



State and National Extension

PAUL HOWARD

IN SEPTEMBER 1952 Fenton B. Turck, a New York consulting engineer, wrote that "The culture and the economy of the United States have, in less than a generation, exploded into an entirely new dimension."¹ He presented evidence that this explosion "is not a pattern made by a people interested only in material progress—in bread alone.' It is, rather, a design that shows a well-rounded people, matching material progress with the building of a great new national culture. . . . In a further examination of these facts, and others, the pattern becomes clear—a picture of an entirely new kind of America, and Americans, whose new behavior, desires, needs, and tastes demand new patterns of service and distribution."

Mr. Turck went on to show that in 1950, as compared with 1940, Americans spent ninety-six per cent more in constant dollars for books but bought motor cars at a rate only ten per cent greater than ten years ago. At this greatly accelerated rate they bought flowers and seeds, classical records, and theater and opera tickets. In one year they spent more to go to classical concerts than to baseball games. They bought more Bibles in the ten years than in the preceding forty years.

Even the sceptical will admit some degree of truth in these conclusions. A student of the library movement, in attempting to analyze the events of the past few years and to chart the course of its development, will do well to consider the relation between libraries and the over-all cultural patterns which are forming in our time. Are libraries moving in the same direction as the general culture? Are they behind, or in advance? Are the trends we think we see, really trends? Which events have significance? Which victories and which defeats are likely to have permanence?

It is generally accepted as a historical fact that public library development in the United States has been, up to now, predominantly local.

Mr. Howard is Librarian of the United States Department of the Interior.

State and National Extension

The first tax-supported public library was established in 1803;² the first state library extension service was inaugurated by Massachusetts in 1890;³ a federal agency working in the same field was not created until 1937; and the final state agency was not established until 1949.⁴ It should be noted that, in this article, the state and federal library agencies considered are those concerned with the study, guidance, and promotion of public libraries and public library service, as distinguished from specialized and research libraries such as those of federal departments, and from state historical, legal, and other libraries.

In the past ten to fifteen years there has been an acceleration in the development of federal and state interest in library extension. The following events may be taken as examples:

1. Establishment of the Service to Libraries Section, United States Office of Education, 1937.⁵
2. Publication of Carleton B. Joeckel's *Library Service as Staff Study No. II* for the Advisory Committee on Education, 1938.⁶
3. Michigan's annual continuing appropriation of \$500,000 for libraries beginning in 1938.⁷
4. Library support as state policy adopted in Missouri's Constitution, 1945.⁸
5. The movement leading to establishment of the National Relations Office of the American Library Association in 1945.
6. Publication of *A National Plan for Public Library Service*, 1948.⁹
7. The Southeastern Library Survey, 1947-49.¹⁰
8. The Public Library Inquiry, 1947-50.¹¹
9. The creation of a Library Extension Section in the Arizona Department of Library and Archives, 1949.⁴
10. The New York State Library Aid Bill of 1950, providing \$1,175,000.¹²
11. Use of state aid for library salaries in Georgia, 1951.¹⁵
12. Consideration of federal-state demonstrations of library service.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

These events are not the only ones which indicate the development of state and federal agencies for public library service, but they are important, and typical of many others. Each is an outgrowth of long evolution. Taken as a whole, they represent a phase of libraries' share in "the American explosion." Compared to the increased tempo of American life, the library explosion is subdued—a bit of fireworks

instead of atomic. It does represent an increasing vigor, an enlarging concept of library service, and development within the profession of a willingness to accept responsibility for controlling its own destiny.

It should be noted, also, that these events do not meet with universal favor within the library profession. There have been conflicts within the A.L.A. and within state library associations over the establishment of policies and their implementation. Many librarians do not perceive the trends, or disapprove the goals. Others are too concerned with individual problems to participate actively in larger movements. However, there is an increasing sense of direction, a gain in the skills necessary for attacking problems, and above all an increasing number of librarians working as a group for effective growth.

Of the examples of development of state and federal library agencies, some represent actions by library associations; some, moves by state governments; and some, undertakings of the federal government. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and indeed bear important relation to each other.

The official actions of the A.L.A. during the last twenty years are the easiest to recognize as forming a single pattern. They did not occur spontaneously; instead, they represent a stage in library thinking and library history. They are a logical outgrowth of the needs and desires which led to the founding of the American Library Association in 1876. The urge for librarians to associate themselves in considering mutual problems leads to working together to achieve mutual goals. Combining in a national organization promotes this nationally.

The establishment of the National Relations Office was part of the same movement which earlier had led to setting up the Service to Libraries Section in the Office of Education, and which had brought support of federal aid to education, including library service. The same movement produced planning on both a state and national scale by the national association; although in the final analysis that body could gain results only by pressure and persuasion.

This activity, as a function of the American Library Association, grew out of the lack of adequate governmental facilities for planning and leadership in the public library movement. The relative weakness of state and federal library extension agencies, when compared to the strength of the larger public libraries, coupled with the tradition of local autonomy, had left a void which could be filled only by a national association.

State and National Extension

It may follow that, as the governmental agencies grow stronger, they will do more and more in determining directions and thus tie the staff and line functions closer together. There is some evidence of this in the stronger state units today. However, if the historical pattern prevails, it will be a long time before all state agencies can assume such responsibility, and even longer before the federal organizations can do so. The greatest hope for early progress lies in the factors mentioned in Turck's "American Explosion."

An interesting variation of association planning is found in the Southeastern Library Survey, which was a cooperative effort by agencies of the federal government, the states, and state and regional library associations. Other examples have occurred in the Pacific Northwest and the Mountain Plains regions.

In the sixty years required to establish state library extension agencies, from Massachusetts to Arizona, their growth has been uneven and sporadic. Some older agencies have increased in vigor and influence. Some lately established ones have surpassed their forerunners in amount of appropriations, in strength of organization, and in influence upon state library development. Others, both old and new, have not been able to exert the influence or to provide the services now considered incident to state responsibility.

In the sixty years the pattern of state library service has changed from concern primarily with traveling libraries, meager supplements of local book funds, and aid in organizing libraries, to assistance in selecting librarians, establishing standards, demonstrating library service, and financial aid in making it adequate, and even to establishing regional centers as advocated in the *National Plan for Public Library Service*, or providing direct service where local resources are inadequate. At the same time the scope of public library activity itself has broadened from collecting and preserving books to organizing and presenting knowledge. Salesmanship has entered, work with groups is advancing, and the library is becoming more nearly an integral part of everyday community life.

The broadened concept of library service, with acceptance of the enlarged concept of state responsibility, has led to action by the states. The Missouri constitution, adopted in 1945,¹⁷ declared it to be a policy to promote the establishment and development of free public libraries and to provide for their support. Other states have had similar provisions written into their basic library law during the last

decade. Arizona was the last to establish a library extension agency, this in 1949,¹¹ but it provided no funds for the program.

During the past seven years there have been a number of changes in the line of control for the state library agencies. In 1945 there were fourteen independent commissions, twenty-two units under state libraries (six of which were under state departments of education), nine directly under state departments of education, and two under other bodies.¹⁸ By 1952 there were twelve state library agencies under state departments of education, twenty under independent commissions, and sixteen as parts of state libraries.¹⁹ If there is any significance in this shifting of control, other than an indication of concern for state responsibility in public library development, it seems to lie in awareness of the difference between library service to a state government and library extension.

The implementation of state policies for library extension does not testify so much to the establishment of policy as to the determination to carry it out. Helen Ridgway, writing in the *Municipal Yearbook* for 1951,¹² made an effective summary of the trend. She reported that for two year periods embracing 1950 there were material additions to state aid for public libraries in seventeen of the commonwealths, and that in nineteen others extension agencies were given increases for work allied to that ordinarily financed by state appropriations. New York through a new law added over \$1,000,000 for 1950, bringing its total to \$1,175,000. North Carolina assigned over \$160,000 new money in an aggregate of \$768,000, providing \$550,000 to help speed and equalize public library service. Georgia raised its 1949-51 grant for rural libraries from \$450,000 to \$700,000. Missouri added \$150,000 for 1949-51, reaching all told \$672,000, which embraced over \$400,000 to assist city, county, and regional libraries. Louisiana increased its appropriation for 1948-50 by \$100,000 to a total of \$450,000, of which more than half went for demonstrations in parishes.

Her statement points out several interesting facets. First, four of the five state agencies mentioned received state aid appropriations in excess of the \$500,000 in Michigan's 1938 appropriation, which was noted as a landmark. Second, three of the five agencies were in the "impoverished" South, which had been considered too poor to support adequate library service. Third, the amount of increase ranged from \$100,000 to over \$1,000,000; and this increase, if viewed over a period of ten years, is significant. In the three southern states the appropria-

State and National Extension

tions for state extension agencies exceeded the total 1941 public library expenditures in those states, being approximately double in Georgia and North Carolina.²⁰ Fourth, all three types of organization were represented.¹³ Two were under independent commissions, two under state departments of education, and one a part of the state library. Fifth, each of the programs aimed at the development of larger units of service, whether municipal, county, or regional. Although the small community library is still widely represented, evidence indicates that it is passing from the scene.

At the federal level, the pattern has been different. When viewed in historical perspective, however, it appears likely that the federal government will assume an increasing responsibility for the promotion and encouragement, if not the provision, of nationwide public library service.

Before the establishment of a federal service to libraries most federal library assistance was either indirect, i.e., aimed at a specific objective in which libraries were included by coincidence, or consisted in exempting libraries from the provisions of certain federal statutes. Two important exceptions are the sale of Library of Congress catalog cards and the furnishing of depository libraries for federal publications. In 1938 these federal services were adequately summarized by C. B. Joeckel for the Advisory Committee on Education in *Staff Study No. 11*.⁶

During the previous year Congress had supplied an initial appropriation to the Library Service Division of the Office of Education, for the purpose of "making surveys, studies, investigations, and reports regarding public, school, college, university, and other libraries; fostering coordination of public and school library service; coordinating library service on the national level with other forms of adult education; developing library participation in Federal projects; fostering Nation-wide coordination of research materials among the more scholarly libraries, inter-State library cooperation, and the development of public, school, and other library service throughout the country."²¹

The high promise of this statement of objectives was then and has continued to be offset by meager appropriations. The division, now a section, has maintained a skeleton organization, limited by lack of funds primarily to studies, investigations, and reports, and to some of the coordinating functions mentioned. It has served as a liaison

between libraries and various federal agencies in matters of surplus property and priorities and allocations of building materials.

However, this is not the entire story. The Service to Libraries Section has and is exerting an important influence in state library extension. Through cooperation with the Library Extension Division of the American Library Association, through national conferences of state library agencies, and through the transmission of information concerning state plans for library extension, as well as statistical information, it plays an important role at the state level. The importance of this is often entirely overlooked by observers, and even by participants in the conferences and by recipients of the benefits.

At this point it becomes necessary to consider the Library Demonstration Bill,^{11, 14-16} and its successors, in the light of the historical framework and with reference to federal interest in library extension and development. This bill, first introduced in the 79th Congress, has been favorably reported by every committee to which it has been referred; has been passed once by the Senate, and failed by only three votes in the House of the 81st Congress.¹⁶ Nevertheless, up to now it has failed to pass.

Any study of federal relations in the extension and development of public library service must assess the importance of this bill and its place in the American pattern of intergovernmental relationships. Garceau²² intimates that any program of federal aid is premature from the standpoint of state agencies, but further states that "The use of Federal monies is justified as a convenient way to give intelligent direction to the movement. . . ." He sees the Demonstration Bill and its successors not as an attempt to meet this need, but as an entering wedge for full-fledged federal aid.

The debate on the floor of the House¹⁶ indicates that enough congressmen shared his views to defeat the measure the only time it reached a vote. However, the fact that within five years the proposal gained almost enough support to succeed, suggests that some program conforming to the functions outlined in the original appropriation for the Library Service Division can become an expression of national policy.

In summary, it appears that there is a definite tendency for state library extension agencies to increase in strength, to enlarge the scope of their operations, to participate more directly in library service to the public, and to assume planning and promotional functions for

State and National Extension

statewide public library service. The federal government, following the historical pattern, is in an earlier stage of development in its relation to public library service. Its present roles seem to be those of research, and of liaison between state library agencies and the federal government, with a view to serving as a clearinghouse for library programming. However, the effort behind the Library Services Bills could enlarge the part of the federal government in a much shorter time than the sixty years which were required to establish state extension agencies.

References

1. Turck, F. B.: The American Explosion. *Scientific Monthly*, 75:187-191, Sept. 1952.
2. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1949, Vol. 14, p. 23.
3. American Library Association. Library Extension Board: *The State Library Agency, Its Functions and Organization*. Ed. 5. Chicago, The Association, 1945, p. 28.
4. Ridgway, Helen A.: Public Libraries, Developments in 1949, in *Municipal Yearbook, 1950*. Chicago, International City Managers' Association, 1950, pp. 481-485.
5. Merrill, Julia W.: Public Libraries, in *Municipal Yearbook, 1938*. Chicago, International City Managers' Association, 1938, pp. 125-128.
6. Joeckel, C. B.: *Library Service*. (Advisory Committee on Education. Staff Study No. 11) Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938.
7. Merrill, Julia W.: Public Libraries, in *Municipal Yearbook, 1939*. Chicago, International City Managers' Association, 1939, pp. 103-106.
8. Merrill, Julia W.: Public Libraries, Developments in 1945, in *Municipal Yearbook, 1946*. Chicago, International City Managers' Association, 1946, pp. 486-490.
9. American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Planning: *A National Plan for Public Library Service*. (Planning for Libraries No. 3) Chicago, The Association, 1948.
10. Southeastern States Cooperative Survey: *Libraries of the Southeast*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1949.
11. Leigh, R. D.: *The Public Library in the United States; General Report of the Public Library Inquiry*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1950.
12. Ridgway, Helen A.: Public Libraries, Developments in 1950, in *Municipal Yearbook, 1951*. Chicago, International City Managers' Association, 1951, pp. 469-476.
13. Kee, S. Janice: Public Libraries, Developments in 1951, in *Municipal Yearbook, 1952*. Chicago, International City Managers' Association, 1952, pp. 488-495.
14. U.S. Congress. House: *Hearings Before Subcommittee No. 1 of the Committee on Education and Labor . . . on H.R. 2465; A Bill to Provide for the Demon-*

PAUL HOWARD

stration of Public-Library Service in Areas Without Such Service or With Inadequate Library Facilities. 80th Congress, 1st Session. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948.

15. U.S. Congress. Senate: *Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare . . . on S48; A Bill to Provide for the Demonstration of Public-Library Service in Areas Without Such Service or With Inadequate Library Facilities.* 80th Congress, 1st Session. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.

16. U.S. Congress: *Congressional Record*, Vol. 96, pt. 3, March 9, 1950. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950, pp. 3119-3142.

17. Missouri Constitution, adopted Feb. 27, 1945. Article IX, Section 10.

18. American Library Association. Library Extension Board: *The State Library Agency, Its Functions and Organization.* Ed. 5. Chicago, The Association, 1945.

19. Unpublished information in U.S. Office of Education, Service to Libraries Section. Sept. 1952.

20. American Library Association: *The Equal Chance, Books Help to Make It.* Chicago, The Association, 1943, pp. 26-29.

21. *United States Statutes at Large.* Vol. 50, pt. 1. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1937, pp. 609-610.

22. Garceau, O.: *The Public Library in the Political Process.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1949, p. 238.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

American Library Association. Library Extension Board: *State Grants to Public Libraries.* Rev. ed. Chicago, The Association, 1942.

Asheim, L. E., ed.: *A Forum on the Public Library Inquiry; Conference at the University of Chicago Graduate Library School, August 8-13, 1950.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1950.

Book of the States. Chicago, Council of State Governments, Vol. 6, 1945, to date.

National Association of State Libraries. Committee on Organization of State Library Agencies in the Structure of State Government: *Tentative Report of the Committee.* . . . Columbus, Ohio, The Association, 1950.

Washington. University. Bureau of Government Research: *The Regional Library and the State Aid Program.* Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1951.