

LIBRARIANS CITE NEED FOR STATEWIDE REFERENCE CENTER

The most pressing need for libraries in North Carolina is to link existing informational resources with users throughout the state.

Three nationally-recognized library experts and over 40 North Carolina librarians who met December 16-17, 1969 in Raleigh to discuss a proposed statewide library research center concluded that the libraries' immediate needs should be met through a statewide bibliographic center and far more rapid communication services within the state.

The State Board of Higher Education, the North Carolina Library Association, the State Library and the State Board of Education initiated the meeting in connection with their joint sponsorship of a study of the feasibility of establishing a North Carolina Libraries Service Center.

The three consultants in the library study are John Dawson, Director of Libraries, University of Delaware; John A. Humphry, Assistant Commissioner for Libraries, New York State Library, University of the State of New York; and Roger H. McDonough, Director of the State Library, Trenton, New Jersey.

In a second planning session on the library study, an 11-member advisory committee heard a preliminary report presented by the library consultants which cited the need for a statewide bibliographic reference center.

The advisory committee also received the findings of a poll of North Carolina librarians representing all types of libraries which was conducted in November by the sponsors of the study.

The poll indicated strong agreement concerning the need for a center to provide bibliographic services to users anywhere in the state. To accomplish this, the location of major library resources in North Carolina should be identifiable in one reference center. This would mean expanding the North Carolina Union Catalog to include the holdings of all the major libraries in the state. At the present time this bibliographic resource is the best single catalog of what North Carolina libraries hold. Since 1937 it has been in operation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

It would also mean extending the IN-WATS telephone reference service to all libraries. This service now links most of the libraries in the state to the State Library and to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and handles approximately 200 requests for information weekly. It does not include direct service to community colleges, technical institutes, junior colleges and certain special and research libraries.

While discussions were exploratory, they represent a significant attempt toward better library coordination and more rapid service to all North Carolina. This study brings together representatives of all types of libraries to identify their most pressing problems and through cooperation to find solutions.