

THE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES *

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It is a pleasure to respond to Professor Kingsley's invitation by submitting a brief review of the progress made in the expansion of the activities of the American Association of Law Libraries. I shall for the most part confine myself to what has taken place since the last meeting of this round table. Those who were present in Chicago at that time will recall that Professor James briefly outlined the plan,¹ and that Professor Hicks enlarged upon his remarks, by emphasizing the need for an expanded Law Library Journal as one of the several improvements included in the plan.² Your present speaker followed them by advancing some of the reasons why the Association of American Law

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¹ See L. LIB. J. 28:3-4.

² See L. LIB. J. 28:4-6.

Schools should be interested in the expansion of the activities of the American Association of Law Libraries.³ It will also be recalled that both the round table and the Association endorsed the expansion plan.⁴ Under these circumstances it seems appropriate that we submit a report to this group today. We hope that the progress made will incline you to continue your cooperation and support.

Not only the officers but twelve committees are at work this year. To enlarge upon all these activities would take more time than is at our disposal. We will, therefore, only enumerate and briefly describe a number of the most important ones. They are as follows:

1. Under the able leadership of Professor James, the American Association of Law Libraries held one of its most successful annual meetings in Denver last June. No doubt, the most notable achievement of this meeting was the adoption of certain amendments to the constitution and the by-laws. After a most lively discussion these were approved substantially as submitted.⁵ The principal changes, embodied in the amendments as adopted, were amendments authorizing the incorporation of the Association; the addition of an institutional membership to the several classes of memberships already existing; the raising of the annual fee for associate members from \$5.00 to \$20.00 per year; and an amendment permitting the employment of an executive secretary on a full time salary.

This action on the part of the members not only removed all of the technicalities that might retard the forward movement, but the present officers were virtually given a mandate to proceed with the expansion program.

2. On September 23, 1935, the Association was incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia, as the nation's capital had already been adopted as the national headquarters. By taking this step we believe we are now in a better position to successfully undertake the work that lies before us as a group.

3. Immediately after the close of the meeting in Denver, acting in conformity with the amendment creating institutional memberships, law libraries active in the work of the Association were invited to join as institutional members. It is gratifying to report that in these few months 36 law libraries, including 24 libraries of law schools that are members of the Association of American Law Schools, have availed themselves of this type of membership,⁶

³ See L. LIB. J. 28:6-8.

⁴ See L. LIB. J. 28:8-9.

⁵ See L. LIB. J. 28:198-222 and 232-234.

⁶ Institutional Members as of December 28, 1935: Association of the Bar of the City of New York; Biddle Law Library of the University of Pennsylvania; Boston University School of Law Library; California State Library; Colorado Supreme Court Library; Duke University Law Library; The George Washington University Law Library; Harvard University Law Library; Howard University Law Library; Indiana University Law Library; Law Library Association of St. Louis; Louisiana State Library; Mississippi State Library; Northwestern University Law Library; Oklahoma State Library; Oregon Supreme Court Library; Rhode Island State Library; Rochester Appellate Division Law Library; Stanford University Law Library; Tennessee State Library; University of California Law Library; University of Cincinnati Law Library; University of Detroit Law Library; University of Iowa Law Library; University of Kansas Law Library; University of Michigan Law Library; University of Minnesota Law Library; University of Oregon Law Library; University of Southern California Law Library; University of Virginia Law Library; University of Washington Law Library; University of Wisconsin Law Library; University of Wyoming Law Library; Western Reserve University Law Library; Wisconsin State Library; Yale University Law Library.

thus not only further assisting the Association in its work financially but also by lending to it their moral support. By way of explanation may I add that when a library joins as an institutional member, the librarian is empowered to nominate a designated number of the members of its staff to membership in the Association.

The total number of librarians, assistant librarians and library assistants now members of the Association by virtue of institutional memberships is 102. Many of these were of course members of the Association before, but there has been a substantial addition, and it is gratifying to note that a number of these are already actively interested in the work of the Association.

We may, I believe, look forward to a gradual lengthening of this list of institutional members as the plan is more fully understood and appreciated and as law librarians have the opportunity to present the matter to their respective boards, committees or other governing bodies.

You will recall that one of the changes effected by the adoption of the amendments mentioned above provided for the increase of dues for associate members from the former sum of \$5.00 per year to the present rate of \$20.00. This has been done in order to offer a type of membership to individuals, firms and associations which (although they are not librarians or libraries) may be interested in the work of the Association or may desire to avail themselves of its services. I have no doubt but that we will have an increasing number of members in this class as we are able to add to our usefulness as a group.

Summarizing the situation as to memberships we find that we have added, during the past year, not only the 36 institutional members mentioned above, but 81 individual members as well, thus raising our total membership of all classes to 317 as against a total membership of 192 just one year ago. Surely this is a creditable and encouraging showing. It, however, in no sense represents a temporary movement. There has been a gradual but almost constant growth, even during the depression, (something of which few organizations can boast) and the increasing momentum strongly suggests additional growth in the near future. And why should we not expect this? Do we not serve and, therefore, represent, for this particular purpose, an extremely influential profession having a membership of at least 175,000 persons? This profession will, I feel quite certain, increasingly insist upon a type of library service such as can only be provided by a well trained and highly coordinated special professional group.

4. Unfortunately there is available very little specific information with respect to law libraries. Accordingly a special committee has recently been appointed to study the whole problem. It is now at work and will in due time submit a plan for the systematic gathering of statistics for all classes of law libraries. Work of this kind, but limited in scope, was commenced by the Association in 1923 and has been regularly continued by a committee of which Miss Ryan (who is presenting a paper today) has been chairman for a number of years. She alone, perhaps, fully appreciates the difficulties encountered and the painstaking work involved. The data already secured, although limited, has been put to use by many of us with quite advantageous results. However, there is a crying need for more detailed information and we believe we will soon evolve and inaugurate an appropriate comprehensive program to meet

this need. It may be of interest to note in passing that the most satisfactory law library statistics we have are for law school libraries. Obviously this is due to the work and initiative of several law school librarians who have more fully appreciated the need for such information.

5. Some of you may not know that we are grappling with the thorny problem of the educational requirements for law librarianship. Our Committee on Education for Law Librarianship is aggressively at work this year. Those of you who are familiar with Professor Hicks' comprehensive list of the educational requirements of the law librarian⁷ will appreciate how numerous are the tasks and responsibilities which may from time to time confront the law librarian. These would appall even the most courageous were it not for the fact that, to some extent at least, we meet them by a division of labor. It is hoped that this committee, by focusing attention on the problem, by gathering data as to the educational qualifications of present librarians and library assistants, and by endeavoring to set up in tentative form some of the essential formal requirements, may eventually bring about a substantial improvement in the personnel that administers our law libraries. This work is not being undertaken hastily nor without due regard to the difficulties involved. Professor Beardsley,⁸ the chairman of this committee, recognizes the fact that several years will be required for the preliminary work alone.

6. An inevitable result of the developments outlined above has been a growing realization that there must be more continuous cooperation with the several associations whose activities are more or less closely related to the problems with which law libraries are concerned. The American Association of Law Libraries, since its organization in 1906, has been affiliated with the American Library Association, and it has held its annual meetings with this larger group. Believing, however, that the time is ripe for a more active and continuous program of collaboration, these two groups have this year set up a joint committee to canvass the situation and submit recommendations for further cooperation in dealing with problems of interest to both Associations.

In recognition of the community of interests between law libraries and state libraries, the American Association of Law Libraries and the National Association of State Libraries have held many meetings jointly. That this happy and mutually advantageous relationship will continue seems inevitable.

No doubt all of those present are in one way or another concerned about the multiplicity of law books with which the legal profession is almost literally overwhelmed. Lawyers have been complaining about this problem for years but they have never really bestirred themselves to do anything about it. I am glad to report that our cooperative program for this year includes a committee to deal with this matter. It is actively cooperating with a similar committee representing the American Bar Association. Without question this is an extremely complex problem. However, we hope that some progress toward its solution can be made.

⁷ Hicks, *The Educational Requirements of Law Librarians*, A. B. A. JOUR. 15:699 (Nov., 1929); L. LIB. J. 23:62 (April, 1930) Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries, Washington, D. C., May 17, 1929.

⁸ Arthur S. Beardsley, Law Librarian and Associate Professor of Law, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

As further evidence of the desire to keep in close touch with the activities and development of the legal profession in general, our members have also recently voted to hold the next annual meeting in conjunction with the American Bar Association and a highly constructive program is already being arranged.

A discussion of cooperation has inevitably led us back to this round table and to the present meeting. I believe I am correct in asserting that it was at the suggestion of Professor James that the Association of American Law Schools conducted its first Round Table on Library Problems. At the request of those who were present at that first meeting in 1932 the round table has been continued. Many of us believe that these discussions have been of value. That they will continue to be so I have not doubt. At any rate the members of the American Association of Law Libraries believe that they have stimulated greater interest in the law school libraries, and the endorsement of its expansion program last year has without doubt been helpful.

7. Acting in response to the mandate, as expressed by the members during the annual meeting last June, the present officers are considering further ways and means of increasing the services of the Association. A special advisory committee on the expansion program has been appointed to consult with and assist the executive committee. Together these groups are endeavoring to devise ways and means of financing a more suitable headquarters, under the direction of a full time executive secretary. It is also hoped that way will be found to improve the Law Library Journal by more frequent publication, in order to make it a more effective organ of the Association itself, so that it may serve as a medium for the exchange of ideas between law librarians, and that it may become a more adequate depository for the literature of our specialized professional group.

You are all familiar with the Index to Legal Periodicals which is sponsored by the American Association of Law Libraries. While it is a very useful publication, we very much hope that, in due time, we may be able to effect certain improvements. Those of our members, who are responsible for the Index, and to whom great credit is due for their untiring efforts, are fully aware of its shortcomings. But they also know that it is an expensive undertaking and that its circulation is necessarily limited. You may be quite certain that when the funds are available the Index will be improved.

These three things—a more adequate headquarters under the direction of a competent executive secretary, free to devote himself (or herself) exclusively to the work of the Association; an enlarged and more frequently published Journal; and an improved Index to Legal Periodicals—are the principal items on our program for the future. We sincerely hope and believe that soon we will realize some or all of these objectives. That we will make a steady advance is certain, for such a movement within the organization is now an unmistakable fact. We are building gradually but substantially.

Although I am not at all certain that the chairman's invitation to present this statement on behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries includes the privilege of offering recommendations, I am very much tempted to do so.

Suppose we call them suggestions and thus escape possible censure. Here they are:

First: That this annual round table concern itself primarily with problems which may conveniently be embraced under the heading, "The Relation of the Law Schools to Their Libraries." The point I wish to make is that we should here discuss problems which are also of interest to faculty members. In fact I should like to see these round tables largely attended by deans and professors, in order that these broader considerations (I mean those dealing with the relations of the library to the law school in general) may receive joint treatment. I can think of a number of appropriate subjects to which an entire round table might be devoted. An excellent one is the topic urged by Miss Lucile Elliott, Librarian of the University of North Carolina Law School, who is at present a member of the council of this round table, namely, "The Relation of the Faculty to the Law School Library." As you have no doubt noticed this subject is on our program for informal discussion today.

Second: While there need not necessarily be any formal action with respect to the matter, it would seem to me wise for this round table and the Association of American Law Schools to encourage active participation in the program of the American Association of Law Libraries on the part of their respective librarians and their assistants. It is unfortunate that 32 law schools that are members of the Association of American Law Schools are not, through their libraries, in any way represented in the American Association of Law Libraries. Our annual meetings consist of a number of sessions, extending over several days, which are devoted to law library problems and closely related subjects. It is here that law school librarians, as distinguished from law teachers and administrators, may discuss their problems from the narrower and more intensive point of view. However, I do not so much desire to limit the law school association round table discussions, as to suggest the point of view from which matters may be considered. Can we not thus, when we meet each year after Christmas, discuss matters in which law school administrators, teachers and librarians have an interest, and leave to the summer meetings, under the auspices of the American Association of Law Libraries topics which are primarily of interest to law librarians?

Third: No doubt discussions like the one we are having today lead to constructive action when we return to our several institutions and endeavor to make some practical use of whatever we may have learned. However, there are some things that we cannot do individually. This being the case, I wonder if the time has not come for the adoption of a suggestion recently advanced by Professor Kingsley that the Association of American Law Schools appoint a committee to cooperate with the already existing committee of the American Association of Law Libraries? I can envision a number of ways in which these committees, acting together, might be quite helpful.

In closing may I thank you for your kind and patient attention. On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries I invite all of you who are law librarians to join forces with us if you have not already done so. I feel certain that we can benefit immeasurably by consulting and working together. From deans and other faculty members we hope for interested and helpful support.