



# Legal Responsibility for Public Library Development

UNITED STATES

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TODAY IN THESE UNITED STATES the maintenance of library services is one of a vast array of public functions which emanate from each state. It is clear that the state has not only authorized or required the establishment of local libraries for the dissemination of information, but that it has also accepted some responsibility for providing aid to these units. The states' purposes have been to stimulate the establishment of these services in areas which have been hesitant to act and to equalize the widely varying abilities to develop and utilize such services. The efforts of the state to advise and counsel, to stimulate by example, to share in the costs of establishing and operating libraries is but a reflection of the trend among states to step up their participation in functions which loom increasingly large in the lives of the people today.

There is no doubt that information is a prime factor in modern living. Every facet of our lives reflects this need. Scientific development, mechanization, improved communications, the shortening of the time-distance relationship, and increased leisure time are some of the factors which have put phenomenal pressure on the media of information, but the trail breaker, the pioneer, the advocate, are still essential in our complex economy to point up and lead the way to the broader horizons which only the discerning see ahead. The state as the constitutional source of the authority to provide public services essential to its people must and has accepted the responsibility to assure information through the medium of the institutions of learning and for a broader segment of its constituents through the medium of the

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public library. Over the years a veritable parade of phases of the learning process have first gained recognition and then assistance from the state. The elementary school, the high school, teacher training, vocational agriculture, audio-visual instruction, vocational rehabilitation, apprenticeship training, post high school education, as well as library services are among the elements of the learning process for which the state now accepts some responsibility.

Today with the heavy demands upon all levels of government for more and expanded services, it is necessary that the functions of government be both efficient and effective. Here again, the state with its corps of experts, its statewide contacts with problems and its opportunity to promote minimum standards brings to the governing process a level of performance which cannot be attained without over-all direction. In this era of performance budgets, work load data, and intricate accounting processes the guidance of the state plays an increasingly important function. This is as essential in the operation of public library services as in the operation of the school system, our far-flung welfare institutions, our highway system, or our law enforcement processes. The soft, kind hand of persuasion, counseling, visitation, all utilized by the strongest regulatory agencies, is the stock in trade of the state level agency.

The pattern of government in the United States is a dynamic thing which has resulted not only in ever-increasing activity on the part of government but also in the constant shifting of functions from one level of government to another. Yet underlying these evidences of change are certain principles which have endured for nearly two centuries. These principles have placed the function of maintaining libraries squarely within the purview of the state.

Every schoolboy knows that in these United States we live under a federal government, a state government, and a multitude of general and special purpose local governments. In 1787 when a group of conscientious citizens from the confederation of the thirteen coastal states assembled at Philadelphia to patch up the faltering Articles of Confederation, they soon discovered that they could not fulfill their charge. In one of man's greatest efforts to chart the path of future action they formulated a new plan known as the Constitution of the United States. It was reluctantly accepted by the thirteen independent units but it gave life to the system of government.

Basically, those who assembled in Philadelphia conceded that the thirteen independent states could not long endure as a unit unless

they granted specific powers to the national government. They, therefore, set forth in Article I, section 8 of the Constitution a series of functions which were to be assigned to the national government. When the proposed Constitution was submitted to the thirteen states, the suspicion of a strong national government caused them to insist on a provision clarifying the scope of the federal power. Consequently the tenth amendment was added to the Constitution providing that "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Thus, the federal government became a government of delegated powers with the authority to do only those things expressly assigned to it by the Constitution.

It is clear that in the spectrum of governmental functions known to the citizen of 1787 the scope of the powers granted to the federal government was limited indeed, while the powers remaining to the states loomed large. It is equally clear that a whole mass of factors shrunk the boundaries of our nation, made neighbors of Bostonians and Californians, and so blurred the lines dividing the states that the powers so carefully assigned to the federal government by Article I of the Constitution grew out of all proportion to the original intent.

The states became the reservoir of all the remaining powers. No city, no town, no public school, no publicly-supported library exists in this nation, except as the state authorizes it in broad or specific terms. It is the state which is the fountain of all local authority and it is the state which likewise may withdraw the authority it grants. The authority granted by the state ranges from the virtual autonomy of home rule granted cities in some states to the carefully restricted and regulated authority in other fields, such as health, welfare, and education.

The rise of the federal government as the dominant feature of our political life was a phenomenon of the post Civil War period. It is less well known or accepted that the state, too, has broadened its scope both in the extensiveness and intensiveness with which it operates. Phases of government concern unknown at the turn of the century have expanded into complex agencies of state government. As the twentieth century was born the motor vehicle was virtually unknown. Today each state maintains a vast machinery to license vehicles, to assess taxes and fees on them, to tax their fuel, to build roads on which to drive them faster and to restrain people from using them at the speeds of which the motor vehicles are capable. Institu-

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tions of learning from the preschool center to the graduate level, have mushroomed. A complex system for assisting those citizens who have suffered adversity has arisen beside another complex of agencies established to reduce the probability of, if not prevent, such adversity.

Government which once was looked upon as a device to regulate and restrain has come to be an agency to advise, guide, and stimulate the people toward more and broader activities. Reluctant as some may be to accept the broadening scope of government on all levels, few exercise any effort to resist it. Thus, for example, a quarter of a century after the inauguration of the broad program of social security, we no longer find the resistance of the early 1930's to such activity on the part of government but rather a tendency to suggest proposals for even broader and deeper coverage.

Parallel with the evolution of the role of the various levels of government in the political scheme of our nation was the growth of education as a public function. It is customary to cite an act of 1647 of the General Court of Massachusetts as an early effort on the part of government to assure the rudiments of learning to all the children. The Ordinance of 1787 provided a major impetus for public education in the Middle West, the opening up of the vast area west of the Alleghenies provided the opportunity for its expansion.

In a large part of our land, the unit of public school administration was the local school district which became a social institution of substantial import. It is not surprising then that public library service early developed within the school district structure. In 1835, New York began the movement by enacting the first state law providing for tax-supported free library service. It permitted the school district to tax for the support of a school district library to be used not necessarily by the students but by all the public and, in fact, some of the libraries were not even located in school buildings. Other states followed the example and by the 1870's nineteen states had enacted similar enabling legislation for the establishment of public libraries. Almost immediately grants-in-aid from the state to the local school district were provided on a matching basis for the purchase of books. While this created an impetus for the expansion in the number of such libraries the school district library was but a passing phase in the struggle to find a unit of operation which had the resources and motivation to be effective. Only in the case of Michigan which early provided a constitutional guarantee of some state support did the school district library continue to flourish.

Instead, the establishment and operation of public libraries became recognized as a function of general units of government. While isolated examples of publicly-supported libraries antedate 1848, it was in that year that the legislature of Massachusetts gave Boston permission to levy a tax in support of a public library. In 1849 New Hampshire passed a general law permitting towns to tax for the support of libraries, and in 1851 Massachusetts followed with a general law providing tax levies for such purposes. The remaining New England states quickly followed so that by 1867 all of that corner of the nation permitted the public support of library services. Incidentally the enactments varied greatly state to state in degree of detail and specificity and the nature of the legislation has had a major influence on the flexibility for the organizational pattern in recent years. As concepts of organization have changed to adjust to changing conditions the legislative hurdles confronting the states in meeting these changing concepts have been in direct ratio to the detail their basic law contained.

As the concept of public support of libraries moved across the nation, their unit of operation reflected the pattern of local government. Thus, the county became the natural governmental agency to operate libraries in the south. As the town library failed in many places because of inadequate support attention turned to the county in other states, and now the full potential value of the county as a unit of library administration is being thoroughly explored.

The evolution of government in the formative period of public libraries also influenced library organization. It was the period in which the commission in government was strong. New functions were frequently assigned to independent boards, and the prevailing library organization reflected this trend. It is conceivable that had the library enjoyed its greatest development coincidentally with the era of city manager development, a different type of public library organization might have resulted.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of both encouragement and discouragement. The encouragement lay in the communities with sufficient resources, public and private, to build their library services. The discouragement lay in the struggle the communities of little resources had to maintain libraries of any kind, to say nothing of enriching their services, and in the substantial areas with sparse population which had no services at all. Also, the rise of home rule in the last quarter of the nineteenth century had some

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effect on the freedom of action of municipalities and therefore on libraries. Home rule, however, operates only in some states and only in certain types of local units within those states. The doubts as to the scope of state controls in home rule municipalities may wither away as the unit of administration extends beyond the confines of the city.

As the nineteenth century neared its end recognition of the need to provide library services to all the people including those in the sparsely populated and poorer areas forced the states into the position of taking a more aggressive attitude. The state governments began to take an active part in the stimulation, guidance, and counseling of local library organizations. It was freely predicted that ultimately every state, of necessity, must create such a state library agency. Library service began to be recognized, not as an adjunct of the educational system, but as a parallel independent function.

Massachusetts in 1890 established a Board of Library Commissioners, the first state department responsible for public library administration. New Hampshire followed in 1891 with the State Board of Library Commissioners. In the same year New York enacted a law designating the regents of the university as the state library agency. The Connecticut law of 1893 established the Public Library Committee and in 1894 Vermont became the fourth New England state to create a division of the government concerned with library services.

In 1895, the first midwestern library agency, the Free Library Commission of Wisconsin, was established. The Ohio State Board of Library Commissioners was set up in 1896 and in 1897 Georgia became the first southern state to create a state library commission. By 1904, twenty-two states had created departments authorized to assist public libraries. Of these seven gave direct aids only, eleven provided traveling libraries, three provided both types of service, while two were advisory only. By 1910 more than two-thirds of the states had created a state level library extension service.

The state library agency as it evolved in the seventy years since its inauguration has come to perform three broad functions. First, by reason of the permissive nature of local libraries' services in most jurisdictions the state agency has been called upon to assume the leadership in stimulating activity by consultation, visitation, planning, research, in-service training, and coordination. This basic function is most widespread.

Its second function, regulation, arises out of the state's responsibility

for the efficient and effective operation of the function it has permitted, and must of necessity be statewide. The state sets up the basic permissive organizational plan for the local units established within its law. It requires reports, may set standards for personnel and very probably requires that library facilities as public buildings conform to the health and safety standards required of all such structures.

Third, the state level organization may also perform certain line or operational functions. The most obvious examples are provision for book service to individuals in isolated areas via bookmobiles or mail service, supplementary services of materials to public libraries in the state, and the operation of pilot or demonstration libraries in specific places. It is assumed that as the coverage and the quality of the local services improve, this function will decrease.

State level library activity is usually administered by a nonpartisan independent board. In roughly half the states the same board operates the state library and the extension services, although some doubts exist that the two functions should be combined. In a minority, though a substantial one, of the states public library extension is a function of the state educational unit either with or without inclusion of the state library.

The modern phase of state-local relations in the administration of library services developed along two lines roughly emanating from the east and west respectively. Both were predicated on a state agency specifically designated to administer the program of state participation in library services.

In the east the state library commission developed to provide assistance to the locality in the form of grants-in-aid or direct contributions of books to stimulate the establishment of local libraries or to help build them. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, as first organized, provided up to \$100 in books to any town creating a library under state law if the town set up an appropriation and suitable provision for the care and distribution of the books. The authority to advise local libraries on administration was confined to those cases where advice was solicited.

New Hampshire's State Board of Library Commissioners could grant \$100 worth of books to any town for the establishment of libraries, loan books to local libraries, and provide advice on request. New York's law established a system of grants-in-aid to those local libraries which could qualify. The Connecticut law of 1893 provided a grant-in-aid program by which the state would

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match the local book fund up to \$200 upon establishment and \$100 annually thereafter.

The Free Library Commission of Wisconsin plan dropped the grant-in-aid feature of the previously created agencies and placed the emphasis on field work and visitation, with a traveling library as an important but subordinate function. In 1896 the Ohio State Board of Library Commissioners was created along the same lines.

Today each state has an identifiable state level agency which has some responsibilities in aiding local library organizations. Most common are the functions of advising and counseling local units. Frequent also are the operation of traveling libraries or loan services for areas not served adequately or for individuals whose needs cannot be met locally. Less frequent are the programs of state grants-in-aid whereby the state agency administers a fund to supplement local resources. These grants-in-aid are usually contingent on local expenditures and on meeting minimum standards set by the state. Notable, too, are provisions which authorize the state agency to administer existing or anticipated funds from federal and private sources. It must also be recognized that the state agency is to a varying degree a watchdog for library legislation. Located near the legislature and cognizant of the library problems it is in a position to at least report the measures affecting library services if not to actively participate in their disposition.

While the original aids to local library services were to a large degree geared to the need for stimulating the creation and maintenance of the traditional units of library service, in recent years the aids have been more specifically directed to the promotion of library services for areas which are large enough to possess both the resources to support good library services and the population to utilize the services effectively. County and regional libraries often created as demonstration projects and augmented by bookmobiles are among the devices rising in prominence. Grants-in-aid in substantial amounts and geared as an incentive to establishing broader, more effective, operating units appear to be the trend. In the 1930's and 1940's legislation intended to develop the larger units of library service administration through state grants-in-aid was enacted in such widely separated states as Arkansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Virginia. These programs sought to spread library services to people without them, encourage effective units of administration, stimulate local effort and strengthen



existing libraries. The states, however, trod with a light foot, emphasizing advice, counseling, and the insistence on minimum standards as to size of the unit, the amount of local effort, the quality of personnel, and book selection.

Although the current movement for a state grant-in-aid program of substantial scope is roughly a quarter of a century old, and efforts have been made in various states to enact such legislation, the present pressure on the legislature to keep all state appropriations down has made it exceptionally difficult to initiate new programs, especially when they are in part intended to stimulate local expenditures and require a substantial outlay in themselves. The lifting of local and state financial participation to a level adequate to provide the type of service desired in the face of other urgent demands for public funds is not easily accomplished today. Momentarily, federal grants-in-aid have softened the pressure, but the foreseeable future promises no relief from the competition for funds.

Modern grant-in-aid programs for libraries seem to follow three principles. The first principle is illustrated by a flat aid to all libraries granted because the state has a stake in better library service, because it is expedient to continue aid to all who have received it previously, and because it gains support for the aid program. The second principle is demonstrated by an incentive aid based on the effort made by the locality. The third principle is illustrated by the most current program of gearing the aids to the stimulation of more adequate units of administration. This three-pronged attack of providing basic aid, equalizing opportunity, and stimulating effectiveness is not peculiar to the library system, but is a tried and true device which has permeated many grant-in-aid programs essential to modern living.

The evolution of the pattern of state library services is clear. It began in a period when books were scarce, magazine circulation was limited, daily newspapers were confined to urban areas, and distance was a mighty barrier. Initially it provided very limited supplementation of local book funds or supplies on one hand, or the distribution of package libraries to areas with limited or no services on the other hand. It guided the communities in the rudiments of library organization, often only when the community, in desperation, requested help. It got its start in an era when libraries collected and preserved books. As one of the contemporaries said of another service which was being initiated at about the same time "it is to provide something where there is nothing now provided."

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In the short span of seventy years the emphasis has shifted from assuring that the minimum services were available in those areas choosing to act, to promoting effective organization and operation. All of the factors of modern society have worked to wipe out the differences in the cultural needs of the urban and rural inhabitants. Fewer people remained on the farm, fewer farmers worked full time at tilling the soil, and more people came to realize that the desire to know was not limited by locality. The same concept, which caused one institution of higher learning to claim that the boundaries of the state determine the campus of the university, caused the state library service agencies to look toward statewide services.

In anticipation of more widespread acceptance of the need for allocating more local and state funds to library services the state library service agency began to emphasize its leadership function in showing the way to economical, effective library organization and operation by establishing standards of good library organization, certification of librarians, placement and referral services, and demonstration of how a library unit could be made most effective. This resulted inevitably in the move toward more adequate units of administration, the stimulation of improved organization by grants-in-aid of considerable size, and in the important function of planning a statewide library program.

In a little more than a century the emphasis switched from permitting the creation of libraries on the level of government closest to the people, to laws permitting or even requiring county and multiple county or regional units. Even before 1950 Maryland and Ohio had prohibited the establishment of any new library units which were less than countywide, a reflection of a trend which has also affected such services as education, highways, welfare, law enforcement, and health.

Within this framework of a plan for assuring adequate local services the state has expanded its direct services. Not only has it taken an active part in advising those areas moving toward more effective units, and providing materials to enhance the services of local units as the library's library, but it has strengthened its services to the individual through loaning materials, reference facilities, and specialized collections such as law libraries, historical collections, and materials for the handicapped.

By 1960 the implementation of the pattern of library services as a state function is becoming a reality, the path is increasingly apparent.

The critical problem is to find the financial resources to reach the new goals. It seems clear that the next decade or two will see a major effort to convince the legislatures that library services as well as education, welfare, highways, health, and other functions deserve substantial financial support.

In many states the legislative intent in the enactment of substantial pieces of legislation is set forth in an introductory provision sometimes called a preamble. This is especially true when a state initiates a new program or makes a complete revision of an existing program. Such statements stand as a public declaration of the scope and direction which the legislature contemplated that the function take. Some clue to the acceptance of library services as a state responsibility may be obtained from representative provisions of the library laws of the states.

The Vermont act of 1937 relating to the powers of the free public library commission provides in part: "The free public library commission is authorized to develop and adopt plans to provide more adequate library service for all residents of the state, giving special consideration to some system of regional libraries or other agencies whereby better library service than now possible can be given to the people of the state especially to rural schools and farm homes."

The preamble of the 1941 North Carolina law relating to state aids for public libraries provided:

Whereas, it is provided in the Constitution of the state that 'religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and happiness of mankind schools and means of education shall forever be encouraged,' and that 'the people have the right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the state to guard and maintain that right'; and

Whereas, the establishment and maintenance of public libraries is an integral part of the educational program of a great state; now, therefore,

The general assembly of North Carolina do enact:

Sec. 1. It is hereby declared the policy of the state to promote the establishment and development of public library service throughout all sections of the state.

Perhaps the most recent statement of legislative policy which comes to grips with the issue of the state's responsibility for library service is contained in the 1959 California addition to the education code which states:

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27000. The legislature hereby declares that it is in the interest of the people and of the state that there be a general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence through the establishment and operation of public libraries. Such diffusion is a matter of general concern inasmuch as it is the duty of the state to provide encouragement to the voluntary lifelong learning of the people of the state.

The legislature further declares that the public library is a supplement to the formal system of free public education, and a source of information and inspiration to persons of all ages, and a resource for continuing education and re-education beyond the years of formal education, and as such deserves adequate financial support from government at all levels.

Although the mass of the law relating to libraries is contained in the statutes and administrative rules of the several states, no less than fifteen state constitutions make reference to some aspect of library services. Ten of the states appear to confine their constitutional provisions to the state level library and the provisions in two of the five remaining states relate to the use of certain funds by schools or libraries. The remaining three, however, make express provision for libraries. The Massachusetts Constitution in Amendment XLVI permits an appropriation by any city or town for a free public library and the Michigan Constitution in Article XI authorizes the legislature to provide for the establishment of at least one library in each township and city and assigns all fines in counties, cities, and townships for breaches of penal laws exclusively to the support of such libraries.

By far the most comprehensive constitutional declaration regarding the responsibility of the state toward public libraries is contained in the Missouri Constitution adopted by the people of that state in 1945. Article IX, section 10, provides: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to promote the establishment and development of free public libraries and to accept the obligation of their support by the state and its subdivisions and municipalities in such manner as may be provided by law. When any such subdivision or municipality supports a free library, the general assembly shall grant aid to such library in such manner and in such amounts as may be provided by law."

While there never was any real doubt as to the ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of public library services, it took the requirements of twentieth century living to force the state into a position of leadership in the development of effective statewide service. The need for vocational and avocational information by people of all ages

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in all strata of society has led to planning for statewide coverage, and the competition for public funds necessitated that the plans give real promise of effective and efficient operation. While that promise has not yet been fulfilled, the position of the state as the generator of the energy to carry forth the program has been so clearly established that the path to fulfillment seems reasonably apparent. Toil and courage are now the essential ingredients to success.

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## CANADA

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CANADIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES are conceived in provincial statutes and brought forth in municipal by-laws. The central government in Ottawa is not yet involved in their propagation

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or support; neither is federal aid, for the moment, of primary importance, and in these remarks there will be no further reference to the national government.

Why should the provincial authority be concerned with public libraries? Informed opinion has held for many years that the public library is an integral part of the formal process of learning. Our national constitution places the responsibility for education squarely on the provinces, and if public libraries are educational institutions then they are a part of this responsibility. This has been eminently satisfactory, up to a point. What the originators of the idea did not foresee was the phenomenal growth of the provincial education systems and the fantastically high percentage of the provincial budgets which must be allocated to them. The welfare of public libraries became in most provinces a mere afterthought.

Fortunately, despite their vicissitudes, the libraries have managed to achieve their own legislation. Nine of the ten provinces now have public libraries acts, the exception being the province of Prince Edward Island, which places libraries under the Department of Education Act. This was not true even ten years ago, and its importance cannot be over-emphasized. Naturally, the legislation varies from province to province, some of it excessively detailed, some extremely broad and sweeping. Experience has revealed fundamental errors, such as the specification of amounts of money, despite our inflationary economy, and the detailing of so-called library standards which in fact are subject to fundamental changes. While the argument goes on over specific versus general provisions, it is reassuring to remind ourselves that library legislation is an accomplished fact nine times over.

Historically, the development of library legislation and public library service in Canada covers little more than a century, yet it is possible to see patterns evolving which undoubtedly will affect future measures. For one thing, it is generally believed advantageous to set up a governing agency for public library affairs and to attach that agency to one of the departments of government, usually the department of education because of the conviction that the library is primarily an educational institution. A few provinces, perhaps more enlightened, have ignored the dogma and seconded their library agencies to the provincial secretary or to a ministry devoted to cultural activities, or have made the administration of the act a variable responsibility under any specifically designated member of the provincial

cabinet. The important point is that the agency, whatever its particular niche and name, does exist and has specific powers and duties.

Chief among these powers and duties has been the responsibility to promote, by counsel and encouragement, the establishment and extension of public library facilities. On this point the provinces agree. Theoretically, once a library exists, the municipal administration should be able to maintain and develop the service without "outside" help. Unfortunately, perhaps, this is an outmoded and indeed unworkable premise. Public agencies are interdependent, and the burden of taxation, the chief source of public expenditure, must be shared. This, at any rate, is the current mode of thinking, which is to say that we behave as if all levels of authority and all governmental agencies are part of a successfully integrated whole. Just how far this is true does not concern us here. Public libraries have to be started, maintained and extended, and if the individual community cannot bear the whole cost, by all means let it call upon its senior government.

Financially, then, the government, because of its existing involvement with municipalities, is already in spirit, and in fact in law, committed to assisting public libraries. For obvious and practical reasons, the provision of the bulk of the library appropriation must be left to the local authority. The government enters the scene at the point where grants become necessary to elevate the standard of library service above the mere subsistence level. Provincial grants present a tricky problem, and a nice balance between nominal assistance and all-out subsidy is the desirable goal. There is usually a considerable difference in the degree of need from one library to another, and it behooves the government to study carefully the general situation and to develop a policy and a formula which will come near to providing a fair and efficient distribution of funds.

In Canada, full realization of the need has been a long time in flowering, and the assumption of responsibility for financial aid to public libraries is still a new concept for some of our provincial governments. One of the practical functions of the provincial public library agency is therefore to interpret the needs of individual libraries to the provincial government in terms which will result in tangible assistance. This is no easy task, first because of the number of agencies competing for a limited number of dollars, and second, because along with the quest for money must go a campaign to promote realization of the value of public library service to the community and to the

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province. These things the agency must do and, curiously, it often has a third problem—to convince small, long-established but unprogressive libraries that the government desires sincerely to help, with a minimum of interference in local autonomy.

The provinces also agree on the kinds of organization best suited to public library service. The details of these and their interrelations have been described many times elsewhere. The important thing is the virtual unanimity of conviction among governments that public library service can be reduced to three essential and well-defined units—the community or association library, the county or regional library, and the municipal public library. From this realization it is but a step to the creation of legislation designed to form and strengthen the organizations and to insure their efficient operation.

Up to the present stage of its development, provincial aid to public libraries has demonstrated the need for provincial legislation. In other words, to be effective it must be fitted within a formal pattern. It has already been said that we do not have agreement as to whether library legislation should be broad or detailed, but the provinces with the greatest experience tend to favor a fairly general act which provides for regulations to be made or abolished by order-in-council, without awaiting the pleasure of the legislature. As long as there is a responsible governmental authority to recommend such changes as circumstances require and to persuade the government that they are necessary, this kind of flexibility can be a distinct advantage.

Regulations are particularly valuable if provincial aid is to be considered as more than simply financial assistance. They are used to publish conditions governing the awarding of grants, but they can also specify: the qualifications for the certification of professional librarians; the conduct of short courses in library management; the establishment and administration of library schools; rules for cooperation between library boards, municipal councils, school boards, and the provincial agency, with respect to change and loan of books and agreements to contract for library service; encouragement and assistance to the provincial library association; and the mechanics of providing financial aid to students of librarianship.

Another point of agreement arises in the provision of a public library service by the government itself. Normally this takes two forms: parcel post service to individuals and boxed collections by freight to communities. In one province at least it has been further developed by the establishment of branch offices of the provincial



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public library agency, each branch looking after the small libraries in its immediate area and performing some of the functions of a regional library headquarters.

In a sparsely-populated country this kind of operation is likely to be needed for a long time to come. Fortunately the governments are aware of this and are prepared to continue to finance it, though its total cost may be greater than the combined grants to organized public libraries.

Briefly to conclude, it is evident that the governments of Canada's ten provinces have accepted the burden of legal responsibility for the development of public libraries, at the same time leaving individual communities accountable for their conduct and the bulk of their financial support. It is also apparent that assistance in the form of grants and other, less direct financial benefits will be the concern of the provinces alone for some time to come. The parentage of Canadian public libraries therefore abides in the cooperation between provincial and municipal authorities.

## SCANDINAVIA

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PERMISSIVE LEGISLATION followed later by mandatory legislation with state grants to persuade authorities to provide at least a minimum standard of service—some form of state inspection or advisory assistance, provision for the setting up of agencies for services which can be more economically provided nationally rather than locally, state assistance for cooperative schemes particularly those designed to help the smallest authorities and the national integration of all library resources—all these are particularly vital in countries whose populations are relatively small compared with their size. This condition applies to all the Scandinavian countries even Denmark and in all four, i.e., Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, trends in state aid have been with slight variations creating a pattern which is recognizably Scandinavian.

Not that developments have taken place in completely logical  

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stages. State grants in Norway date back to 1876 though the first public libraries act was not enacted until 1935. "County" libraries in the Scandinavian sense started operating the following year though it was not until 1947 that it was mandatory for a municipality to provide a library. The 1947 Act was later amended by that of 1955 and the present position that libraries must be publicly owned in order to receive a grant is unique in Scandinavian countries. The law also provides that the municipality must spend a minimum amount per head of population if it is to receive a state grant. If in a rural area or if it does not have a children's section it must also provide a school library and a small state grant is available for this purpose. State grants for public libraries in Norway are on a sliding scale, varying between 90 per cent where the local expenditure is between £50 and £100 to 50 per cent where the expenditure is £500 with a maximum grant of £500 to any one library or £1,000 to the libraries of a single municipality. State grants can have, therefore, little but psychological effects on the few large municipal library authorities but a very considerable effect on raising the standard of the smallest.

The weakness of the smallest authorities and the need for assistance in addition to local grants is recognized however by the payment of a state grant to a municipal authority of £1,250 if it acts as a central or "county" library. A further grant of £250 is payable if this central library operates a mobile library or book boat and additional grants may be given for reference collections, furniture for new libraries, school libraries, etc.

Where a "national service" is operated and grants are given it is necessary to set up some national agency for this purpose. In Norway this is the Norwegian Library Board which is a section of the Ministry for Church and Education. A director is in charge and acts as the minister's chief inspector. The State Inspectorate takes 2½ per cent of the total grants available for public libraries. This sum is used for special projects and for bibliographical work undertaken by the Libraries Agency.

The Libraries Agency is a company jointly owned by the state and the municipality which exists to provide services which can be run more economically by a single body than by a multitude of small units. It sells Norwegian books at a discount of 20 per cent and all books bought out of state grants must be bought from the Agency, it provides an economical book binding service, promotes the design, manufacture and sale of library equipment, classifies and services

books and provides one catalog card free for Norwegian books and sells additional cards at a small charge. Future developments will probably include a consultant service on library methods and the publication of book lists.

State aid to public libraries in Norway would be incomplete without reference to the part played by the Oslo University Library, the Library of the Technical University, Trondheim, and the Joint Library of the Industrial Research Centre, Blindern, Oslo, since there is much closer cooperation in the Scandinavian countries between public libraries and the scholarly libraries than is general elsewhere. The Oslo University Library is financed directly from the state in recognition of its role as a national institution whose duties include not only the loan of books to institutions and individuals throughout the country but also the preparation of a national bibliography and provision of a national information center for bibliographical queries. It maintains also a central union catalog of the books and periodicals in all the major libraries in the country. As Oslo is largely concerned with the arts and humanities the library of the Technical University, Trondheim, has become recognized as the national library in the sciences while the Joint Library of the Industrial Research Centre, Blindern, Oslo, supported by state funds and football pools provides a library for scientific and industrial research institutes and lends to many outside research workers.

This close integration of either a state library or a university library acting as such is common to Scandinavian countries who therefore receive indirect state aid from such sources. In Denmark, a decree of 1926 limited the scope of the Royal Library to the humanities while the University library undertook to specialize in science and medicine. The former among its other activities includes the publication of the list of the foreign acquisitions of the chief learned libraries and a bibliography of the Danish books in its collection. In Sweden, the Royal Library also cooperates in interlending and has been the center of Swedish bibliographical work. Since 1888 it has published an annual union catalog of foreign accessions in Swedish research libraries. The Bibliographical Institute established in 1953 as a department of the Royal Library is now responsible for the compilation and accessions catalog as well as the Swedish National Bibliography. Since 1958 the Institute distributes catalog cards for all Swedish publications to other libraries. In Finland, the library of the University of Hel-

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sinki acts as the national library. It lends to libraries and public institutions throughout the country. It also acts as a national information center for bibliographical queries.

State grants in Denmark have been in existence since 1882 though it was not until 1920 when the first libraries act was passed that they were stipulated by law. The second library act of 1950 has decreed that after 1960 parish libraries must be provided on the demand of 10 per cent or more of the electors and standards of service have been set up. Grants in Denmark, substantially increased in 1959, are more generous than in the other Scandinavian countries and are scaled from 80 per cent of the first £1,250 provided from local funds to 25 per cent of expenditures over £2,500. A library acting as a central library receives an additional grant of £1,000. Denmark is the only Scandinavian country which has not imposed any maximum grant.

State grants in Sweden date from the passing of the first Library Act in 1905. The second Act dates from 1930 and preparations are now being made for a revision. Grants are scaled very much as in Norway except that the maximum is higher. There are also grants to hospital libraries, the armed forces libraries, school library systems, merchant marine libraries, and Swedish libraries abroad.

In Finland state grants have been available since 1921 before the passing of the First Public Libraries Act of 1928. Grants usually equal the local grant with a maximum of about £250. Preparations for a new Act have been under consideration for some time. Finland is the only Scandinavian country where no additional grants are available for central or "county" libraries as development on these lines has yet not taken place.

State grants imply some form of inspection or observance of minimum standards. In Norway, Denmark, and Finland the library inspectorate is directly responsible to the minister of education who in these countries deals not only with schools but also other cultural activities. In Sweden the state inspectorate is not immediately responsible to the minister but is a division of the state school department. Arrangements for advising and inspecting vary in the different countries. In Norway, the county libraries use part-time library councillors who advise the local libraries. These are in addition to the state inspectors. In Denmark, the right of inspection is reserved to the library director and library inspectors, but the county libraries do a considerable amount of advisory work. In Sweden the county libraries

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are entrusted with inspection as well as the state inspectors. In Finland where there are as yet no county libraries the country is divided in seven districts each with a resident state inspector.

The general opinion of Scandinavian librarians would appear to be that library development would not have advanced as far as it has without state grants and new draft legislation in Sweden and Finland suggests that larger grants would be helpful. The help, it is suggested, is not only material but also psychological: it persuades authorities to contribute and also emphasizes the fact that the state considers the service sufficiently important to assist financially from state funds. A further point has been made that joint contributions from municipalities and the state help to produce financial stability and planned development. Except in Finland grants have assisted the provision of "county" services. Grants have helped also to provide national bibliographical and other assistance to libraries since it secures a source of income for providing at national level services which could not be economically operated by any but the largest libraries. Finally it has laid down minimum standards which can if necessary be raised as social, educational, and economic conditions require.

## NIGERIA

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THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA is divided into three regions, known as the Northern Region, the Eastern Region, and the Western Region; the federal capital of Lagos and the quasi-federal Trusteeship Territory of the Southern Cameroons. Eastern and Western Nigeria became self-governing in August 1957 and Northern Nigeria in March 1959.

In Nigeria the development of public libraries is of recent growth. The gradual conscious realization of the importance of library services in such a rapidly developing area is very much owed to the British Council, Unesco, and the West African Library Association. The West African Library Association is a direct result of the 1953 Unesco Ibadan Seminar on the "Development of Public Libraries in Africa."

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Recently, the Federal Library Advisory Committee of Nigeria was formed at the instance of the West African Library Association "to advise the Federal and Regional Governments and the Government of Southern Cameroons on library and bibliographical policy and problems."

In Nigeria today the following situation prevails: Northern Region—The Regional Government of the North has no legal responsibility for libraries. Its regional library service which was started in 1952 is under the aegis of the Education Department. The service is comparable to a county library system in Britain.

The regional library at Kaduna gives services freely to all local authorities' educational institutions, cultural associations, and individuals. It is financed as a division of the Education Department and in its 1958-59 budget, the sum of \$45,038 was provided for the service.

Western Region.—Like the Northern Region, the government has no legal responsibility for library development. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the regional library service in Western Nigeria. Its regional library service is now being planned.

At the moment, a lending service for adults and children has been started at Ibadan, the regional capital. There is also in operation a mobile library service to schools, a book box service to approved centers. It is hoped that in the near future, more mobile libraries will be provided for the service and a new regional library headquarters built.

Eastern Region.—In Eastern Nigeria, the permanence and development of its public library service has been assured by appropriate legislation. The control and direction of the service is vested in a state agency—the Eastern Region Library Board. The Board was established by an ordinance—*The Eastern Region Library Board Law, 1955*. This law, amended in 1958, is the only one of its type in the whole Federation of Nigeria.

The Board is a body corporate having perpetual succession and a Common Seal. It may sue and be sued, and in connection with the purpose of the Ordinance, have the power to acquire and to hold, manage, and dispose of property whether real or personal, whether by investment or otherwise, and may enter into any contract necessary for the discharge of any of its functions. It is the duty of the Board to establish, equip, manage, and maintain libraries in the Eastern Region and to take all such steps as may be necessary to carry out such duty.

The Board consists of six members appointed by the minister responsible for libraries. The members of the Board hold office for two years and are eligible for reappointment. The chairman is appointed by the minister and holds office "for such a period as shall be stated in the Instrument by which he is appointed."

The Eastern Region was fortunate to have attracted Unesco's assistance at its early stages of library development. The basic agreement between the Government of the Eastern Region and Unesco on the project provided that the government should allocate a minimum sum of \$35,000 annually for a period of five years (1957-61), and should provide suitable premises for the pilot library. Unesco, on the other hand, undertook the provision of an expert on the organization and operation of public libraries for about twelve months, financial aid during each of the five years that the agreement was in force, and the award of a fellowship in the field of public libraries to enable the staff of the pilot library to have some practical insight into the overseas libraries.

The above basic agreement paved the way for the planning of the "pilot" library known as the Regional Central Library, Enugu. The new Regional Central Library is the third such project in the world. It was jointly planned by Unesco and the Library Board. It comprises the usual public departments and, besides serving the needs of Enugu, the regional capital, it also acts as a regional center for bibliographical information and research, organizes regional, national, and international loans, encourages and coordinates the development of public and special libraries in the region.

The cost of the building which was about \$135,000 has fallen wholly on the Library Board, but much of its equipment has been provided from funds made available by Unesco.

The Library Board runs its services almost entirely on a subvention from the Eastern Nigeria Government. Its estimates are prepared each year and presented to the Eastern Legislature. It is hoped that small grants-in-aid would be made by the various local authorities when divisional libraries are being opened up in the region. The accounts of the Board are audited annually and are examined by the Public Accounts Committee of the Eastern Legislature. The annual budget of the Board for 1959-60 was about \$61,600. It is a public library, and in the true tradition of that service, its services are entirely free to all users.

The importance the regional government attaches to the provision

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of library service to the people of Eastern Nigeria can best be summarized in the following words spoken by the former Premier Nnamdi Azikiwe at the formal opening of the Regional Central Library in March 1959:

I would like to say a few words about the importance of libraries in the development of a nation. In a fast developing community such as ours, it is important that progress be made on a number of fronts at the same time . . .

In providing books for the readers and students of this Region, we are mindful that books are essential for the development of the personality of the young; . . . they add stature to learning and convey from one man to another the accumulated knowledge of centuries of enquiry . . .

I feel that the public library has special functions which however small, add something to human development, and spread the democratic ideal, is almost as much a requirement for any community of people as the food they eat. A full opportunity for any person, of whatever faith or belief, to make contact with the world of ideas contained in books is as necessary for the proper growth of individuals as it is for nations. And I cannot think of any institution more suited at this moment to help us achieve such an object as the library service . . .<sup>1</sup>

The Federation of Nigeria as a whole has no over-all library policy, plan or legislation. Some of the services of a national library are provided by Ibadan University Library but this is entirely without official recognition. The federal government has, however, established its Library Advisory Committee. This committee is gradually feeling its way in the scheme of the library development. Recently it decided to communicate the various governments of the Federation, in respect of library legislation in the following words:

It was considered that one of the functions of the Committee should be to advise the Governments of the Federation on library legislation, in order to ensure that legislation introduced by the various authorities (libraries being a residual subject under the Constitution) was in harmony. The Committee took note of the existing position, viz. that only the Eastern Region so far had library legislation; the West was contemplating legislation on the subject, and the other parts of the Federation were not at present considering the introduction of such legislation. The Committee recommended that the Governments of the Federation should be asked to seek the advice of the Committee before introducing any fresh legislation.



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This action of the Committee is most encouraging. Public library provision in Nigeria is still in swaddling clothes and the problems which face us are a challenge to the few trained personnel in the field. There are certainly good prospects for public library provision in Nigeria and it is hoped that those in the field will continue to pioneer in a cause which means so much for the future of the country.

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SOUTH AFRICA

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THE PRINCIPLE OF LIBRARY SUPPORT by government was introduced, in the Cape, in 1818 when a wine tax was directed towards the establishment and maintenance of the free South African Public Library. It was further strengthened when the Cape Parliament, in 1862, voted the first of its continuing annual grants-in-aid to the S.A.P.L. It was consolidated in the Molteno Memorandum of 1874 which established a system of pound for pound grants to public libraries. But the principle of entirely supporting a town's public library from rates and taxes is still making its way, for all South African public libraries were begun as subscription libraries, and a number continue as such to this day.

By the South Africa Act, 1909,<sup>1</sup> the four self-governing colonies of Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange River were united under a central government which entrusted, in the four provinces which they had become, certain named powers. In the Financial Relations Act of 1913, which clarified this delegation, the administration of libraries was among the miscellaneous items for which the Union government relinquished responsibility, i.e. the provinces were permitted to assume responsibility if they so desired.

The prime purpose of the Financial Relations Act was, as its title implies, to make equitable the burden borne by each governing unit

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in relation to the income available to the nation. By Clause 6 "there shall be paid from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to the provincial revenue fund of each province, in respect of every financial year, a general subsidy of an amount equal to fifty per cent of the net expenditure . . . of the province during that financial year." This clause has remained unaltered.

It was necessary, of course, for the provinces to place the activities delegated by the Financial Relations Act within the framework of law. Libraries were affected in two ways, first, through the Provincial Ordinances (acts) regarding the scope and function of municipalities. The right to establish and support libraries was granted, also the right to give grants to nontax supported public institutions, e.g. subscription libraries. The total amount which could be spent on public institutions of this nature was not to exceed, in the Cape, more than 2½ per cent of the municipality total revenue.

The second way in which libraries were affected by the Financial Relations Act was by the implication that libraries were the responsibility of a province as a whole. The Act entrusted libraries to the provinces; their acceptance of the trust then had to be proclaimed. This was done by the Cape in 1913, the Transvaal in 1914, the Free State and Natal in 1949. These proclamations meant not a great deal. In fact, the willingness of the province to carry on the pound for pound grants began in 1874. But only the Cape has continued consistently with this small aid; and it ceases this year. The Transvaal gave it for a decade, withheld it for another, restored it in the 1930's, and then withdrew it. Since Natal and the Free State did not formally accept their responsibility for libraries, the Union government continued the pound for pound grants until 1922, after which they withdrew.

Possibly not a great deal was intended by the library clause. What the Act of 1913 entrusted to the provinces was the "administration" of libraries, their regulations and control. Provinces did not have the power to "establish" as had the local authorities, and, of course, there was no specific compulsion to do anything about libraries, neither upon the provinces nor upon the municipal councils.

In the thirty years between the passing of the Financial Relations Act and the next legislation of importance, the concept of libraries and library service evolved from that of the independent, subscription library to that of a free library service to all inhabitants, urban and rural, of all races.

A high point of a semi-legislative nature in this long period was the publication and acceptance in 1937 of a report by a Union government committee<sup>2</sup> on the status of libraries and the government's role. The report determined that the responsibility should rest with the provinces and that they should take "immediate steps" to set up a free rural library service by appointing advisory committees and library organizers to formally establish provincial library services. The Union was asked to subsidize the services on a pound for pound basis. In 1942 the Union government placed £2,000 on the estimates for the salaries of the library organizers, if appointed.

Although the draft of the first Provincial Library Ordinance, that of the Cape, was prepared in 1945, it could not be passed until 1949 when an amendment to the Financial Relations Act permitted the "establishment" of libraries.

The Cape Ordinance provided for the complete support by the province of all libraries in towns less than 15,000 population. The province was empowered to take over existing libraries and to develop a system which would bring library service to all. A library hierarchy was planned with one central headquarters library, eighteen regional libraries (the Cape is larger than France and England combined), town libraries, and village depots. The principle of sharing costs between province and local authority, ignored here, had always been advocated by librarians and laymen. Their theory was soon proven the more suitable. In 1954 the burden of bearing the full cost of the service proved to be too severe for the province. A new ordinance, gazetted in 1955, was drawn up, and it, plus the *Conditions Governing Participation* and the Service's *Regulations* form the basis of the present provincial service.

In the Cape, since 1955, an urban area of over 25,000 population and believed capable of supporting an independent service may be declared an urban library area. Towns over 25,000 have been admitted to the service; 40,000 is felt to be the maximum size for consideration. Urban library areas are not considered part of the provincial library system. A provincial subsidy up to 50 per cent of a municipality's expenditure on libraries may be granted. There is no ceiling. Separate facilities for European and non-European borrowers are to be provided in urban areas and throughout the service in general. The conduct of the direct service to small towns and villages is loosely defined: "For the purpose of the service the Administrator [head of the provincial executive committee] may take such steps and measures for

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the provision of free library facilities as he may deem fit, including (a) the admission of public libraries to the service on such conditions as he may in each case determine and the aiding of such public libraries in such manner as he may deem fit . . .”<sup>3</sup>

The conditions of admission require “all members, i.e. libraries, to provide accommodation as approved by the library organizer . . . the organizer may allow up to 5 years to provide satisfactory accommodation; all local authorities are required to provide an amount not exceeding six shillings per annum per capita of the European population for the salary of the library personnel and any other administrative expenditure.” European in this sense means those of European descent.

In return, the headquarters organization provides books, films, recordings, and art prints which remain the property of the province. Books include serious reference works as well as all types of general reading matter. Periodicals are generously provided. A library may buy materials for its permanent retention out of its own independent funds. Provision is made for each of the eighteen regions to be in the charge of a professional librarian who visits regularly member libraries to give administrative advice and assistance. Books are brought by bookmobile to the libraries where the librarians make bulk exchanges. Loans are not made to individuals. Provincial headquarters staff promote the idea of free libraries, help in the re-organization of former subscription libraries, advise local government officials, conduct training courses for the local librarians, etc., and, of course, acquire and process all materials.

A provincial library board is provided for of whom the majority are nominated by the Provincial Administration.

The Transvaal Provincial Library Service Ordinance was gazetted in 1951. The pattern of service is similar to that provided under the 1955 Cape Ordinance, and, indeed, its introduction precedes that of the Cape. There are the following differences. “The Transvaal Provincial Administration holds the local community primarily responsible for the establishment and proper maintenance of libraries and library services, but . . . renders certain supplementary services by means of the Transvaal Provincial Library Service. In addition the Administration also provides leadership in the library field.”<sup>4</sup>

The population limit was first set at 10,000, raised to 25,000 in 1956 and to 50,000 in 1958. The annual contribution required from the local authority ranges from two shillings in the case of a village council

to seven shillings, six pence in a municipality of over 25,000 European inhabitants. There is no compulsion to provide services for non-Europeans and libraries not in the service may receive grants-in-aid only under certain conditions. None do. Recently direct library service from bookmobiles was introduced in the peri-urban areas of the Rand where scattered population and scarcity of premises have made the establishment of libraries most difficult.

In the two smaller provinces, Natal and Orange Free State, where library service is not so advanced, the model followed is that of the large provinces. The population limit in both is 10,000. Natal requires from the local authority three shillings and the Orange Free State two shillings per head of European population.

These are the instruments of a free library service. The government's complete acceptance of responsibility for free libraries was not achieved without a struggle. A struggle which has been won through the energetic efforts of a few librarians and others who from 1930 to 1949 never lost an opportunity for pressing upon government and public alike the cause of free libraries. A government can do little more than follow in the steps of a community's leaders.

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