

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
PUBLIC LIBRARIES DIVISION

Summary Report

Meeting of Membership, ALA Midwinter Meeting
Chicago, Illinois, 1956

Tuesday, January 31, 10:00 a.m.
Presiding, Mildred W. Sandoe, President

Program Participants: Ruth W. Gregory and Ruth Rutzen
Mrs. A. W. Errett and Mr. Jack B. Spear

Miss Sandoe explained PLD's procedure for establishing a field of interest statement. It was decided to refer this task to an existing committee, the Division Organization Committee. The function of this committee was adjusted to assume the broader responsibility. This committee is chaired by the immediate past president of PLD, Ruth W. Gregory, to whom Miss Sandoe turned over the meeting.

Miss Gregory stated that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for membership discussion of the management survey, the Division's field of interest statement and the preliminary report of the ALA Steering Committee.

Miss Gregory asked Miss Rutzen to discuss the field of interest statement; Miss Rutzen gave a brief statement about the thinking of the committee's position that the Public Libraries Division of the Association necessarily had to be concerned with the objectives and interests of the public libraries, etc. In looking at the management survey, Miss Rutzen said that PLD looked with favor to the proposed PLA which brings together all public librarians who work in libraries. It occurred to Miss Rutzen during reading that there were still jobs to be done which will not logically fall under any existing councils. She could see that in the associations there would have to be sections according to type of library (armed forces, etc.). It would be an

arbitrary division regarding type of library. What pleased all of them very much was the committee's work on boards and committees and the real simplification that has come out of their work. Miss Rutzen questioned the wisdom of including some of the activities that the Steering Committee put into the Council on Library Administration; for example, legislation which is probably more the concern of a whole public libraries association rather than a type of work. Miss Rutzen raised a number of questions about the proposed Council on Library Administration, stating that she had not been able to get a clear picture of just what persons would be in this council.

Mr. Eastlick's feeling has frankly been that responsibility seems to be transferred to councils rather than to associations. He is not in accord with that. However, he knows that other people are not in accord with him. They feel there is need for specialization of council, pulling activities together for the benefit of public libraries association. It seems to him that the original survey placed emphasis on associations while the Steering Committee has translated that emphasis over to the councils. It may be that is necessary, Mr. Eastlick said, in implementation.

According to Miss Morsch, the word syntheses has turned out to be the \$64 word. This is one of the most important things, to serve as a medium between the members of councils and the type of libraries to keep them informed on everything going on in the ALA. People who are interested and who need to be interested in the various councils have not really been taken care of. People should be kept aware as to what is going on in councils in every phase of specialized activities. They would be alerted and would have a channel through which they could make their interests known and when their needs were not being filled. The generalists are not only the people in the small libraries. Administrators cannot be expected to join every council. If what is going on in coun-

cils is not filling their needs, they can request councils to undertake projects or to change the direction of projects in the interest of public libraries. A word about the division of the councils by sections that might be sections by type of library. This action is intended to help because there are people in each of these sections who are members of PLA.

Miss Gregory asked someone to speak about machinery to establish authority, or, she questioned, will the definition of areas of responsibility be sufficient?

Mr. Metcalf said the important thing as he understood it was the question of public library standards. He want to have the problem studied. He thinks it would be better to call on the seven councils to provide the groundwork for their statement on public library standards in that field. Then the committee on public library standards would synthesize the material that would be brought together. Public library standards which involve all of these divisions are one of the very important things that they are worried about. Mr. Metcalf spoke next about the proposed Library Administration Council. Neither the management survey nor the Steering Committee is sure of it, but it was worth proposing to see how many people were interested in it. A very good case could be made for certain parts of it according to Mr. Metcalf. He then went into the question of buildings and equipment. LAC provides one place for building information, one group instead of five or six going to architects, contractors, etc., and this would eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort. The same thing will happen for insurance, pensions, annuities, etc. The whole idea is to simplify our approach to the outside world.

Mr. Brigham talked chiefly about synthesis. To define what was being synthesized in the report which was distributed at the door, it was a statement that the leaders or officers of PLD attempted to approach the job of a statement about

afresh without being definitely held to what PLD is now. He thinks this is what everyone needs to do—to see themselves in the new ALA picture afresh. Mr. Brigham then discussed public library interests and extension library interests. State library library and state agency people are going to consider what a new association of state libraries or state library agencies might mean to them and to ALA. The problem is to find the means for getting the best organization for the whole ALA and find how we can have the cooperation and synthesis that involves all of them.

To Miss Sandoe's way of thinking, responsibilities of the new Public Libraries Association were going to be concerned with such things as public library statistics, public library finance, public library legislation. Those have gone over to the Council. She is not sure they have an over-all bearing for administrators. Other things need to be worked on jointly. She would like to ask the ALA Steering Committee to take the point into consideration in its final deliberations. Miss Sandoe is concerned, not about losing the Extension Section as such from the new Public Libraries Association, but how they will relate themselves to the over-all picture. Much broader than that is her question as to the place of the new council in the picture. To Miss Sandoe the state library is a public library. It is just another governmental unit. She is convinced that every unit that is organized is going to have to be financed. Instead of lessening the groups, the Steering Committee has at this point created many more than there were, and Miss Sandoe is absolutely convinced that so far the financial proposals that have been made in connection with the reorganization will not provide adequately the financial support that the membership demands when it demands service. The membership wants

more and more services. Services are costly. If it wants them, it must face up to paying for them.

Miss Ridgway said that ALA has not got enough money to do what it is trying to do now and it is not going to have any more, except the Steering Committee hopes that some of the reorganization will free some funds that are being used in a duplicate way. Neither associations nor councils will have as much money as they want, but will have to operate as in the past with paid staff and volunteers. Miss Ridgway is not sure that everything on the Steering Committee's report, including LAC, has been put in the exact pigeonhole where it belongs. On the whole, she does not think we want to say that either associations or councils are more important—they are different kinds of animals. It may be that it will need to be sections by type of library; it may be committees. Perhaps, Miss Ridgway added, the section idea has been overlabored. The Steering Committee has tried to recognize situations as they exist (e.g., desire of catalogers to get together. The implementation of the use of activity is extremely important. That is where synthesis comes in. Miss Ridgway then spoke about the responsibility of a public libraries association. As she sees it, the Public Libraries Association will have certain direct responsibilities that will not go into the Council and certain indirect responsibilities. The Steering Committee is trying to find which of those things is which and they do not entirely agree. They will never get the answer and agree if they do not accept the basic premise that it is going to be done through the Public Libraries Association. Miss Ridgway stated that the financial aspect has to be kept in the back of the mind.

Miss Rutzen declared that the provision for interdivisional committees overlapping between associations and councils is recognized. Would there have to be on certain problems, she asked, interdivisional committees between associations?

Miss Ridgway answered certainly and she would see a great need for an inter-divisional committee between the Public Library Association and the state library agency. Miss Ridgway then mentioned joint committees; she thought Miss Morsch would want to speak to that point.

Miss Morsch, after reading from the Steering Committee's report, said that if the interdivisional committee exists between a council and an association having dual membership, this is a thing that can be set up on their own without asking anybody about it. As soon as it becomes joint, it should have the approval of the General Assembly. This does not mean that it would be discouraged. The purpose is to have information about the need for such things known, so they could constantly watch the organization of the association and see where perhaps there should be a different kind of organization.

Miss Perry then asked, "Who sets up the authority and how will it be financed?"

Miss Le Fevre brought out the point of fields of responsibility. Each group in setting up its own organization will be working on fields of responsibility, and clarification will reveal where there is duplication which will have to be resolved. Concerning finances Miss Perry asserted that there would be possibly a little more money from the structure being more simple instead of more complicated and also more efficient. In drawing together because of continual joint action, it may become one group, resulting in a saving to the individual member by the saving at Headquarters.

Miss Nistendirk of PLD Library Extension Section said the Section is not too concerned about identity nor about the size of sections. Her question was what provision has been made for those who have many interests and problems to be assured in the bigger fields of interest that those will be taken care of and not lost in the general shuffle. What safeguards are there that those

people will be taken care of she asked. Will the Extension interests be met even though it may be in Public Libraries Association and Adult Education Council she wanted to know. She expressed concern for the "generalists."

Miss Ridgway declared that it is the function of PLA to take the responsibility for total needs. The machinery can be there. This is the kind of thing that PLA should be freed to do; the responsibility is taken, but it is not necessary to do it itself.

Mr. Eastlick summarized. The questions to be resolved are in the field of financing, definition of sphere of interest and definition of fields of responsibility. It seems to him that there is a question still existing in the content of activities to be included in the Library Administration Council, but above these questions which can be solved is the fact which we must recognize is that this proposal is a tremendous step forward. He wished to suggest that Public Libraries Division at that time would like to consider the endorsement of the plan, the report of the Steering Committee has it has been implemented, asking the Steering Committee to consider further the specific areas which were raised in the meeting.

Mr. Paine thought endorsement should be given. But he wanted to know if assurance of getting a fair share of attention in all councils lies in multi-council membership. Mr. Paine was not as concerned with finance as he was with viewpoints.

Miss Morsch observed that it was not a question of money, but of more active participation.

Miss Rutzen read Category B statement on page 3.

Mr. Brigham thinks multiple membership in many councils is a mistaken notion. There will be little need of multiple membership of ALA members.

Mr. Bacon asserted that we are the councils—councils are not foreigners.

Miss Gregory asked Mr. St. John to comment on the request which had come to her on the Council on Library Administration and the types of things that it would take up with the large libraries.

Mr. St. John said that the Council on Library Administration which has just recently been suggested in implementation of the survey would not only apply to large libraries, but to all sizes of libraries. The general idea behind it would seem to be the synthesizing of the operations of libraries of all sorts. He really hopes that the general plan might be carried even a step further. There are advantages of having an Adult Services Council or even a Service Council so that you can have much more unity in the pattern of development than you can when you begin to divide into fairly small categories.

Miss Gregory said that the Committee on Division Organization would be interested in membership reaction to the statement of primary interest. In answer to a question from Miss Ridgway, she said it was being considered from the standpoint of field of interest as the Division Organization Committee had not had a chance to discuss field of responsibility. Miss Gregory read the ten points, and the membership by a show of hands gave its support. Miss Gregory said the Committee on Division Organization would be thinking in terms of responsibility and would like to know what they felt are the fields of responsibility.

Miss Gregory then turned the meeting back to Miss Sandoe.

In the PLD Membership meeting the following resolution was VOTED; The PLD commends the work of the ALA Council Steering Committee, but suggests that

further consideration be given to their recommendations for a Council on Library Administration and the problem of financing the new organization. The motion was heard and seconded by Mr. Lieberman. There was no contrary vote.

Miss Sandoe made an announcement about a change of time for the Library Extension Section Board meeting.

The meeting ended at 11:45 a.m.