

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

"A Plan for North Carolina Libraries" should be begun as soon as possible. It will be an evolutionary sort of thing and as many North Carolina librarians as possible should have a part in it. It will probably come out in parts, mimeographed, and labelled "Preliminary Draft" and perhaps it will be years before a sound, finished plan is ready for the printer, but now is the time to start.

Some of the spade work has already been started in different sections of NCLA. This has been in terms of one type of library: public, school, or college. A plan for library service throughout the state would cut across library types. It would help us to think in terms of the service we give the school boy, college student, farmer, housewife, industrialist, merchant, engineer, writer, lawyer, bricklayer, clergyman, and other individuals; the services we have for groups such as the PTA, civic and federated club, union local, chapters of other professional groups, and many more. Does it matter as much whether it is an assigned function of the college, school or public library as it matters whether the individual or group gets the facts, material or source of the answer he wants? Of course not, but . . . It takes money to provide services and who is going to pay? No library in North Carolina has an adequate budget. (As this is being written some of our state supported colleges and our state university are threatened with cuts in library budgets; there is no likelihood of any increase in State Aid to Public Libraries; school library supervisors are feeling insecure. Is this the time to plan for better service? The only better time would have been before now, but that time is past, so let's start now.) Perhaps we can devise some sort of division of cost in areas where the school, college and public library serve some of the same people. The H. W. Wilson Company worked out a "service basis." Why can't we?

There are some "standards" of per capita, or per pupil, income which will have to continue to be worked out by type of library. Building needs for these types of libraries are different. But there are some standards which are common to all libraries. How do professional library salaries in North Carolina compare with salaries for other professions in the state on the basis of educational requirements, amount of responsibility, experience, and length of working year? How do clerical salaries compare with those offered by the businesses who compete with libraries for the available supply of good clerks, typists, stenographers and bookkeepers? The Conference planned by the Library Education Committee and held in Chapel Hill on April 30 has given us a foundation in bringing out what a librarian should learn before accepting a position. How are we going to keep the graduating paragon in North Carolina?

But back to our theme, which, in case you are wondering at this point, is COOPERATION. There has been a great deal of cooperation between libraries, but hasn't it been mostly one way? The college and university libraries have made inter-library loans to the small public library, but how often has a college library borrowed a book from a public library? County libraries have supplemented rural school libraries each winter, and town libraries meet the rush of school children when the school library closes up tight at three-thirty; but has a school library ever supplemented a public library in the summer time? Does it always have to be the larger library helping the smaller library? Can't we find a return route?

As we said earlier, many librarians must help to find the answer. What are your ideas on the subject? Send them along and we'll put plans for the future in with the reports of the past biennium in the next issue.

What should be the new State Library's function in the state plan? Now that the General Assembly has acted, the present State Library and the Library Commission will merge into a new agency in July 1956. What do you want its functions to include? North Carolina librarians should be consulted. Let's start planning now!