystallized. There is evidence of a desire on the part of some for recognized requirements; others feel that the training of teacher-librarians is much more important than any question of "paper qualification." In any case there is no unanimity as to who should make such an award and on what conditions. The view of the School Library Association is that such a qualification is an educational rather than a "professional" one, that a diploma, if granted, should be given by an educational body, that it should be awarded only to qualified teachers with a certain minimum of teaching experience, and that the main emphasis should be on the educational side of school library work.

*Library Premises.*<sup>19, 21, 47</sup> In early thinking about library accommodation it was usually taken for granted that one room was needed, and discussion centered on its size. It was considered that the school library of minimum size should provide accommodation for the largest class in the school, plus a small number of individual pupils who might need to use it for private study. But when the conception of library periods became familiar, it was evident that instruction and practice in library work was usually incompatible with other uses

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of the library, such as that of private study, and that for all practical purposes the library during a library period was out of action for the rest of the school. This was of little concern in small schools, e.g., in a "one-stream" secondary modern school containing one class per year, only four or five periods a week would be required. But with large schools the matter would be serious. A four-stream grammar school would need thirty-two, and the problem could only be solved by restricting the library periods to the younger classes, or by making them fortnightly or even three-weekly, or by bringing in temporarily a neighboring room. It is now, therefore, felt that where the size of a school warrants a very large library room; it is wise to divide it. It may be thought best to have two libraries, a senior one and a junior one, each covering the whole range of subjects and interests for those who use it, with permission for dual membership where this is helpful. Such a plan is better than to divide the two rooms between subjects.

But what is really needed is a group or complex of rooms—two main library rooms, a librarian's room, a store or stock room, and one or two small conference rooms where small groups of six or eight can work together without disturbing other users. In the present building situation one can only look upon such a solution as utopian. Most schools will have to be satisfied for a long time to come with a single room, the urgent need being to have it adequate.

Perhaps the most helpful and imaginative temporary, and perhaps permanent, solution is that suggested in the Ministry's recent Building Bulletin No. 2,<sup>48</sup> the relevant parts of which are reprinted and commented on by H. R. Mainwood in the *School Librarian*.<sup>49</sup> Here the fundamental idea is that the library shall be situated in close proximity to one of two rooms of classroom size, and to a "division room" and a "store room," any one of which may either serve its normal purpose or be brought into the library as need requires. This flexibility is characteristic of present planning, to make the most economical use of space and to provide for varying, and new, needs.

But apart from new building, which has been heavily reduced since the Korean War, most attention has been necessarily focused on improvisation as the only way of coping with the immediate situation. Much imaginative work has been done here. The commonest case is the conversion of a standard-size classroom into a library. Very unpromising rooms, sometimes festooned with pipes and equipped with heavy cupboards, have been turned into not unattractive library rooms.

*Primary Schools.* Under the 1944 Act, primary education<sup>14, 15</sup> covers



three stages: Nursery, or "under five"; Infant, from five to seven; and Junior, from seven to eleven.

As previously mentioned, discussion took place in 1943 and onward about the provision of libraries in elementary schools, and this led to the "Joint Report" in 1945. The first urgent task after the war was to meet the needs of what had been the senior classes of the old elementary schools, now reorganized as secondary modern schools; but the case for libraries in primary schools was not lost sight of.

Primary schools differ from secondary schools in that the pupils are not differentiated into the three types of grammar, technical, and modern. The primary school includes all the children over the whole range of intellectual capacity from the brightest to the most backward. There is now a general concensus that, at any rate, for the junior stage, seven to eleven, there is a strong case for a school library, resting on three main arguments: the very wide range of intelligence, the eagerness to read shown by many children at this age, and the advantage of familiarizing children with a collection of books before the break to secondary education comes. Whether a general school library is the best way of bringing the younger children into contact with books is not certain; here the common opinion seems to be that attractive book-corners in classrooms are the better way. In view of this situation the School Library Association has taken measures to hold a short conference, of teachers and others, in the coming autumn, to consider the field as a whole.

There are two main problems of the future which call for solution, the one material and financial, the other educational. (1) The economic situation and the demands on labor and material will for a long while prevent any striking improvement in premises. The official policy is expressed in Building Bulletin No. 2: "... economy should be achieved not by an unwise lowering of building standards but by careful investigation into the most suitable methods of construction and a careful apportionment of money."<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, as indicated elsewhere, the utmost stress is laid on improvisation.

On the financial side the principle of the annual grant is coming to be accepted; but few schools have what can be regarded as completely adequate provision. Grants made during 1951 and 1952 to about forty grammar schools varied from £200 to about £15 a year, with an average of about £75 to £80. These figures do represent an advance on prewar grants, even when the rise in the cost of books is taken into account. The "Draft Report"<sup>21</sup> calculated that adequate provision for

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a grammar school of six hundred would be about £160 at 1938 prices, so there is a long way still to go.

The most reasonable approach to the problem is probably to put the figure needed to maintain an adequate library against the total cost of maintaining the school, or with the cost of maintaining the school laboratory. A first rate library could be secured on a grant of considerably less than one per cent of the total amount spent on the school, and it serves *all* the activities of the institution. Conceivably its support gives better educational value, pound for pound, than any comparable expenditure. Nevertheless any such amount might appear large as a sum of money, and the authorities whose duty it would be to provide it would have to be reasonably convinced that it was well laid out. This brings up the second problem. (2) There is a great need to train teacher-librarians; but there is an even greater need to bring home to the teaching profession as a whole the possibilities of the school library, both generally and in the teaching of their own subject, so that their own teaching methods will involve its use; for it is as an educational force that the school library will stand or fall. Key points are: (a) the heads of schools, for the general planning of school work, and much of its character, lies in their hands; (b) the educational institution and training colleges, responsible respectively for educational research and for the training of students, for it is as the demand is felt and expressed that it is most certain to be met, and the present task is, above all, "conversion and enlightenment"; (c) the local education authorities, for they have to find the money. Fortunately a good school library well-administered and fully used is its own best advertisement.

Florence Horsbrugh,<sup>51</sup> the present Minister of Education, in her foreword to the Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 21, *The School Library*, says: "It may still be said of books even more truly than of films and broadcasts, that they are 'the golden key that opens the enchanted door'. Text-books alone, indispensable as they are, will not open this door, nor will they prove sufficient guides to those children who have passed through it. Boys and girls want books of quality and substance to match the growth of their own powers and their own imagination. Homes and friends can often help, and so can public and county libraries, but school libraries can help most of all."

In the foreword to *School Libraries Today*, Lester Smith quotes Richard Livingstone<sup>52</sup> as follows: "The most important room in any school is the library. If it contains good books, well chosen and well

used, we may feel reasonably sure that, on the intellectual side at least, it is a place where real education is given. If the library is neglected, ill-equipped, dreary, unused, we may feel equally sure of the opposite."

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