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AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
Public Library Division

Tuesday, July 1, 1952, 10:30 A.M.

Chairman: Harold F. Brigham, President of Division  
Indiana State Library

Mr. T. J. Ross, President, Ivy Lee Company, Public Relations Counselors, New York, and member Citizens Advisory Committee of the New York Public Library was introduced by Raymond Mahoney, Detroit Public Library, Chairman of the Public Library Division's Committee on Public Relations, and spoke on "Internal Public Relations for Libraries."

Mr. Ross said that the objective of all public relations was favorable public opinion. He pointed out similarities between business and library public relations; these having comparable publics which they wish to reach with products and services. He discussed four principal aspects of public relations all of which apply to the Library's internal public relation.

1. Point of view - attitude of mind
2. Active function of management
3. Techniques used to express ideas
4. Public relations personnel activities

Employees should themselves believe in the library's service, be aware of their role in the library's public relations program, and participate actively in it.

Three

1. Things now being done
2. Things proposed to be done
- 3.

Potential public relations activities of the library:

1. Have management thinking about what people think about the library.
2. Have a two-way communications system between the library and its publics.
3. Publicize the library's goals and standards.
4. Involve as many members of the public as possible.

Libraries deal with men's minds, they help people develop values - One of the library's public relations opportunities is to help broaden mental landscapes.

(Original was handwritten by John Mackenzie Cory)

In a question and answer period Mr. Ross agreed that it was important to have employees informed on the library's public relations program through conferences, ~~manuals~~ and everyday management contacts. He called attention to specific programs already available in the literature of librarianship.

"The small public library - its importance and its future" was discussed by Mrs. V. Genevieve Calick, library advisor, Massachusetts State Department of Education, from the librarian's point of view and by James J. Weadock, Jr., Public Library, Lima, Ohio from the trustees point of view.

Mrs. Calick emphasized the local community origins of the public library in New England, mentioning that Massachusetts has 395 existing independent public libraries in 351 communities with 111 of these libraries located in communities of 2000 persons or less. The small public library is strategically located in close relation to its clientele but it needs advice and technical supervision.

While the tax base in small communities may not be large enough to provide adequate modern library service, larger units of library service may not be the best answer especially where a number of independent libraries already exist.

She proposed a two-point program for improving the lot of the small library:

1. Strengthen the state library agency, increasing its funds, improving its staff.
2. Supplement but not supplant the services of local libraries with coordination not integration being the keynote; specifically:
  1. hold training conferences
  2. provide consultant services,
  3. conduct a vigorous field service
  4. sponsor legislation facilitating voluntary agreements and cooperation,
  5. informing library trustees
  6. sponsoring interloan arrangements
  7. encourage reciprocal borrowing privileges
  8. delivery service
  9. shared staff

This requires good leadership at the State level and shared effort at the local.

Mr. Weadock

Mr. Weadock mentioned that 65% of the 7500 public libraries in the United States are in communities of 5000 persons or fewer. Since public libraries are primarily local agencies they reflect the many small units of government that exist.

The trends toward larger service units does not offer immediate hope to thousands of existing small libraries. No additional small units should be organized but existing small libraries should be helped and strengthened. The small library has advantages as well as disadvantages: closer contact with the public, greater range of activities available to the staff, provision of a local gathering place, intensified local pride..

State aid; the regional librari operated by the state but retaining local autonomy; federation of local libraries -- all these require legislation and tax adjustment but informal cooperation and contracts are always available.