

PROCEEDINGS
of
Executive Committee Meeting
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chicago - Illinois
September 29, 1934

5

MONDAY MORNING SESSION

September 29, 1924

The First Session of the Executive Committee meeting of the American Library Association, held at Room 907 Crerar Building, Chicago, Illinois, was called to order at ten-ten o'clock by President H. H. B. Meyer.

The motion made by Mr. James I. Wyer to adopt the minutes of the meetings of June 29th and July 5, 1924, was seconded and carried.

Secretary Milam made a resumé statement on the A. L. A. delegate to China.

Mr. Bishop reported as follows on the League of Nations Library:

"I received two letters, one from you and the other one, I think, from the Secretary asking me to go to Geneva for the benefit of Mr. White and make a report on the League of Nations Library. At that time I was in England and unable to go, but I had been there before, and I think I can make an informal report.

"This information came from the Association indirectly. It came very much to me first-handed at Geneva. The situation in the League of Nations as I see it is briefly this: ~~After two long conferences with Miss Wilson and after a very careful inspection of the library itself,~~ Miss Wilson was appointed to the librarianship of the League of Nations Library at the instance of



the Secretary-General who had become acquainted ^{has when she was Librarian} with the ^{American} delegation to the Peace Conference. It was a very distinct compliment to the success of American library methods, as shown by the work done by Miss Wilson and other people both before and after the Peace Conference, to have her ^{chosen to} organize ^{the League of N. S.} a class ~~or~~ distinctly American lines ~~of service~~. This she has done, and to my mind has shown very remarkable ability ~~to rise to so great an occasion~~. She is a person who grows on you, and she has undoubtedly brought about a grade of library service in the League of Nations Library comparable with that of our best reference libraries, and similar organizations, and has done it with somewhat limited resources, particularly at the beginning.)

"Miss Wilson is extremely efficient. ~~During~~ the last two years, a good many of the delegations in Germany have found it was a pretty hard job for them to pay their share, and they have had, particularly during the last year, a steady ^{series of} inquiries directed by various sub-committees, composed in part of members of the assembly, chairman, and experts, ~~were largely~~ employed by the League, investigating all of the activities from the Secretary-General's office down through the International ^{Labour} ~~Li~~ Bureau, with a view to cutting the budget.)

"Miss Wilson ~~has~~ told me she had suffered one investigation after another, generally ^{in a} very friendly ^{and} terms. ~~Her~~ chief difficulty, as she sees it at the present time, is the curtailment of the funds, ~~not only as to the possibility they~~

There is a possibility that they may will curtail the funds but dispense with her services. She did not, however, intimate that was anything which would worry her. I think she is the type of person who will find remunerative employment anywhere.

"She is fearful of two elements which would curtail the admirable work which has been done by her at the League of Nations Library. The elements are, first, finances; ^a feeling ^{that} so large a part of the income now devoted to the library can not be continued. Of course, I am speaking very confidentially. The second element is a rather definite feeling on the part of ~~the~~ ^{the} delegation from a number of European countries ~~who feel~~ that very much of the service which she renders there is unnecessary. They have an idea three people can run a library of ^{300,000} ~~3,000~~ or ^{400,000} ~~4,000~~ volumes. They run them, but, of course, they don't render the service she has been doing.

"The very thing that distinguishes the League of Nations Library from other European libraries, and which distinguishes our very best type of library from similar institutions in Europe is a thing to which objection is made on the score of its cost, pure and simple, not on the score of its results. I have heard from various sources that she produces the goods, but they can't afford them. There has come with that, so far as I can find out, a very serious situation in regard to Miss Wilson. Her contract with the League was for three years, and I find it ends at the close of this calendar year. There is

considerable feeling also on the part of representatives of the smaller countries that the United States is not represented and does not belong to the League of Nations, and it is not right for an American to be holding the position. ~~That is quite a natural human feeling. We would want the same thing.~~

"When Mr. Milam and Mr. Meyer asked me to go down to Geneva and look into the library and make myself known, there came to my mind, 'What could I do if I did go there?' All I could do ^{would be} ~~was~~ to appear and say we were greatly interested, etc. ~~I did as much as I could,~~ ^{as it was,} so I contented myself with a reply to Mr. Meyer, ~~of which I believe I transmitted a copy to the Secretary,~~ outlining the situation as I saw it. Then I wrote to Mr. Hugh Gibson, the United States Minister at ^{Geneva} ~~Berlin~~, ~~who was an old friend of mine, or at least an acquaintance,~~ and who I thought would have more influence if he could say a word, than probably anybody else. I wrote Mr. Gibson a personal letter, and he made this reply, which I received just before sailing." *quote letter*

Mr. Bishop read the letter he received from Mr. Gibson, and then continued as follows:

"That leaves this matter up to this body, if they want to take any action of any sort. I drafted a letter, of which I have several copies, that I thought, with such corrections, additions or changes, might occur to the Board or President as satisfactory. I am merely doing this to have something before you, and because I am sure we ought to do something.

"Miss Wilson, in conversation with me, said if there was any serious curtailment of funds, of ir she, herself, was not resumed as librarian, it would be because Sir Eric Drummond and various other delegates felt other matters were more important than this particular thing. Of course, anybody having anything to do with legislative things have to let other things slide, and it is quite apparent that might be the case. With this in mind I have made this tentative draft of letter from the American Library Association."

Mr. Bishop read the letter and then continued:

"The question, of course, is does the board want to take any kind of action in the matter, and does this sort of letter seem to be the thing to send?"

"The burden of her difficulty was, very frankly, the people from most of the European and South American countries thought the kind of library service she was giving was a needless extravagance. Yet I checked up and thought she was doing a lot with the small amount of money."

The letter with two slight modifications was accepted.

Mr. James I. Wyer made a motion that the sixth item on the docket, namely, "Attitude of A. L. A. toward Institutut Internationale de Bibliographie letter of September 5th," be passed, and in passing the Board would like to request the President to get report from the Chairman of the Committee on Bibliographie which shall give forth such information as the Com-

mittee can furnish touching the need for any action by the A. L. A. in relation to the affairs of the Institut Internationale, covering the whole international question. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

The motion made by Mr. Carl B. Roden that Dr. Goldsmith be the delegate of the American Library Association to the Pan-American Scientific Congress, December 20, 1924, was seconded and carried.

Mr. Edward D. Tweedell moved that a clause covering corresponding members in the Association should be incorporated in the Constitution. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Mr. Ernest J. Reece's motion that the matter of selecting additional delegates be left to the President and Secretary was seconded and carried unanimously.

In the matter of the President's report on resolution passed by the American Federation of Labor, it was decided that the situation as far as it affected the New York Public Library should be left to the officials of that library.

The meeting adjourned at twelve-thirty o'clock.

ADJOURNMENT

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

September 29, 1924

The meeting was called to order at three-thirty o'clock by President Meyer.

President Meyer stated Dr. Boswick should have an interview with Mr. Tige, however secured, and his expenses would be assured, if necessary.

On the American Library in Paris Mr. Bishop made the following remarks:

"I did not know until some weeks after I left Paris that the Board had passed a resolution at the Saratoga meeting asking me to make an investigation, or report on the Paris Library. I learned some four weeks after I left Paris (I left there before the session in Saratoga took place) that the Board desired me to make the investigation, and I replied to Mr. Milam that I didn't see how I could go back to Paris for that purpose, as the financial statement which all the members of the Board received in the spring was very explicit. But at the end of August I received a telegram from Dr. Tuttle saying with Dr. Johnson's hearty concurrence he would like to have me come to Paris to make a report to the Home Committee of the American Library on the survey of conditions there. I did not feel that I could ignore the request, and it seemed to me whatever personal inconvenience, and it was very inconvenient, it was my duty to go down there and meet his request.

"I was at the English Lakes at the time. I went to Paris and arrived there on Sunday. Immediately on Monday morning I got in touch with Mr. Johnson and I found that three members of the Home Committee were having a meeting that day at the American University -- Dr. Tuttle, Dean Babcock of New York University, and Professor William Emerson of the Pasteur Institute of Technology, who with Mrs. Emerson has made a contribution of \$5,000 to the American Library for the Bureau of Information. I had a very fine talk with those three gentlemen and found out what they wanted.

"They said they wanted a statement of the field of the American Library in Paris, what they needed and my judgment as to the organization and staff.

"I went down there and Johnson gave me every facility and assisted me throughout in making this abridged report. I met the same gentlemen the next afternoon at four o'clock. They were quite surprised that I knew anything about the matter. Having been in touch with the American Library, being President when it was formed, I was really in touch with the thing and had been. I had made three successive visits to Paris and I knew its finances pretty well, having been on this Committee last winter, and with Mr. Weir had examined the report, so I was prepared without the amount of preliminary investigation that would have been necessary for a stranger in order to make the statement.

"I was specifically informed by the three gentlemen

they did not ask me to bring in the question at all in regard to the librarian of the American Library in Paris. My report was to be unconcerned and they did not recognize I would decline to give them any personal criticism or approval.

"I want to make it perfectly clear that I did have with Mr. Depeere some private conversation on that point at his seeking, not in the least my own.

"If you would like me to, I will read the report."

Mr. Bishop read his report and then continued as follows:

"I was told by the three members of the Committee, after I submitted a report verbally, they seemed to think I had opened up some fields they weren't familiar with. They also seemed to feel it confirmed them in their own view that they must go back to America and raise an endowment for the library. What they will do I don't know? But that is the situation as I see it today.

"On the building problem I might say Dr. Keppel had a matter which I will ask the Board to regard confidentially regarding the endowment. They bought a large structure on Boulevard Saint Joan d'Arc, not far from the University of Paris, and where the Carnegie Endowment has two floors of offices which are practically empty. I went over that entire building with Dr. Keppel and also separately, and I gave him as my judgment it could be adapted for library purposes without much expense and

would offer a very much better place in which to conduct the library than the present quarters. Several street cars go by the door; busses go by the door, and it is only two blocks from the underground tunnel, and it is very close to the student quarters of Paris.

"Dr. Keppel was of the opinion that probably the arrangement could be made to offer the building rent free to the American Library of Paris and leaving certain offices for the Carnegie Endowment office, leaving the room they now have, and turn part of it into a periodical reading room and that sort of a library, and their building difficulties might be solved for quite a long time by that device. This is purely confidential. It is not actual, but if it could be done it would save a very large charge and give them quarters.

"Of course, the great difficulty of adopting any of the French buildings is twofold. In the first place they have a magnificent staircase which cuts right into one side of the structure. They have a servant staircase which generally goes up on the other side, but in this case they are together. There is a partition with doors. Then they are all built around a court. The disposition of rooms is rather hard, but that building on Boulevard St. Joan d'Arc is twice as good for the library as the building where they are now. If that matter does go through it would eliminate possibly the amount of rent."

Mr. Bishop's report on conditions in Paris was ac-

cepted as a statement of conditions to the Executive Board, inasmuch as it was really a report to another body.

Mr. James I. Wyer's motion, that the election of five trustees of the American Library Association be postponed until after conference with Dr. Keppel and Babcock, and after such conference that the matter be submitted to the Board by correspondence vote, was seconded and carried unanimously.

It was voted that the same course be pursued in regard to the nomination of librarian as that adopted in regard to the election of five trustees.

Mr. W. W. Bishop made a motion that Miss Bogle be requested to get whatever information she could gather in Europe, without exciting too many questions. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried.

Mr. Edward D. Tweedell moved that Dr. Boswick be designated as the choice of the Executive Board to undertake the mission to China. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried.

Mr. James I. Wyer moved the acceptance of the statement of general funds in the supplementary budget. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried.

Mr. Carl B. Roden moved the approval of the budget of the publishing funds. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Mr. John A. Lowe moved the approval of the budget on

the Paris Library school fund. Mr. Bishop amended the motion with the recommendation that as the reserve was dangerously low it would be wise to reduce it somewhere soon in order to hold the reserve. The motion as amended was seconded and unanimously carried.

The meeting adjourned at five-thirty-five o'clock..

ADJOURNMENT