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FOR YOUR INFORMATION (1962)

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ON H.R. 11823

BEFORE THE GENERAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION OF THE
HOUSE EDUCATION AND LABOR COMMITTEE

JUNE 26, 1962

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
OFFICIAL FILE

My name is James E. Bryan. I am the President of the American Library Association, which is an elective office in our membership organization representing more than 25,000 librarians, trustees and members of the general public interested in the development, improvement and extension of library services as essential elements in the educational, scientific, cultural and research needs of our country. The Association is a non-profit, national, professional organization. My professional position is Director of the Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

The American Library Association is pleased to have the opportunity to appear before this Committee in support of H.R. 11823 which amends the Library Services Act by assisting the States to improve public, school, college, and university library service, and by aiding in training programs for librarians.

In presenting this statement in behalf of the Association, I should like to indicate our appreciation to you for the great support which this Committee has given in the past in connection with grants for rural library services. We do appreciate the aid which the Congress has given to public libraries and we enlist your support for this more comprehensive proposal.

The Library Services Act of 1956 has clearly demonstrated the value of the partnership of State and local governments and the Federal government. Approximately 36,000,000 rural people now have new or improved library service. Since 1956 State funds for the development of rural public library service have increased about 92% and local appropriations by some 75%. The State library agencies have been strengthened. New books in millions and great numbers of other materials, including necessary audio-visual aids, have been

made available throughout the country by this legislation.

House Report no. 392 of the Committee on Appropriations dated May 15, 1961, referring to the Library Services Act states:

"For the small amount of Federal funds involved this has been not only one of the most popular, but one of the most worthwhile programs of the Federal Government."

We feel that the proposed legislation is the next logical step in the development of libraries to meet our national goals. The Federal legislation to date does not cover public libraries with populations of over 10,000. Yet the great increases in population, including the enormous development in metropolitan areas and the swarming suburbs constitute a great problem for public libraries.

An estimated 60 million people in urban areas receive inadequate public library service because of sub-marginal budgets with which to provide a program of service for their communities. Public libraries are frequently overlooked by appropriating bodies which must also provide increasing funds for schools, highways, sewage systems and other projects. .

An important title of the Bill is the one on public libraries which will be discussed in more detail by another witness. Equally important, however, are the provisions for improvement of school and college libraries and the proposals to increase the number of trained librarians.

It would appear that every improvement in the educational process in recent years, every constructive change in curriculum, the increased attention to worthwhile science programs, the development of enrichment opportunities, the increase of individually conceived and motivated studies in conjunction with classroom, laboratory, and honors assignments have brought to all types of libraries a great demand for reading, reference and research materials on all levels. This demand can scarcely be met. Many of these programs find young people working at a level hitherto unknown

for pupils of a similar age.

We are in the midst of a population explosion which has increased the number of students in elementary schools, secondary schools, junior colleges and 4-year colleges and universities. In addition, because of the programs of curriculum enrichment and of quality education resulting from an earnest desire for excellence on the part of students and teachers we are finding that the use of collateral reading and the use of basic reference materials have increased manyfold. The problem is not just more students but more students using more materials with greater thoroughness and intensity than we have known heretofore.

This unprecedented demand for library materials and services is felt in school libraries of elementary and secondary levels, in our colleges and universities and in our public libraries. Never before has it been so clear that our libraries are not just an adjunct to the process of formal education but that the tools of learning in our libraries are central to the educational process itself. Properly motivated individual study has no substitute in the development of educated and informed citizens.

This deluge of requests for library assistance comes at a time when our larger public and university libraries, particularly, are already heavily burdened with work, especially of a scientific and technological nature, for business and industry. Much of this work is in conjunction with government sponsored and related activities. Newark's neighboring libraries at Rutgers and Princeton, for example, have this specific problem. Likewise, on many days, the New York Public Library has long lines of persons waiting to get reader seats, and the demand is so great for research materials that no new requests for books can be accepted for periods up to an hour.

In the Newark Public Library, of which I have the honor to be director, we have peak load periods that show an almost unbelievable interest in and need for educational materials.

In the Christmas holiday period, in 1960 our library took a 25% sample of all of the visitors to the main library which approximated 20,000 persons.

We were interested to know why they came to our library, what they came for, and where they came from, so that we could best determine the changes in services that we must meet and be prepared for. Service is a key word for the operation of our library. Here are some of the findings as indicated in the sample itself:

1. 64.1 per cent were students.
2. Of the students, about 30 per cent were high school students, and 70 per cent were college students.
3. The secondary school students represented 85 schools of which 75 were non-resident schools from eight counties, and came from a 60 mile radius of Newark.
4. The college students represented 175 colleges and universities in 30 States. They were home for Christmas, but they brought their assignments with them. This is mentioned to indicate that an assignment in Maine or California can and does have to be met in Newark, New Jersey. This is not unusual.
5. Of the total users during this period, 50.8 per cent were non-residents, the city tax supporting a service used by many from outside its limits.

6. Many of the students, and other adults as well, used not only books but periodicals, microfilms, and information in other forms.
7. Of the total uses of the library according to the sample, approximately 48% were to meet a school or college assignment, and 22% were for information relative to business, trade, or professional needs, the balance being for general informational and recreational use.
8. Our main library circulation of books for home use for this period numbered about 25,000 of which 89% was non-fiction.

From this study, it would appear to be very clear that libraries are central to the educational process, not only for students, but for business and industry, and for research in connection with many technological projects.

Good library service to an area such as ours with active business and technological organizations costs money. Just as a single example, at the time of this study our total library budget for our system of libraries was about \$1,800,000. Our budget for collections including books, periodicals, and binding was roughly \$200,000, but it was necessary for us to pay \$950 for one essential serial publication and index, the Chemical Abstracts.

Unfortunately, there are not enough of the tools of learning in all of our libraries to go around. This difficulty is further compounded because of a lack of suitable and proper distribution of what we have. There have been many informal arrangements and some formal arrangements among libraries

to try to overcome this problem of distribution. For example, some of the larger libraries have divided the subject fields for the acquisition of materials; most of the libraries have arrangements to lend books among themselves, and many of them have undertaken other cooperative measures. However, the efforts of librarians, no matter how well they are conceived and carried out have been woefully inadequate to meet the need up to this time.

Furthermore, there just have not been available sufficient funds in the different types of libraries to offer well-rounded collections and competent services adequate to the need at the various levels. In addition, library growth has been uneven. Certain types of libraries in our communities, counties, regions and States have advanced faster than other types, with the result that there are far greater demands on the libraries which are reasonably adequate than they can supply. This in turn forces them to expend funds and resources which should be normally used to broaden the scope and depth of their own collections for a duplication of materials which should be supplied by other types of libraries.

What is needed is a way by which public, school, and college libraries in any given area will develop in concert so that not only the resources available in each type of library will be increased, but also the total resources for all will be enhanced.

We are not thinking of a system of libraries which will have all of the needs of high school students taken care of in high school or the needs of all college and university students taken care of in college and university libraries. We are thinking of a system which will advance all libraries generally, which will permit and encourage the high school students to use the public library in addition to his high school library, which will permit a college or university student to use his public library or his

regional reference and research library in addition to his college library, and which will permit the general adult researcher, particularly in areas of science and technology, but not excluding the humanities and cultural areas, to have a broader spectrum of library resources to meet his needs at various levels of difficulty.

The tremendous use of libraries of all kinds is one of the best indications that our educational programs are improving and working better and providing better students than heretofore. In my career as a librarian I have never seen so many hard working, aggressive, genuinely interested, perceptive, intellectually curious young people in proportion to the total population, as I see now. There is no question in my mind but that formal and informal education in these United States is progressing and that young students and adults seeking self-education are progressing with it.

Because of this deluge of students and other persons on our libraries and because there are demands which cannot be met, a series of restrictions in the educational use of libraries is beginning to appear, primarily because there are not enough of the tools of learning normally found in libraries, to go around. These restrictions have taken some of these various forms.

1. High school students cannot use a public library in the evening because there will not be enough seats for general adult use.
2. The availability of many kinds of books is limited because there are not enough copies to go around.
3. Students are not permitted to use back issues of periodicals for fear they will be worn out and there is no money to duplicate them.
4. Non-residents of the area supporting a local public library or persons not registered in college or university libraries are being refused entrance to these types of libraries even for general reference purposes in many cases because there are

insufficient reader seats and not enough library materials to go around.

A good student is a good student regardless of residence; a good student needs books and periodicals regardless of age, school level, or time of day. A good student is a good student regardless of where he attends school, and most obviously, the national welfare cannot afford that such students be discouraged or thwarted in achieving their educational goals.

The strengths of the proposed legislation may be summarized as follows:

1. This program will be of assistance to students and researchers at all levels in schools, colleges and universities and in public libraries.
2. It will aid adults in their self-education.
3. It will build on existing strengths.
4. It will permit and encourage a system of libraries, in which the small, the medium-sized and the large public and regional libraries will be strengthened and made better able to serve the needs of the Nation.
5. It will stimulate each State to have a system of libraries, school, college, and public, so that each person, no matter where he is located, will have the benefit of all the library resources not only of the State but sometimes of the country as a whole.

Each individual American, who wishes to live up to his potentiality as a student, a wage earner, and as a generally cultivated and useful citizen, cannot do so without the tools of learning being made available to him and placed ready to his hand.

We need to put a greater share of the national product into these tools of learning, and into a framework that will make those tools available

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to the greatest number who need and will use them.

This is an investment that will enhance the existing educational program and make it more meaningful and more useful to our people, who in turn will not only contribute more scientifically and culturally, but will also be better wage earners, better achievers, and better citizens. And thus they will contribute in an increasing way to our national good and purpose.

Other witnesses will testify in detail on the various Titles of the Bill and will go into the deficiencies and the specific Federal assistance needed to close the gaps: for public libraries, for school libraries, for college and university libraries, and for increasing the supply of trained librarians. My testimony has been in general terms but I hope it has provided necessary background.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I wish to thank you for the privilege of presenting the views of the American Library Association on this significant library legislation. We urge favorable action upon it.

In presenting this statement on behalf of the Association, I should like to indicate our appreciation to you for the great support which this Committee has given in the past in connection with grants for rural library services. We do appreciate the aid which the Congress has given to public libraries and we solicit your support for this new comprehensive proposal.

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