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TEMPLES OF DEMOCRACY:

A HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

IN ONTARIO, 1880 – 1920

BY

JOHN A. WISEMAN

A Doctoral Thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of Doctor of
Philosophy of the Loughborough University
of Technology

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The public library is the temple of democracy. It is the noblest expression of the highest type of democracy in modern life. It is a very temple whose atmosphere compels reverence. Not even a church compels it more, and frequently not as much. There is in it the consciousness of high purpose, of noble endeavour, of eager quest for truth. The institution represents a common enterprise. It belongs to the people and it is maintained by them. No touch of autocracy is suffered to come within its doors. There is no distinction between rich and poor. The greatest minds of the past greet alike the learned and the ignorant of today. Every book, obtained without charge, opens without favour to any and alike to all.

C.W. Casson, editor,
*Ottawa Citizen*, in an address to the Eastern Library Institute,
November 20, 1913
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I also received assistance from many librarians and archivists in institutions which included the Archives of Ontario, the Public Archives of Canada, the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, the National Library of Canada, and a number of public libraries across the province; the kindness and patience afforded me made my research that much easier. The Library Documentation Centre, National Library of Canada, deserves particular mention where Mr. Doug Robinson earned my deepest gratitude by assisting me on a number of occasions in tracking down those elusive references that can frustrate even the most tenacious researcher.

In the final analysis, however, my largest debt of gratitude is to my wife who gave me encouragement and support throughout, and also provided a great deal of practical advice and assistance which included proofreading the final draft.
ABSTRACT

The forty years from 1880 to 1920 were probably the most significant for public library development in Ontario, underscored by a marked deficiency of these institutions in the other Canadian provinces. This study explores the transition from a loose confederation of semi-independent mechanics' institutes and a few free libraries to a recognizable province-wide system of public libraries that, after 1900, came under the watchful eye of a nascent professional association, the membership of which took a "missionary" approach to its work.

The library movement's relationship with the Government, acting through the Education Department, is also examined, together with the legislation and regulations that affected library development. The outstanding problems of the period are also discussed, which included professionalization, library provision in rural areas, the survival of the small impecunious library, library service to children, technical education, and within collection development, the fiction question. Innovative forms of library service designed to meet unusual circumstances also receive attention. Among these were libraries in schools, travelling libraries, railway company libraries, and lumber and mining camp libraries, all of which affected the directions public library development was to take.

These concerns and developments are described against a background of radical change in most areas of society: economic, social, political, cultural, and educational, of which the last-named is particularly significant, for the
public library was regarded in this period as an integral part of the educational system.

The formation of the Canadian Library Association's Library History Interest Group in 1980 signalled the beginning of a more systematic study of library history in Canada. Under the convenorship of Professor Peter McNally,
of McGill University, the group meets annually to present papers and discusses a wide variety of topics. This has proved to be an important forum for my own research. While working on the nineteenth-century period, I examined the legislation which includes the important enactments of 1882 and 1895. The first statute provided for the establishment of free libraries; the second consolidated previous legislation and changed the name of mechanics' institutes to "public libraries." I was curious to know more about their impact on future library development, and this led me to the years 1880-1920, a forty-year period that was perhaps the richest in the province's library history. The year 1880 is a natural terminus a quo because, in that year, the mechanics' institutes were subjected to a searching review which had a profound effect upon their future development. In 1920, all previous legislation was consolidated, emphasizing forty years of growth and development, making that year the ideal terminus ad quem.

I delivered a survey paper before the Library History Interest Group in Hamilton, Ontario, in June 1981. It examined the basic legislation for the period 1880-1920 and the significant changes it brought about, together with some general observations on this period of transition. It was subsequently published as "Phoenix in Flight; Ontario Mechanics' Institutes, 1880-1920," Canadian Library Journal, XXXVIII (December, 1981), pp. 401-405. Time and space constraints prevented more than a cursory examination, but it did serve as a baseline study for my thesis. I later conducted two further studies in the period (a biographical cameo of the Ontario Library Association's long-serving Secretary and founding father, E.A. Hardy, and a discussion of the role of the public library during the First World War), projects which convinced me that the period deserved a
much fuller treatment. Both studies were published in *Readings in Canadian Library History* (Ottawa, C.L.A., 1986).

The principal sources consulted were the early records of the Education Department (Archives of Ontario); reports of the Minister of Education, which include full reports from the Inspector (Superintendent) of Public Libraries; the reports of the National Council of Women of Canada; the Reading Camp Association and Frontier College Archives (Public Archives of Canada); board minutes, archival material, and scrapbooks for selected public libraries; transactions and proceedings of library conferences; transactions and proceedings of learned societies (Royal Society of Canada, Canadian Institute); published monographs and pamphlets relating to the history of the public library and its role in the community, including works on the library movement in Britain and the United States; backfiles of library journals, especially *Library Journal, Ontario Library Review, Public Libraries, and the Library Association Record*; files of daily and weekly newspapers, and periodicals of more general interest; histories of the province and of individual communities, especially those containing material relating to culture and education.

The records of the Education Department are, unfortunately, incomplete; material pertaining to public libraries and mechanics' institutes is included under the subdivision entitled "Registrar's Branch." There are only "select files" for this branch, covering the period 1885-1913, and public libraries and mechanics' institutes are represented by just three boxes of fragmentary documents, with nothing, of course, beyond 1912. The "Provincial Library Service" forms another subdivision of the Education Department's records, and covers the period 1874-1924. This
collection contains mostly reports from various societies which were of little value to my work.

Fortunately, it proved possible to compensate for these deficiencies by supplementing the archival material with the reports of the Minister of Education and the Inspector of Public Libraries, which are rich and valuable sources of information. The statistical data are about a year behind the reports to which they are appended, and are not always completely reliable. The information reflects only those libraries that filed annual reports (luckily the majority). Nevertheless, these annual reports, which are substantial compilations, reveal much about Government policy, attitudes to public library development, and the directions the movement was taking. If the wealth of information found in the annual proceedings of the Ontario Library Association (O.L.A.) is also taken into account, then a reasonably full picture of the public library emerges. For example, the broad range of matters discussed at the annual meetings, and also at the library institutes (district workshops), provides us with the library movement's point of view, which did not always coincide with that of the Government. The primary link between the public library movement and the Government was, of course, the legislation which added yet another dimension to the narrative.

Archival material relating to the history of the O.L.A. is not substantial. There are two collections: one is in the Archives of Ontario and the other at O.L.A. headquarters in Toronto. The first covers the period 1899-1926, which coincides with the period covered by a short history of the Association, published in 1926. The records, which again, are incomplete, include minutes of the annual conferences, some manuscript copies of papers presented, routine business
correspondence, and financial records. This collection would be of some value to a researcher writing a history of the Association, but being largely administrative records, it contributes little to any further understanding of the larger aspects of public library development.

The archival collection at O.L.A. headquarters is not large. The lack of records for the early decades is due to the fact that E.A. Hardy, the Secretary, kept them in his attic or cellar over the years and move several times in that period, losing many of them in the process. There are minute books (handwritten for the early years), however, that run to the 1960s, but like minutes generally, they need to be read in conjunction with other types of record.

Because northern Ontario was developed much later than the southern part of the province, and its few centres of population suffered from isolation and the obstacles presented by a harsh and empty landscape, it seemed reasonable to suppose that the library movement there had been hampered by additional problems not present in the south. During the early stages of my research, I had found little on northern library development, although I expected to find material on the related topics of railway, mining and lumber camp libraries in the Public Archives of Canada. Besides, the situation suggested that a case-study approach might enable me to discover both the common and the unique characteristics of the principal libraries in that region. As a consequence, I decided to select a number of representative communities, visit their libraries, and examine their historical records. In total, I estimate that I travelled some 2,000 miles, following the eastern shore of Lake Superior north to Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, then crossing the province by the so-called "northern" route
and returning south along the eastern boundary, visiting New Liskeard on the way.

The libraries chosen for examination were Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, New Liskeard, and Kenora. Board minutes were a basic source of information for these libraries. They were fleshed out with accounts found in informal histories, local newspapers, scrapbooks, and through interviews and correspondence with staff members. Sudbury Public Library, for example, kindly loaned me its board minutes in microform which saved a special visit. The enormous distance of Kenora, which is on the western side of the province, made a visit there impractical, but the staff was most helpful in providing me with both material and advice on the early history of their library.

Other libraries that might have been included had to be ignored simply because there was not enough documentary evidence. North Bay Public Library has no records of its early history. Haileybury was the victim of a tragic bush fire that destroyed ninety percent of the town in 1922, which means that the history of its public library is lost forever. Consequently, I was able to provide sketches for the Sudbury Public Library and the Kenora Public Library, with fuller treatment for the public libraries in Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, and New Liskeard. Considered with other developments in northern Ontario, these case studies provide a clear picture of the emerging public library in that region.

The only other treatment of the exact period of my study consists of a journal article by Lorne Bruce entitled "Public Libraries in Ontario, 1882-1920," Ontario History, LXXVI (June, 1985), pp. 123-149. It examines the
administrative and financial policies of the Education Department relating to public libraries. Although it is a highly speculative article that encountered some editorial problems, it did provide me with the opportunity to engage in an extremely useful dialogue with its author (for which I am grateful), thus enabling me to clarify my thinking on a number of contentious issues. One other study needs to be mentioned: Stephen F. Cummings, *Angus McGill Mowat and the Development of Ontario Public Libraries, 1920-1960* (University of Western Ontario, Ph.D., 1986). It explores Mowat’s professional life as an important figure in library development during the period immediately following that encompassed by my research. I was very pleased that I had the opportunity to read it before my own thesis was finished.

I was also fortunate to be invited to address the faculty and postgraduate students of the School of Library and Information Science, University of Western Ontario, on the subject of my research. I found this to be a useful and stimulating experience, for it enabled me to enhance certain aspects of my study, as well as test its validity.

As far as the organization of my thesis is concerned, I did consider a thematic approach, for there are several topics that would lend themselves to this treatment (travelling libraries; the Carnegie benefactions; technical education and the public library; professional training, etc.). In the end, I decided upon what is basically a chronological framework to convey a sense of time passing and accommodate the notion of development and progress. To avoid fragmenting pervasive topics by discussing them over several chapters, I decided to deal with each completely within the chapter where it first becomes a factor in the
narrative. Dates given in chapter headings should, therefore, be regarded only as approximate indicators of the period covered. Furthermore, two topics have been given chapters of their own: "Northern Ontario," because the subject is large enough to warrant it, and "Collection Development," which is relevant and important, but outside the mainstream of the discussion.

During the period 1880-1920, the following served as Inspectors (Superintendents) of Public Libraries:

- S.P. May,
  - 1880-1905
- T.W.H. Leavitt,
  - 1905-1909
- W.R. Nursey,
  - 1909-1915
- S.B. Herbert, (acting)
  - 1915
- W.O. Carson,
  - 1916-1929
INTRODUCTION

The old colony of Quebec was divided in 1791 into Upper Canada (now Ontario) and Lower Canada (now Quebec). The upper, or western, colony was mainly English-speaking, receiving its first major influx of settlers from the American colonies. These were people who were loyal to the British Crown and wished to remain under its protection; they were known as the United Empire Loyalists. In the decades that followed, Upper Canada continued to receive immigrants, and it began to grow in importance and stature.

Upper and Lower Canada were united in 1841 to form the Province of Canada; Ontario was now called "Canada West." The British North America Act of 1867 brought into being the Dominion of Canada, formed from the provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. The name "Ontario" dates from this historic moment. Manitoba joined the Confederation in 1870, followed by British Columbia in 1871, Prince Edward Island in 1873, Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905, and, finally, Newfoundland in 1949. During the four decades encompassed by this study, the province experienced boundary increases, taking on its present form in 1912 (412,528 square miles).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the framework for a free, elementary school system was constructed that would improve levels of literacy, and eventually provide potential patrons for the public library. This was also a period of innovation and growth for the province, with vast improvements in transportation and
communications, notably the development of rail networks, all of which increased population mobility. The northernmost parts of southern Ontario were still, however, mostly "bush," and were sparsely populated and somewhat isolated. This was especially true of the vast region known as northern or "New" Ontario, which would slowly begin to open up as the nineteenth century was drawing to a close.

The period 1880 to 1920 saw enormous economic, social, and political changes, when the province embraced industrial capitalism, with all its attendant evils, and attempted to deal with numerous complex problems associated with industrialism, not the least of which was rural depopulation. It is not surprising that it was also a period of social reform, epitomized by the "social gospel" movement in which the churches attempted to ameliorate the social evils that followed in the wake of industrial capitalism.

On the political front, the period opened with the Liberal Government still in power (since 1872), led by the ubiquitous Oliver Mowat. The Liberals continued in power under Arthur S. Hardy (1896-1899) and then George W. Ross (1899-1905), formerly Minister of Education. The Conservatives replaced the Liberals in 1905, under James P. Whitney, who died in office shortly after his party was re-elected in 1914. The First World War had its impact on the life of the province which, like the rest of Canada, made great sacrifices and contributed enormously to the war effort. Again, the public library found special roles to play, largely as an information service and a community centre for war-related activities. During the war, Conservative Williams H. Hearst led the Government until it was defeated by E.C. Drury's Farmer-Labour Government in
1919, the latter receiving some credit for the major library legislation that was enacted in 1920.

An emigration guide, published in 1880, described Ontario as "the great English speaking, British populated province of the Dominion," with "surroundings and associations" that made it much like Britain. It was therefore natural to support British-style institutions, and one of these was the mechanics' institute which was to become the foundation of Ontario's public library system. The first institute was organized in Toronto as early as 1830, and many more were to be established throughout the province in the years ahead. Their original purpose was the provision of technical and industrial training, eventually leavened with some general education for the adult population, but especially the working classes. This aim was to be accomplished through lectures and evening classes. Also implied was a measure of "social control," but this element does not seem to have received much stress, at least as far as Ontario was concerned.

For the membership, the most popular facilities in the institute were the library and reading room which received a great deal of attention, while evening instruction languished. In fact, a number of institutes were also cultural and social centres for their communities, all of which was a constant sources of concern to the Government who wished to stress education. Nevertheless, as the fortunes of mechanics' institutes waxed and waned, the libraries became their mainstay.

The prime mover in the development of the primary school system mentioned earlier was Egerton Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of Education. He soon realized that the
newly-literate, about to issue from his schools, would need to be protected from the mass of pernicious reading matter that was readily and cheaply available to them. His plan was to substitute "wholesome" and instructive literature. Ryerson was not entirely happy with the collections in mechanics' institutes, so he devised his own system of school-based public libraries to serve both adults and school children. The libraries were stocked with selections from Ryerson's Educational Depository, a form of bookstore that provided books at extremely low prices, carefully selected by the Chief Superintendent and his staff.

The library system failed in the 1870s, and as the mechanics' institutes were functioning largely as public libraries (although evening classes were still being offered), they were given the task of filling the gap in library service. A free libraries act was passed in 1882, based on the now familiar principle of library service financed through taxation. Its appearance suggested that the proliferation of free libraries would usurp the public library role of mechanics' institutes, but most communities were slow to take up this option, and mechanics' institutes continued to predominate. Before the nineteenth century was over, access to technical education was becoming available from alternative agencies, further reducing the need for this type of service in the institutes. Official recognition of their principal function was confirmed in 1895 when, under new legislation, they were renamed "public libraries." Thus, the first steps were taken towards a rational system of public libraries for Ontario.
ORILLIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

A TYPICAL CARNEGIE BUILDING
CHAPTER ONE
1880 - 1884

On January 28, 1880 the Toronto Globe reported upon the second reading of a bill amending the Agriculture and Arts Act that would place mechanics' institutes under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education. It was hoped that such an affiliation would encourage the institutes to fulfill their primary purpose of providing educational opportunities for working people, principally through the provision of evening classes. During the debate, James Young, a member of the Legislature and President of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes of Ontario, expressed his pleasure at this transfer; he thought the new arrangement would improve efficiency. Pointing out that many restrictions were placed upon the institutes, Mr. Young was also pleased that a more liberal attitude to the selection of books was embodied in the legislation.

The wording of the act is quite vague, stating that the Education Department was empowered to sanction the purchase of books "in other subjects than those expressly authorized by the said act." But it is clear that Mr. Young had in mind a recommendation made at a convention of institutes held in the previous year which proposed that twenty percent of the grant should be applied to the purchase of fiction. This became permissible by a regulation of the Education Department in June, 1880. There was, however, a stipulation: if selections were to be made from sources
other than the Education Department's official catalogue, they would require ministerial approval.³

School-based public libraries created by Egerton Ryerson in the 1850s had virtually disappeared by the end of the 1870s. They were abandoned by the Government in favour of renewed support for the mechanics' institutes. Foster Vernon believes there were two reasons for this choice which he extrapolates from statements in a memorandum published by the Education Department in 1888.⁴ Ryerson's public library system had been mainly used by children. (This was actually true only for the later years and there were other influences on the system's failure such as stagnant, uniform collections and financial problems).⁵ Vernon finds the second reason in a statement that refers to financial support for the mechanics' institutes, showing that they received approximately eighty times more from local contributions in 1887 than the school-based public libraries did in 1879.⁶ As the Government made its choice in 1880, this particular piece of information could hardly have influenced a decision taken several years earlier. In retrospect, it does indicate, however, that the legislators had chosen correctly.

The same memorandum notes that, in the five years before the grants were withdrawn in 1880, book expenditures by the municipalities in support of the school-based public libraries had been slight compared to earlier years. At the same time, the mechanics' institute libraries were flourishing. In 1873, for example, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works stated that "bringing within the reach of the people a wholesome literature should be among the foremost functions of these institutes."⁷ Looked at in conjunction with the later decision to allow fiction
purchases from the grant, it is clear that mechanics' institutes were expected to provide library service, as well as continuing education of a technical nature. It was, no doubt, hoped that such a service would counteract the deleterious effects of cheap "sensational" literature which was readily available throughout the province and beyond. It may also be significant that between 1870 and 1880 approximately sixty percent of the institutes visited by Dr. May in 1880 had become incorporated in that decade. This was a positive response to the support the Government was providing.

The historian John George Bourinot, while pleased that the institutes were to be placed on a more efficient footing, believed that public libraries accessible to all classes were the most pressing need. He suggested that the rich men of Canada might devote part of their surplus wealth to the establishment of such worthy institutions. Bourinot considered this to be a patriotic aim and one that would enable benefactors to erect monuments to themselves "far more honourable than any that may be achieved by expenditures on purely selfish objects." He pointed to the United States where numerous examples of this type of benefaction could be found.

Having taken over his new charges, Adam Crooks, the Minister of Education, was naturally interested in discovering everything he could about them. He instructed Dr. S.P. May, at this time Superintendent of the Educational Library and Museum, to examine each institute in the province with a view to providing the Minister with detailed information. The result was a report of more than 200 pages that included recommendations which would form the basis for regulating the institutes in the future.
May began his tour in June, 1880 and completed it in December of that year. In the 121 institutes visited, he encountered a wide variety of conditions and practices, not all of which were conducive to good management and public service. May was particularly interested in ascertaining which institutes had libraries, reading rooms, and especially evening classes. Membership figures and subscription charges were also surveyed. Particular attention was paid to financial matters as a number of institutes engaged in practices which, to say the least, could be considered dubious. The composition of the book and periodical collections and the circulation figures were of special interest to May. The library came under particular scrutiny because of the presence of fiction, traditionally and frequently a contentious issue. The selection that follows provides a reasonable cross-section of May's findings on typical institutes.

The Alexandria Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1878) was found to be nothing more than a reading room for about seventeen members which, in May's estimation, was "of no practical value to the working classes." His recommendation was that, if evening classes were not formed, the grant should be stopped. Arthur Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1878) was a substitute for a school library, for the books were kept in the school house and the headmaster was the librarian. Lectures, evening classes, and a reading room were completely absent. May was pleased with the Aylmer Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1874), describing its directors as "very energetic and enterprising men." The library contained over 1,000 well-selected volumes, and had subscriptions to five newspapers and three magazines. According to the Inspector, this institute was
destined to become one of the most flourishing in the province.

A successful institute was located in Belleville. It was incorporated as early as 1850, and was housed in a suite of rooms over a block of stores. It included in its facilities a very good library, a reading room, classrooms, a recreation room and a gymnasium. It had over 500 members. By contrast, the Bolton Mechanics' Institute's library was kept in a bookcase in the local telegraph office. The Clarksburg Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1879) stands as an example of confused, if not dishonest, financial practices. Just over forty-two dollars were charged to the maintenance of a reading room, yet, on inspection, May discovered that no reading room existed. The book collection was kept in a bookcase in a tailor's shop, but there were no collections of newspapers or periodicals. Attempts at fund-raising in the form of entertainments had realized the grand sum of seventy cents! The institute located in Guelph (incorporated 1850) received a favourable report, partly because its evening classes were said to be very successful. In addition, it possessed a good library, a reading room, a chess room, and a billiards room with three tables.

Kemptville Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1877) epitomized the worst fears shared by May and his Minister. It was in a state of chaos and was obviously badly managed, functioning largely as a popular circulating library. The Secretary-Treasurer was also the local bookseller which clearly suggested a conflict of interest, a matter May would deal with in his recommendations. Lucan Mechanics' Institute is something of a curiosity, for it had only one member at the time of Dr. May's visit. It had a small
library of 143 volumes which was about to be increased by the addition of new purchases from the Government grant.

Lindsay Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1879) was singled out as having an excess of fiction in its library. It was hoped that this would be remedied in the future. It was unusual in that it received financial support from both the township and the county, in addition to membership subscriptions and Government grants. An extremely good reading room housed a broad range of Canadian, American, and British periodicals, as well as twenty-six newspapers.

The Norwood Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1872) was also castigated for an excess of fiction which apparently represented the principal reading matter of the membership. The stock in this class of literature was almost entirely worn-out, while the remainder of the collection had been hardly used. After taking four years to comply with the conditions upon which the grant was based, the institute was now in a position to apply again. There has been some speculation as to the fate of the book collections formed under Ryerson's public library scheme. Dr. May found one such collection in the Oakville Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1878). The books, covered in linen and kept in glass-fronted bookcases, were in excellent condition.

It should not be assumed that Dr. May's visits were all straightforward and uneventful. When he arrived at the institute in Pembroke (incorporated 1875), May was informed that the institute was defunct. The Mayor agreed to accompany him in the search for former officials. The Inspector was told that the effects of the institute had been sold by auction in June 1878, after receiving the
Government grant. No satisfactory explanations regarding the reasons for dissolving the institute were forthcoming; there was also the question of the disposition of the proceeds of the sale. The former Secretary agreed to get the information and forward it to Dr. May's office, but it never materialized. This left May to speculate on the reasons why an institute that the Inspector's reports for the mid-1870s said was flourishing should mysteriously collapse.

Dr. May described the Smith's Falls Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1854) as one of the oldest in Ontario, but not the most popular. He had great difficulty in finding the establishment and was informed by elderly inhabitants of the town that they had never heard of it. May eventually located it in a very small room over a store which was without a door. The shelves were made from rough planks. The books were in no apparent order, while the system of delivery consisted quite simply of allowing members to help themselves. There was no reading room and evening classes had never been established. May was anxious to examine the records of this institute and asked the President to forward them to him. He was unable to comply with this request as the Treasurer had never separated the accounts relating to purchases for the institute from those for his own bookstore. He gave an assurance that everything was above board and strictly honest, and promised to call a meeting of the Board with a view to putting the institute back on a firmer footing.

It was a function of school inspectors to examine the institutes once a year, but not all of them were scrupulous in the performance of their duties. The inspector responsible for the Vittoria Mechanics' Institute
(incorporated 1850) had continued to draw his annual fee of ten dollars, even though this particular institute had been closed for several years. The directors of the Woodbridge Mechanics' Institute (incorporated 1877) claimed that more than sixty dollars had been expended towards reading room expenses, but, in fact, they had used the money to pay an instalment on a building lot. The Treasurer, moreover, did not keep proper account books.\textsuperscript{13}

It is apparent from the foregoing that there were many operational disparities among the mechanics' institutes, and although it would have been difficult to prove outright dishonesty, in a number of cases it was obvious that policies and practices left much to be desired. When challenged, institutes could always claim that the pertinent act was ambiguous, a fact which was understood by the Minister himself.\textsuperscript{14} Dr. May's prime mandate was to gather information and report, but he also included a series of recommendations aimed, in part, at correcting the abuses he had encountered and providing the Education Department with more control.

The only serious challenge to May's report and recommendations came from Otto Klotz, an important figure in the mechanics' institute movement. He was President of the Preston Mechanics' Institute, and had served as both Vice-President and President of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes of Ontario. He was clearly unhappy with some aspects of the report, and quickly identified the principal thrusts of the document: the lion's share of the grants should go to support evening classes; all municipalities should be encouraged to share in financing the institutes; the Education Department should exercise greater regulatory control.\textsuperscript{15}
Dr. May began by declaring the existing system a failure. It could give a maximum grant of $400 to even the smallest institute that claimed it could comply with the statute and raise locally an additional $200. There was an obvious risk in this, as the institute might be unable to meet its obligations. Apart from anything else, it was not business-like, and he recommended a reduction, as only the larger institutes could spend amounts of any great magnitude. In fact, May was of the opinion that the majority would be more successful if they received a regular sum of $100 each year for book purchases. What he recommended was a maximum of $200 for libraries and reading-rooms, based on the provision of one Government dollar for each subscribing member. An amount equivalent to one half the grant would have to be raised at the local level.

Klotz was quick to point out the inequities and hardships that would arise if the grant should be restricted in the way Dr. May recommended. It had been proved beyond any doubt that institutes in small towns and villages would not survive without healthy grants to supplement the meagre incomes derived from membership fees. By contrast, cities and large towns had sources of revenue that rendered the grant less important. Even if it was accepted that some institutes might be more successful with book grants that did not exceed $100, how would it be decided which institutes properly belonged to this category?

One of May's chief concerns was that the libraries were developing as depositories for ephemeral literature at the expense of evening classes. Even in those institutes that had conducted classes (about fifty percent), the attempts had usually been of short duration. In order to redress the
balance, the grant would be apportioned according to the amount of evening-class work done. May believed that, in small centres of population, the library and reading room would operate as incentives to the establishment of evening classes, but did not explain how this might be accomplished. Klotz pointed out quite testily that it was not enough simply to assert that the institutes were only circulating libraries; May ought to have proffered a remedy. It was Klotz’s contention that “prohibitory laws and restrictions” would only add to the problem. Instead, people should be induced and persuaded to read a better class of literature, even works of “innocent amusement,” all of which should be conducive to the establishment of evening classes.

Dr. May was anxious that municipal governments should share the burden of supporting the institutes, which was the case in some communities. The practice needed to be extended to all cities, townships, and villages. May put the proposition in the context of profit to businessmen and property owners who would gain immeasurably from technical and scientific training for the masses. Apart from the innovative benefits to industry, there would be “a more perfect security of property and person.” He also thought that benefits would accrue to farmers and their sons through improvements in farming techniques. This recommendation elicited a positive response from Klotz who observed that, in addition to receiving general approbation, the principle would delight a number of struggling institutes if it became established as a law. It was true that some municipalities had responded handsomely to their respective institutes, but these were the minority.

Klotz was pleased at the recommendation calling for the establishment of reading rooms in every institute, remarking
that their collections of scientific publications would enable the public to be informed and up-to-date on the inventions and discoveries of the day. He was not sure about the recommendation to encourage the appointment of female librarians whenever possible. Although they could be paid less than men, Klotz did not think that women were reliable enough to remain in their posts for any reasonable lengths of time. Bad experiences of this type had caused some institutes to revert to the appointment of only males.

A sensitive area in institute affairs was financial control and accountability. The Government's chief concern was ensuring that public funds were not misused, whether by accident or design. Usually, it was more a matter of poor business practice than dishonesty, but Dr. May was determined to correct the matter. He suggested remunerating booksellers and evening-class teachers through the Education Department. In Otto Klotz's opinion this was "the most objectionable, impractical and unpalatable of all May's numerous recommendations." Such "red-tapism would disgust institute directors and cause them to resign."

Apart from the fact that the system proposed would be unwieldy and inefficient, Klotz was worried at the obvious desire to impose a high degree of centralization, thus robbing the institutes of their autonomy and independence. The principle of self-government was important and should be protected, especially as there were sufficient "teeth" in the statute to provide the necessary supervision. "Will the public," he asked, "be better served by theorists than by practical men? Are we to have autocracy or oligarchy introduced into our system; or will we in future be allowed to enjoy, as at present, the privileges of self-government?"
New regulations were formulated, based upon the Minister's own conclusions and suggestions, as well as those from individual institutes. The aim was to prevent undue emphasis upon any single institute activity, which, euphemistically, meant that libraries and reading rooms would not be allowed to predominate over evening-class instruction. Institutes were now required to show that they had raised locally the additional fifty percent of the expected grant before the latter would be dispatched. This was to avoid the past problem of institutes who had not bothered to exert themselves, once the grant had been received.

The grant for library purposes would be $150; for the reading room, $100; and for evening classes, $150. The Minister generously conceded that any institute that had previously received $200 or more for its library would be allowed the same amount again, but no more. Twenty percent of the grant could be used to purchase fiction, but it had to be either selected according to the Department's official catalogue, or with ministry approval. In allowing institutes demonstrating the impracticality of holding evening classes to have the grant for that purpose diverted to the library, the Minister was unwittingly encouraging them to develop their libraries at the expense of classes, the very thing he wished to avoid.

In his annual report of the following year (1882) the Minister shifted his ground. After reinforcing the notion of an educational role for the institutes, he stated that, as the local circumstances differed for each institute, it was unwise to implement regulations that might interfere with autonomy at that level. To replace the regulations
described in his last report, the Minister therefore produced a set of "instructions" for the guidance of institutes which, oddly enough, read just like regulations. The allowance for the reading room was still $100, but the basic change was in the apportionment of the residual $300 which could now be divided between the library and evening classes as each institute saw fit (a further inducement to build libraries). No allowance, incidentally, was provided for salaries and other management expenses; these would have to be covered from the local appropriation. In the reporting year that ended on May 1, 1882, income from every source (grants, membership subscriptions, entertainments, etc.) for the ninety-six institutes that were active was some $20,000 more than had been raised in the previous year.18

The foregoing suggests that a revival was in progress, but the movement for free libraries was already manifesting itself, and would eventually have a profound effect upon the mechanics' institutes. The Toronto Globe drew attention to the existence of a lobby group intent on establishing a public library for Toronto, the principal city and capital of the province. It intriguingly suggested that there were special reasons why such an effort at this time might be successful. The mechanics' institute had fulfilled its mission and the city had outgrown the conditions that had made its establishment necessary. The entire establishment, including the land upon which the building stood, could be acquired for $24,000. It would form the nucleus of a good public library and reading room. Alderman John Hallam, who was to be a prime mover in the establishment of the library, was prepared to subscribe part of the money.19 Originally from England, he was a successful merchant who was generally regarded as a "self-made man."
Compared with some other major cities in North America, it was clear that Toronto was behind the times. What was needed was the ideal library with comprehensive collections and generous access; it would be a powerful rival to the tavern. The Globe thought that the institute had a very poor library and reading room, accessible only to those who were prepared to pay "considerable" membership fees. The Minister of Education took a totally different view, describing it in his special report as one of the most financially successful institutes, with assets in excess of $70,000; he commended it for doing "noble work." The "considerable" subscription fee was, incidentally, only three dollars per annum.

The Toronto Evening Telegram hoped that the long-awaited public library would become a reality. The project had been promoted on a number of occasions but had come to nothing. The editor thought it surprising that in a city like Toronto there were not three or four wealthy men willing to foot the bill. The city was to have free public baths, but a greater need was a free public library. Aldermen Hallam and Taylor were reportedly negotiating in the matter, and the Government was to be approached and asked for legislation that would empower municipalities to levy a tax for public library purposes. The school tax was cited as an appropriate analogy, as the public library was, after all, part of the educational system. A few weeks later, the same newspaper took a rather different stance: "The duly qualified electors cannot be induced to vote a grant for a luxury while they are compelled to submit to the nuisance of having the sewage of the city deposited in the bay."
A strategy meeting, held in the Mayor's office in November 1881, made it clear that the legislation for free libraries and the establishment of a public library for Toronto were inextricably mingled in the minds of at least some of the promoters, notably Hallam. He argued that the first requirement was to persuade the Premier to produce the permissive legislation that would authorize municipal councils to levy a tax. He was asked to confirm that the act was intended for the entire province and not for Toronto alone, which suggests that there was some skepticism about Hallam's broader motives. Hallam replied that there was enough evidence to suggest that a province-wide act was needed. Noting that public libraries were now out of the experimental stage, he stated his firm belief that the provision of such institutions was cheaper than the cost of combatting crime and vice. The meeting further stressed the importance of having the draft legislation prepared and printed immediately.24

Another meeting was held at City Hall on December 12, 1881, intended to get opinions and approval from the city's leading citizens. Alderman Taylor thought that the city's countless vagrants who wandered the streets at night clearly indicated the need for a public library. A Mr. Manning was concerned about the additional tax burden, and was disinclined to legislate additional taxation against the will of the people. A small committee was struck to remodel a draft bill under the direction of the city's solicitor.25

In the same month, Hallam completed a short monograph urging the establishment of rate-supported libraries, a "plea" published early in 1882. It gave the rationale for public libraries and expanded upon their history, citing the experiences of a number of countries including France,
Germany, Great Britain, and, of course, Canada. In the end, it returned to the specific need of Toronto, reiterating the economics of the project and the means for its promotion. In preparing his book, Hallam visited a number of public libraries in England, France, and Germany, encountering a language barrier in Europe that made his visits there less useful. His tour of England was particularly fruitful, especially in Birmingham, where the Chief Librarian, J.D. Mullins, proved to be extremely helpful.

At about the same time, Hallam produced a broadside which set out the steps for the general establishment of public libraries, and embodied his particular aspirations for Toronto. His basic concern was the continuing education of young people after they had left the elementary school system, as few could afford to buy books. "Here then," he said, "is a much felt want in Toronto that can only be supplied by free public libraries." It was the responsibility of the City Council to petition the Government for legislation designed along similar lines to the British act of 1850.

The Free Libraries Act received its first reading in the Legislature on February 9, 1882, passing without comment. The second reading on February 28 excited some discussion. Premier Mowat, rejoicing at the "public agitation" which had brought forth the legislation, hoped that it would provide the same benefits to the young and to those past the school age as its British counterpart had in that country. But not everyone shared the Premier's enthusiasm. A Mr. Meredith thought the powers given to municipal councils were too broad. James Young, whom we have seen was connected with the mechanics' institutes, thought the bill would destroy them. Oliver Mowat countered
by saying that the legislation would enable the population to form absolutely free libraries, the objects of which had not been achieved by the mechanics' institutes. The bill then passed safely through its second reading. The third reading took place on March 7, and became law by royal assent on March 10, 1882.

Cities, towns, and incorporated villages were now able to establish free libraries on the basis of a petition: at least 100 signatures for a city, not less than sixty for a town, and not less than thirty for a village. It required the assent of the electors to give effect to the petition which usually took the form of a referendum. Financial support would be provided from a property tax not to exceed one-half mill in the dollar. Furthermore, in municipalities where the act had been adopted, mechanics' institutes and library associations (subscription libraries) could, if they so wished, transfer their property to the municipal authority. An amendment in the following year permitted a library board that had absorbed the local mechanics' institute in this way to receive the grant to which the institute was previously entitled.

It may have been a coincidence, but on the same day the Free Libraries Act became law, assent was given to an amended Agriculture and Arts Act. One section clarified and strengthened some of the functions of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes of Ontario, a body expected to encourage lectures, promote appropriate literature, and interact with other associations. In introducing the measures, the Minister of Education referred enigmatically to the "altered position" of the institutes, which presumably meant their improvement. By contrast, George Ross (destined to become Minister of Education and then...
Premier), stated that, in his opinion, the mechanics' institutes had been ineffectual. These changes were intended to reinforce the educational function of the institutes and steer them away from a preoccupation with their libraries.

With passage of the Free Libraries Act, the way was clear for Alderman Hallam and his associates to pursue their goal of a public library for Toronto. Hallam left nothing to chance, sending a pamphlet to the churches asking the clergy to promote the library cause from their pulpits. They were to inform their congregations that, by giving the proposal their support, they would be assisting the work of the school and the church. These efforts bore fruit, for on January 1, 1883, the city decided to adopt the by-law on a majority of nearly 2,500 from the more than 8,000 votes cast.

In February, Hallam, as Chairman, addressed his newly-formed Board of Management. He asked its members to give careful consideration to his proposals. He thought that a rate-supported library should be very functional and not 'a mere curiosity shop' filled with books valuable only for their physical characteristics or rarity, and described the kinds of collections he thought it should have. Hallam also considered the building and its site and the qualities of its future librarian, before moving to the financial aspects of the project. Basically, it was a matter of assuming the assets of the mechanics' institute, a form of institution that, in Hallam's opinion, would be superseded by the free library and the technical school. After describing in some detail the monetary implications of the proposed transaction, he asked for a subcommittee to meet with the directors of the institute to discuss the manner in which
the transfer should be effected.

During the first six months of 1883, Hallam corresponded with librarians in England and the United States regarding the steps necessary to create a public library. In addition to advice, he received catalogues of collections, annual reports, and appropriate professional literature. He had some correspondence with several communities in Ontario, but in these cases, Hallam was asked to contribute his knowledge on the formation of free libraries. Hallam approached a number of notable people for advice, one of whom was no less a personage than the Prince of Wales, but his secretary, Francis Knollys, replied that it was not the practice of his Royal Highness to express opinions on controversial matters.

In an article which must have gone to press before the library referendum, the Bystander remarked that, because the growth of cheap printing was making it possible for a larger number of people to purchase books, it might be prudent to wait and measure the impact of this "literary revolution" before too many communities made commitments to buildings, collections, and staff. Such caution was particularly important, the editor thought, because most of the books borrowed from free libraries were ephemeral in nature and produced in a cheap format, serving only to clutter library shelves. A good reference library in each province was needed. For Ontario, the services of the parliamentary library could be extended; in the editor's view, it was a good library that was wasted on the "solitude of Ottawa."

The Bystander took up the specific matter of a library for Toronto. The editor repeated his belief that the availability of cheap publications had greatly reduced the
usefulness of public libraries. He was clearly piqued that his alternative idea of a reference library had not been given serious, if any, consideration. The presence of a public library would obviate the desire to build those small home collections that the availability of cheap reading matter would normally encourage. Furthermore, the real costs of the project, which would place a heavy burden on the public purse, had been hidden from the public's scrutiny.40

The author of the foregoing editorials was none other than historian Goldwin Smith, a political and social commentator who wrote prolifically on the affairs of the day. As creator and editor of the journal, he perceived it as a vehicle largely for political comment, but encompassing issues that were cultural, social, and economic in nature.41 His views on public libraries were widely known, for William F. Poole, Librarian of the Chicago Public Library, remarked to John Hallam on Smith's preference for a scholarly reference library, describing him as anachronistic in believing that poor people did not need libraries.42

Despite the hint of controversy, the preparations for Toronto's library proceeded throughout 1883. The sum of fifty-thousand dollars in debentures was voted by the City Council. A large sum of money was needed to modify and enlarge the mechanics' institute building and provide for branch libraries. The initial book collection would number 25,000 volumes, of which 5,000 would be divided between two branch libraries. On July 3, 1883 James Bain, a former bookseller and publisher, was appointed Chief Librarian, with a staff of three assistant librarians and four junior assistants. John Davy, formerly Secretary and Librarian to the mechanics' institute, was appointed as First Assistant
Bain's appointment to the principal library position was not without controversy, opposition coming largely from the supporters of rival candidates. In time, the criticism dissipated, for as the editor of the Week remarked: his sympathies had lain with another candidate, but now that the decision had been made, he felt no misgivings.

Whatever support the Week was prepared to give the public library movement, it was shortlived. It suggested that there were more pressing problems facing those who governed than supplying light literature at public expense. Referring to social evils on the streets of Toronto, especially victims of hunger and poverty, the journal believed that free access to a library of ephemeral novels was as ludicrous as expecting free tickets to the theatre, a theme that was to be repeated in the fiction controversy. Radical philanthropists were blamed for "taking the power of taxation away from the citizens at large, or their regular representatives, and placing it in the hands of an arbitrary board." Nevertheless, the library had its official opening on March 6, 1884, a fitting year for such an important occasion as the city celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its incorporation that summer.

Margaret Penman considers the enactment of free library legislation and the need for a public library in Toronto as coincidental; but it was more than a coincidence. According to Lorne Bruce, the legislation was designed by Adam Crooks, then Minister of Education, as part of a long-range plan for public library development, but he offers no substantive evidence to support this contention. When the events that led up to the establishment of the Toronto Public Library are considered carefully, it is hard to
escape the conclusion that the legislation for free libraries was carefully orchestrated by Hallam and his supporters to facilitate the creation of a public library for Toronto.

Doubts about this hypothesis can be dispelled by an examination of the pattern of library growth that followed. Only twelve free libraries were formed between 1882 and 1895 (the year of a major piece of new legislation), which hardly suggests an overwhelming desire for them. Particularly significant is the dramatic increase in mechanics' institutes in roughly the same period, the number reporting rising from ninety-six to 289.\textsuperscript{50} Two causes have been proffered for this phenomenon: small towns and villages could not raise sufficient funds from a local tax to support a free library; the middle classes preferred to recommend or select their children's reading matter themselves,\textsuperscript{51} something they could do as subscribing members of a mechanics' institute.

George Ross succeeded Adam Crooks as Minister of Education in 1883. The report on mechanics' institutes for that year again stressed the need for technical education to support the mining and manufacturing interests. The regulations provided principally to encourage the establishment of evening classes are revealing. Ten or more persons with combined assets of at least $100 could sign a declaration forming a mechanics' institute, or a library association, or a combination of both. Perhaps unwittingly, an option had been provided that could only weaken the attempt to promote evening classes on a broad scale. Obviously, citizens opting for simply a library association would feel no obligation in this direction and so could concentrate on developing their libraries. In fact, new
regulations imposed in 1883 only readjusted the $400 grant, allowing $200 for the library, $100 for the reading room, and $100 for evening classes.\textsuperscript{52}

Reporting for the year ending May, 1884, Dr. May emphasized to the Minister of Education the uneven support provided to the institutes by municipalities. Although it was probably asking too much to expect the Government to compel municipalities to provide aid, he thought that they should be encouraged in this direction by increasing their powers.\textsuperscript{53} The Superintendent had a number of complaints to voice. The statistical returns were frequently incomplete. This would be remedied in the future by enforcing the rule that called for accurate and full reporting. The fiction allowance had been introduced to encourage a taste for reading, but libraries were carrying too much fiction. Local inspectors were admonished to examine the books to discourage the dissemination of "shallow and sensational" literature. Noting that a number of institute directors had problems with book selection, the Superintendent concluded from his experience of the past four years that his earlier recommendation (1880) to restrict the grant for libraries and reading rooms to $200 had been sound. He was prepared, however, to make exceptions for cities and towns, because they were more capable of expending larger budgets.\textsuperscript{54}

Like the 1880 survey, the Superintendent's remarks on his later tours in the province are illuminating. Many of the older institutes had failed, one of the chief causes being the establishment of reading rooms without sufficient income to support them. At first they attracted the young men in the community, but once the novelty had worn off, they stopped attending. A handful of newspapers and magazines were simply not enough to lure them away from
their more interesting pastimes of skating and dancing. Predictably, the antidote was seen in the provision of evening classes. At this time, institute libraries were still to be found in schoolhouses, stores, public buildings, and, in one case, a lawyer's office.55

During the year (to May, 1884) active institutes had been granted over $23,000 by the Government, while a number had received almost $9,000 from their municipal councils.56 Their combined library collections numbered close to 196,000 volumes, which provided an annual circulation above 300,000 volumes among a total membership that approached 15,000.57 Three more mechanics' institutes, those of Berlin, Simcoe, and St. Thomas, had joined Toronto and Guelph by reforming as free libraries.58

As for free libraries, a new journal, Books and Notions, designed for the book trade, was in some doubt as to their usefulness. In its first issue it reminded readers that for many years cheap American reprints of English classics, free books given away as promotional ploys by the grocery trade, and volumes acquired as school prizes had encouraged and broadened readership and the development of home libraries. These phenomena must have stimulated the book trade to some extent, but the free library movement, on the other hand, could only be to its detriment. Novels, tales of adventure and similar ephemeral works were being purchased abroad, in England, Germany, and the United States, largely for an adolescent readership. The editor thought that this type of reading matter was of questionable value.59
NOTES AND REFERENCES

143 Vic., Chap. 5, 1880


3Ibid., pp. x-xi. Eric Bow is incorrect in suggesting that the twenty percent allowed for fiction included the grant and the local contribution; the latter was at the complete disposal of each institute. See: Eric Bow, "The Public Library Movement in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," Ontario Library Review, LXVI(1982), p. 8.


8Special Report, p. 64.


10Special Report, pp. 77-195, passim.


12See Special Report noted above.

13Ibid., pp. 77-195, passim. Because they cannot be considered typical, the larger institutes in Toronto, Hamilton, and London were excluded from the sample.
Ibid., p. xii.


"Wanted a Public Library and Reading Room," Toronto Globe, January 27, 1881.

Toronto Globe, November 24, 1881.

Special Report, pp. 181-182.

Toronto Evening Telegram, October 8, 1881.

Toronto Evening Telegram, October 31, 1881.

"Free Public Library," Toronto Globe, November 24, 1881.


Toronto Globe, March 1, 1882.

Toronto Globe, March 9, 1882.
3145 Vic., Chap. 22, 1882.
3246 Vic., Chap. 19, 1883.
3345 Vic., Chap. 4, 1882.
34Toronto Globe, February 24, 1882.
35Copy of a leaflet asking for the clergy's assistance in advertising the coming referendum. Baldwin Room, Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library.

36The Times (London), January 3, 1883. The City Council of Guelph, Ontario, also held a referendum for a free library on the same day, which was carried. See Leo A. Johnson, History of Guelph, 1827-1927 (Guelph, Ontario, Guelph Historical Society, 1977), p. 144.

37John Hallam, An Address to the Board of Management of the Toronto Free Library, Baldwin Room, Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library. Although there is no imprint information given, the item was reviewed by the Library Journal, VIII (March/April, 1883), pp. 50-51, where it is dated February 28, 1883.

38John Hallam, "Letters Concerning the Founding and Administration of a Public Library in Toronto Received by Hallam from Persons Interested in the Movement for Public Libraries in England, United States, and Canada, 1881-1884," Baldwin Room, Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library.


41See Elizabeth Wallace, Goldwin Smith: Victorian Liberal (Toronto, Toronto University Press, 1957).

42William F. Poole to John Hallam, April 6, 1883. "Letters Concerning the Founding and Administration of a Public Library... , 1881-1884," Baldwin Room, Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library.

43Samuel Thompson, Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the Last Fifty Years (Toronto, Hunter, Rose, 1884), pp. 390-391.

44"Topics of the Week," the Week, I (December 13, 1883), p. 17.
"Editorial," the Week, I(January 31, 1884), p. 130.

Ibid.


Ibid., p. 4.


Ibid., p. 4.


Ibid., p. 212.


Ibid., pp. 220-221.

Ibid., pp. 226-227.

Ibid., pp. 229-230.

In 1885 the mechanics' institutes were entering their last decade as centres for adult education, although their efficacy in this regard had been in question for some time. In the 1884-85 reporting year, the number of volumes issued from institute and free libraries was over 500,000. The actual number of institute libraries contributing to this circulation figure is not absolutely clear, but there were six free libraries, among which the Toronto Public Library accounted for almost 180,000 volumes. At the other end of the scale, the village of Lancaster, in Glengarry County, circulated only seventy-nine volumes among its twenty-six institute members. The six free libraries provide the most striking statistic, accounting for almost fifty percent of the total circulation.

Membership fees averaged one dollar per annum and ranged from twenty-eight cents to two dollars for the use of the library and reading room, but those few institutes fortunate enough to be receiving large municipal grants were able to allow free access. It was, however, the Superintendent's hope that it would not be long before all mechanics' institutes were receiving regular assistance from municipal councils. He believed that all classes of society were influenced for the better by the presence of successful institutes. The "moral tone" of the people was noticeably higher even in the children of those who were patrons.
Meanwhile, Dr. May was waiting for a number of institute directors to express their opinions on proposed revisions to the regulations.3

On November 7, 1985 the last piece of track was laid that enabled the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) to operate coast to coast. Running through parts of Northern Ontario, at this time largely a wilderness, the C.P.R. was to have far-reaching effects upon the development of the region and its subsequent settlement; to a lesser extent it would also assist library development. The year 1886 saw the introduction of a new act respecting mechanics' institutes and art schools which received royal assent on March 25.4 Ten or more persons could now incorporate either as a mechanics' institute or art school, but failure to open an institute library to patrons within a period of two years would nullify the act of incorporation. The Education Department would then take possession of the contents of the library and reading room and dispose of them to the local municipal corporation. The land and the building, on the other hand, would remain in the hands of the directors.

The continuing hope that adult education with a practical emphasis was still the prime purpose of institutes may be seen in the clause relating to the powers of directors which included the management of classes in subjects prescribed by the Education Department. This act also restated the option that allowed mechanics' institutes to transfer their assets to local public library boards established according to the act of 1882.

Also specified were the conditions under which the Government would dispense grants. To qualify, an institute had to be incorporated and possess a library containing
books in the fields of mechanical sciences, agriculture, horticulture, philosophy, general science, fine and decorative arts, history, travel, poetry, biography, and fiction; or, it must have opened a reading room, or organized evening classes. Significant here is the use of the word "or" which suggests that it was not necessary to provide all three options; this hardly augured well for the provision of evening classes. Again, the Education Department displayed a degree of short-sightedness that is very hard to fathom.

The act also adjusted the manner in which the grant was to be distributed. Every institute with a membership of at least fifty people, contributing twenty-five dollars per annum in subscriptions, would receive twenty-five dollars annually. Fifty dollars annually would be granted to institutes with 100 members or more, providing the total annual subscription was not less than fifty-dollars. Foster Vernon took this to mean that institutes with less than fifty members would not be eligible for any grants at all.5 It is not clear how he arrived at this conclusion, although the wording of the statute may have misled him. It describes the regular grants as "sums in addition to" the membership bonuses, which Vernon must have interpreted to mean that the latter were prerequisites. In this he overlooked the very next statement that every institute would receive a grant, providing, of course, the necessary criteria were fulfilled. They included the ability to raise funds at the municipal level, carry out the stipulations regarding the accessibility of the library and reading room, provide evening classes, ensure the general quality of all the facilities and services offered by the institute, and report annually. These requirements are, in fact, spelled out in Departmental regulations appended to Vernon's study.6
A principal change was the increase in the local contribution from fifty cents to a matching dollar for each dollar contributed by the Government. On this basis, libraries would be supported to a maximum of $150. Only twenty percent could still be spent on fiction. Reading rooms would receive a dollar for every dollar expended locally on newspapers and magazines to a maximum of fifty dollars. Evening classes could be supported to a maximum of $100, based on the number of pupils enrolled. In total, this represented a reduction in the grant for libraries and reading rooms of $100 from the allowance provided in 1883, a clear signal that evening classes were still considered to be of prime importance.

The act of 1886 also signalled the demise of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes of Ontario, which, since its formation in 1868, had enjoyed a somewhat chequered career. It had been incorporated to take the place of the Board of Arts and Manufactures, formed in 1857. The Board had been given the responsibility for establishing a centrally located (Toronto) museum and library relating to agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce. The founding of schools and colleges for mechanics, the appointment of lecturers, and the creation and distribution of relevant literature had also formed part of its mandate. Inadequate funding and a lack of co-operation from the mechanics' institutes were the chief causes of its failure.

The first meeting of the Association of Mechanics' Institutes of Ontario had taken place in Hamilton, on September 23, 1868 where objectives similar to those of its predecessor had been formulated. It had functioned most usefully as a forum for proposed changes to departmental
policies and regulations. Dr. May, during his investigation of the institutes, had been made to realize that many institute directors saw little point to the organization and thought that it should be abolished. Dr.

The final meeting of the Association was held in Toronto on September 14, 1886, where the hope was expressed that some other agency would take up the task of bringing together the institutes. The organization had been working under extremely adverse conditions, characterized by chronic underfunding and apathy on the part of the public generally, and the working-class population in particular. The last report of the Association, however, ended on an optimistic note. Between them, the Board of Arts and Manufactures and the Association of Mechanics' Institutes of Ontario had contributed to the establishment and development of a number of institutes; it was now up to the Minister of Education and his staff to continue the good work. The claim of success may have some truth in it, but, on the whole, the impact of the Board and the Association seems to have been minimal.

Dr. May's report for the year 1885-86 contained the startling news that the newly-appointed Secretary of the resuscitated institute in Picton had absconded with the subscription funds. The Superintendent was also concerned at the amount of fiction circulating in the province, noting that the Toronto Public Library accounted for approximately forty-five percent of the total. In fact, among almost 265,000 volumes held collectively by 130 libraries (of which six were free libraries), some twenty-six percent were works of fiction, while about sixty-one percent of the total circulated (just over 679,000 volumes) was from this category. If Dr. May noticed a trend away from technical
education towards the provision of popular literature, he did not say so. On the credit side, he was pleased that at least fifty-nine institutes were now receiving municipal grants, the total exceeding the Government's appropriation by some $1,200.  

While the Superintendent of Mechanics' Institutes and Free Libraries was fretting about the amount of fiction read in the province, the Week was examining the relationship between reading and intelligence. It was convinced that, far from developing one's intelligence, reading large quantities of books actually arrested intellectual development. It was important that reading should never become an end in itself, and absolutely never a habit. And although most books should be read with the purpose of strengthening the mind, some fiction could be read to develop the "social" side of an individual's nature.  

Later in that year, the same journal approached the question of the proper choice of books. It first drew attention to the "chaotic condition of the book market, with at least a hundred Barabbas publishers on the other side of the line, pouring the filched wares of their broadsheet Libraries and other cheap issues of the press in incredible profusion into the country." The presence of so much cheap literature, which included pirated English classics as well as "sensational" literature, must have had some impact upon public library usage, but, unfortunately, it does not appear to have been measured or assessed in any way.

The Week was of the opinion that although the newspaper and the illustrated magazine represented the chief reading matter of the mass of people, an increasingly larger number were discovering the pleasures of the classics. If this
meant that newspapers and magazines were formidable rivals of public libraries, then librarians no doubt hoped that this new desire for the best in literature would be satisfied in their institutions.

The same issue of the Week drew attention to the fact that the age was one of great activity, and people had little time to read. Many individuals engaged in business and industry belonged in this category, as did numerous working people who toiled for long hours and had little time to use the cultural and recreational institutions intended for them. The Bureau of Industries, in its 1887 report, pointed out that there was no uniform rule concerning working hours. A half holiday on Saturday in addition to Sunday was common in Toronto, particularly among organized trades, and the arrangement was becoming popular in other parts of the province. In the smaller centres of population, a work week of sixty hours was still usual. This situation naturally created problems for libraries anxious to attract the working-class population, and these would remain until labour organizations won the battle for shorter hours.

While most communities had either free libraries or mechanics' institute libraries, a number of alternatives were developed by labour organizations. In Stratford, the Grand Trunk Railway Company was responsible for organizing a library and reading room. In 1887 it contained 1,600 volumes and boasted 140 members. A similar establishment was situated in Kingston, organized in 1881 and run by the employees of the Kingston and Pembroke Railway for an annual subscription of fifty cents. The Knights of Labour (at this time the most influential labour organization in the province) opened a library and reading room in Cornwall.
Unfortunately, the establishment was not well attended, even though such an institution was badly needed to keep the men of the community out of the hotels and billiard halls.15

Among the business items addressed by the Legislature in 1888 was a request for a statement showing the location of every mechanics' institute, free library, and farmers' institute in the province. Also required was information on the number of members and subscribers in each, together with the amount of financial support provided by the Government. Information was also elicited regarding public library support in the last years of Ryerson's system. Clearly some form of comparison was to be made, but the report on the debate does not indicate the reason.

Mr. Wood, member for Brant, who had called for the report, remarked that farmers' institutes had contributed to the public good and deserved Government support in the form of libraries. He went on to advocate the extension of free libraries in country districts that were beyond access to mechanics' institutes. George Ross, Minister of Education, suggested that an increase in the number of mechanics' institutes might best serve the interests of Mr. Wood. This seems a rather curious remark for Ross to make, bearing in mind his earlier statement that the institutes had done little good.16 But he then reinforced this opinion by speculating on the length of time the Government was likely to continue its support, as the institutes circulated so much fiction. Satisfaction was expressed, however, that the farmers' institutes were doing well and establishing libraries of their own.17

With the Minister of Education's report for 1887, free libraries began to receive separate treatment, even though
there were still only eight of them. They were concentrated in the more heavily populated southern portion of the province in Berlin, Brantford, Guelph, Simcoe, St. Catharine's, St. Thomas, Toronto, and Waterloo. It will be recalled that mechanics' institutes were allowed to transfer their assets to the local public library board, if they so wished. In 1889 this opportunity was extended to art schools, while public libraries could now offer evening classes in subjects likely to promote technical education. The idea of amalgamating art schools and public libraries and providing evening classes in the latter had been conceived at a conference called by the Minister of Education where it was agreed that the combined influence of the two types of institution should popularize evening instruction. Classes in general subjects like English and Canadian history were expected to appeal to those possessing little in the way of a basic, elementary education.

James Bain, described another form of adult education undertaken at the Toronto Public Library. He approached the heads of industrial corporations in the city and persuaded them to send men to a specially-prepared seminar. A particular branch of industry was highlighted by a display of relevant books which the participants could examine and presumably borrow, supported by a lecture from one of their number possessing special knowledge of the subject.

As the last decade of the nineteenth century began, Dr. May expressed misgivings about the proliferation of small libraries and reading rooms established by institutions like the YMCA, scientific societies, and railway companies. He preferred the centralization of facilities, believing that money and energy were being wasted; one library in each centre of population was preferable. The collections in
the free libraries and mechanics' institutes were not particularly large at this time. Twenty-six of the libraries had less than 250 volumes. Thirty-one, which was the largest group, had collections of between 250 and 500 volumes. Only one establishment, the Toronto Public Library, had over 50,000 volumes. Closest in size to Toronto, yet showing a marked disparity, was the Brantford Public Library, with a collection numbering between 7,000 and 7,500 volumes. Nevertheless, from 1884 to 1889 the 187 mechanics' institutes and free libraries that reported issued a combined total of nearly 4,000,000 volumes.

May was especially worried about a number of subscription libraries that were being established by an unnamed American firm. They were primarily intended to circulate "light" literature that included "dime novels and other promiscuous trash." Directors of mechanics' institutes were urged to do everything in their power to have these libraries suppressed. Always ready to pronounce upon the literature of the day, the Week declared in 1891 that the tastes of the masses were crude, devouring as they did, worthless literature "enlivened and made attractive by the most meretricious of devices." Despite the "evil of cheap literature," it was hoped that tastes would improve, the availability of inexpensive English classics suggesting that a change for the better was taking place. It was thought that the struggle was likely to be lengthy. Curiously, not mentioned was the fact that the better type of literature had been readily available in free libraries and mechanics' institutes for decades.

Some of the conditions governing grants to free libraries and mechanics' institutes suggest the ideal, if not the typical, library of the day. The library and
reading room had to be conveniently situated in the community, while the latter was to be warm, with good lighting and comfortable furniture, seating at least ten people. A minimum of two daily newspapers, five weeklies, and three "standard" monthly magazines were to be on file. It was required to be open to the public each alternate weekday somewhere between the hours of 2 p.m. and 10 p.m., although governing bodies were allowed some flexibility in the matter. The library was to be accessible at least one hour each week for the return and issue of books.28

Dr. May was gratified that the number of institutes was increasing each year, with the majority "in a flourishing condition." He thought that another factor in their viability was the increased assistance that was coming from municipalities, a result of special pleading by the Education Department.29 In 1890, there were 217 mechanics' institutes and nine free libraries. Their approximately 59,000 members and readers had access to a combined book collection of 390,000 volumes and 4,000 magazine and newspaper files. The total number of volumes issued in the year ending April 30 was just over 930,000 volumes.30 The free libraries, alone, accounted for about one quarter of the total holdings (over 100,000 volumes) and for more than half the volumes issued (over 500,000).31

The Superintendent may have been happy with the progress of his charges, but the book trade took quite a different view. Pointing out that, originally, these institutes had been designed to educate the working poor, Books and Notions, a trade journal, believed that their true purpose had been "subverted," reducing them to "mere circulating libraries." Consequently, they had become "instruments of destruction" by taking away the booksellers'
customers who now tended to borrow rather than buy current fiction, the trade's most lucrative type of literature. Furthermore, there seemed no doubt that any signs of decadence in the book trade could be attributed to this competition from libraries, for, in order to survive, booksellers were now vending the cheapest sorts of literature at between five and twenty-five cents a novel. It is difficult to comprehend this reaction, as the book trade had faced competition from the mechanics' institute libraries for decades. Now, of course, the difference was the inexpensive nature of popular literature which meant a narrow profit margin. Every customer lost to a lending library would naturally have an effect.

The Superintendent of Mechanics' Institutes saw things differently. He thought that the institutes did much to counteract the "injurious tendency" of dime novels, a class of literature not likely to be found in any of their libraries, as members would object to books of a doubtful moral character. This suggests that the concern of the book trade for its livelihood was more imagined than real as there appeared to be no actual competition. Books and Notions came back to the subject again, relating how local booksellers with poor business acumen had been gradually ousted from the business of supplying their local institutes by larger and more business-conscious city firms. According to the journal, this was now the rule rather than the exception. The answer lay not in larger discounts, but in greater energy and business sense. Those not clever enough to devise the means of acquiring and holding the custom of their respective institutes were advised to get out of the business.
At about this time, the Minister of Education was making plans to extend the system of mechanics' institutes to encompass the smaller towns and outlying villages. He intended to ask the Legislature for an increase in funding, having perceived a tendency among the inhabitants to read a better class of literature. This improved taste he attributed to the high schools and collegiate institutes where a desire for the best in literature of all kinds was being cultivated. 35

Nevertheless, in his report for 1894, the Minister again referred to the importance of technical education, noting that there had been "an advance in this direction almost unprecedented in the history of education." Ross provides little supporting evidence for this rather sweeping assertion, except to note that he had encouraged the establishment of evening classes, and that there had been a huge increase in the number of mechanics' institutes and free libraries in the eleven years from 1883 to 1894. The fact that the circulation of fiction was down from just over sixty percent in 1886 to only forty-six percent in 1894 was also a cause for satisfaction. 36

On the eve of major library legislation that was to come in 1895, 292 mechanics' institutes and eleven free libraries existed in the province. All eleven free libraries reported that year, but only 263 responses were received from the institutes. Fourteen of these were newly incorporated. The combined collections of the free libraries now numbered slightly more than 156,000 volumes, but close to fifty-five percent of these were in the Toronto Public Library. If the Toronto Public Library is excluded from the statistics, the ten remaining free libraries, with only slightly over 72,000 volumes at their combined
disposal, managed a circulation rate that, on average, was seventeen times higher than that of the mechanics' institute libraries in that year.

In excess of 61,000 readers used the free libraries in 1894, compared to a readership in mechanics' institutes that was drawn from some 27,000 members all told. If the Toronto Public Library is removed again, then the figure for free libraries drops to just under 23,000 readers, bringing the figure much closer to that of the institutes. The free libraries were more often found in urban centres. The mechanics' institutes, however, did not seem to follow any particular pattern, and could be found in large towns or small villages, depending upon the relative importance of cultural and educational institutions in each community. The institutes would not disappear, but were about to undergo a dramatic change that would recognize their role in a growing public library movement.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. Ibid., pp. 178-183.

3. Ibid., p. 174.

4. 49 Vic., Chap. 35, 1886.


6. Ibid., p. 559.


8. Ibid., p. 62.


11. W.D. Le Sueur, "Reading and Intelligence," the Week. III (November 4, 1886), p. 782.

12. Ibid.


15. See chapter one, p. 17.


18. 45 Vic., Chap. 22, 1882, Sec. 10.


Abstract of Bain's paper reported in the proceedings of a "Conference for Librarians; Thousand Islands, August-September, 1887," Library Journal, XII(September-October, 1887), p. 441.


Ibid., p. 222.


Ibid., p. 267.

Ibid.

Ibid., pp. 298-299.


"Are the Retailers Losing Their Hold?" Books and Notions, X(May, 1894), p. 8.


38 Ibid., p. 118, and p. 119.
The most important event of 1895 was the adoption of a new act, designed to amend and consolidate existing legislation. One basic aspect of the Public Libraries Act was a change of name for mechanics' institutes which were henceforth to be known officially as "public libraries." During the passage of the act, one member of the Legislature objected to the intention to decrease grants to mechanics' institutes, pointing out that this could only result in hardship for the smaller establishments. In response, the Minister of Education explained that the smaller share for each was due to the great increase in the number of institutes, coupled with the Government's decision not to increase the overall amount available, which was always distributed as equitably as possible.

The act came into force on May 1, 1895, and had three distinct parts. Under part one, a group of electors could petition its local council for a free library, which body would then, with the consent of the electorate, pass the necessary by-law. In cities petitioners had to number at least 100, in towns not less than sixty, and in villages, thirty or more. A reminder that the library would continue to be regarded as an important educational agency is enshrined in the clause reiterating the library board's power to establish evening classes for "artisans, mechanics and workingmen." Financing for a free library would
continue to come from a property tax which remained at one-half mill in the dollar for all communities except cities which were restricted to a maximum of one-quarter mill. Libraries established under this part of the act were to be open and free to all.

Part two was largely designed as a mechanism to bring any mechanics' institute (public library) or independent library created under part three of the act within municipal control. After receiving a petition requesting a transfer of jurisdiction, the local council was expected to create a board of management, to be known as the public library board, to which all the assets of the former organization would then be transferred. Eric Bow states that a by-law was necessary to the conversion process, but this was not the case. Various names have been applied to these libraries, and to those formed under part three of the act, to distinguish them from free libraries: public libraries (not free), public library associations, and association public libraries, the last-named being the least ambiguous. They were not to disappear from the library scene until the 1960s.

Libraries operating under part two of the act faced a special difficulty, for they were required to be free, but were not entitled to a municipal tax levy. There were two options open to them: they could petition to be brought under part one of the act as tax-supported institutions, the obvious choice, or they could continue along former lines, operating on provincial and municipal grants, and membership fees. The second option was preferable in the smaller communities where the tax option was not feasible; but this led to an interesting anomaly: if membership fees were collected then, technically, the library could not be said
to be "free."

Other important clauses in this part of the act underline early steps towards a province-wide library service, even though the fact of such a system was still many years in the future. Municipalities were encouraged to unite in their efforts to provide library service, while teachers' and farmers' institutes could deposit their collections with local public libraries in return for full library privileges. In the case of teachers' institutes, the arrangement included membership (one seat) on the public library board.

The main function of the third part of the act was to allow citizens to incorporate for the purpose of establishing public libraries in places where municipal councils had not taken the initiative in paving the way for a public library by appointing a board of management, and where the community was not a city, town, or incorporated village. Ten citizens or more, being British subjects and at least twenty-one years of age, could file a declaration of intent, followed within thirty days by an election of a board of management. A membership of at least 100 (fifty being twenty-one years or over) was required for a share in the $46,000 set aside for distribution by the Education Department, which was also a requirement for public libraries covered under part two of the act.

In apportioning the grant under this act, a sliding scale was introduced for library support; on a dollar-for-dollar basis, the Education Department was prepared to give up to $200 to cities, $150 to towns, and in all other cases, $100. All reading rooms would receive dollar-for-dollar support to a maximum of fifty dollars. An ever-hopeful
Education Department offered a maximum of $100 for evening classes. This meant a maximum grant of $350 for cities, $300 for towns, and $250 for other types of municipality. This principle was not in force for long, as revisions and additions were made to this legislation in the following year.6

The changes allowed all municipalities, regardless of size, to receive a matching grant of up to $200 for every dollar expended locally on book purchases. The Education Department now required proof that "at least the equivalent of the sum so expended" had been "contributed by municipal or school corporations, or from fees of members and other sources." There were no changes in relation to reading rooms and evening classes. Another clause encouraged municipal and school authorities to support their local libraries by empowering them to contribute from local taxes. These municipal grants differed from the free library tax levy, which entitled a library to a proportion of municipal income, in that they were dispensed as largesse, and so could not be considered as regular, reliable income.

In addition to an educational function, there was a clear intention to promote the public library as a cultural centre. In chapter two it was noted that art schools could combine with public libraries; an 1897 amendment to the act of 1895 now empowered public library boards to establish art schools.7 Library legislation to cover police villages, which were hamlet-sized communities, was enacted in 1898.8 It was only necessary for at least thirty electors to petition the township council within whose jurisdiction the police village lay asking for a by-law, approved by the electorate, to be passed. A tax up to one-half mill in the dollar was to be collected specifically for library
purposes.

At the other end of the scale from the tiny police village, the Toronto Public Library was growing rapidly. James Francis Hogan, a visitor to the library, was greatly impressed, describing it as "one of the finest and best appointed public libraries and reading rooms in the British Empire," with a staff composed of "bright and intelligent young ladies, who do their work with a smartness and precision that pointedly indicate this as a peculiarly appropriate sphere of feminine usefulness."³

Analysing the library’s annual report for 1894, the Week remarked that there were over 42,000 ticket-holders borrowing from the main library and its four branches, the combined collections of these libraries reaching almost 90,000 volumes. More than 500,000 volumes had been either borrowed or consulted. Of particular note was the drop in fiction reading of more than ten percent over six years. Children were reading more, and there was a noticeable increase in magazine reading, a fact the writer seemed to take for granted.

The journal further remarked that the artisan and the mechanic were relying more upon their brains than books, while the "skilled labourer" had not yet "learned the value of a free library."⁴ In this connection it should be remembered that although Canada was, then, entering upon a period described as the "years of promise," Toronto’s working classes were in the grip of industrial capitalism and gaining little from whatever prosperity the system brought.⁵ It is not surprising, therefore, that Toronto’s average working man did not patronize his prestigious and flourishing public library.
Another "appropriate sphere of feminine usefulness" lay in the promotion of public libraries, notably through the influence of the National Council of Women of Canada. The Working Week, in drawing attention to this body's particular efforts in Ottawa, took the opportunity to comment on the progress of the library movement. Even though the act to promote free libraries was clearly a wise piece of legislation, such institutions were not proliferating at the rate to be expected in a province that prided itself on possessing a liberal system of education. The journal expressed satisfaction that Canadian women were showing "that public spirit and sagacity which the men have hitherto failed to show." The opinion was ventured that one prime objection to free libraries centred on an assumption that the public was being taxed to indulge novel readers. But despite a "mass of rubbish" emanating chiefly from British and American publishers, there was no reason to fear the establishment of public libraries, providing Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot, and the rest were available "to delight and instruct the world."^12

The International Council of Women was established in Washington, D.C. in 1888, one intention being the establishment of national councils in participating countries. This eventually led to the founding of the National Council of Women of Canada (N.C.W.C.) on October 27, 1893. Its interest in the public library movement derived largely from a concern over the dissemination of so-called "pernicious literature," and early in the history of the organization a special subcommittee was struck to put a stop to "the vile trade."^14
In 1896 it was proposed that a branch of the National Home Reading Union, a British organization, be established for the Dominion of Canada, and that all local councils be recommended to form home reading circles. It was eventually decided that the interests of the population would be better served by a union that was essentially Canadian, affiliated with the parent body rather than simply a branch of it.\textsuperscript{15} After some discussion of the principles and benefits of such an organization, the chief aim being to improve reading habits, the resolution was carried unanimously.\textsuperscript{16} Members were free to acquire their books from any sources they wished, although there was a decided advantage to buying through the organization. Those in charge of reading circles were expected to devise means of circulating books among members to reduce the cost. It was further hoped that the library in each local Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. and the public library would put books chosen for study on their shelves for those who could not buy them.\textsuperscript{17}

The N.C.W.C. recommended changes to the Criminal Code of Canada and warned parents of the dangers of cheap "street" literature that could seriously harm their children. Through its subcommittee on pernicious literature, the N.C.W.C. also advocated the proliferation of school and public libraries, home reading circles, the establishment of magazine and book clubs. It also recommended the preparation and circulation of lists of suitable reading, debates and discussions within local councils, and, with the co-operation of newspaper proprietors, the introduction of better quality stories and articles into the very popular weekly newspapers.\textsuperscript{18} The Chief Librarian of the London Public Library visited all the schools in his area to describe the library's collections to the children and leave a catalogue with each teacher. No
At the seventh annual meeting of the N.C.W.C., in 1900, a discussion took place concerning public libraries, resulting in a resolution urging local councils to work for their promotion and establishment. One prime target of the Council was the bookshop that stocked cheap novels which could be purchased or borrowed, the chief customers being "young girls employed in small shops." The contents of these novels could not be said to be actually harmful because they conveyed an inaccurate view of life, but such distortion was likely to exert a "deteriorating influence" on the minds of those that read them. In a promotional volume compiled by the N.C.W.C. for the Paris International Exhibition of 1900, attention was drawn to the "very advanced and flourishing" system of public libraries in Ontario, noting that it was far ahead of the other provinces. It was further remarked that, although library staffs were largely composed of women, few were heads of libraries, except in very small institutions.

The N.C.W.C. considered the public library to be an important weapon in the fight against pernicious literature, but that institution was not exempt from scrutiny, as many of the reports from local councils show. There are numerous references to visits to local libraries to discuss with staff members the quality of the collections under their care, with instances cited where books were actually removed from the shelves. During these encounters, ways of eliminating objectionable literature and reducing the amount of novel reading were suggested. As part of the campaign, a great deal of effort went into attempts to give children
greater access to public libraries and ensure that there was suitable literature available to them. Some recommendations displayed advanced thinking, with proposals for special reading rooms for the young and the provision of trained children's librarians. In addition, local councils were also interested in promoting libraries in the schools. 22

The N.C.W.C.'s campaign against literature it defined as immoral and corrupting was so successful that, by 1919, the subcommittee charged with the "suppression of objectionable reading matter" could report that "close supervision by librarians has resulted in the almost complete exclusion of undesirable books from the shelves." 23 It is difficult to determine in any detail the actual publications that had been so thoroughly expurgated. As far as fiction is concerned, there are references to dime novels and "penny dreadfuls," 24 and also a passing allusion to Tolstoi. 25

As for periodical literature, there was grave concern over serialized stories, a number of which were described as "lurid and hectic"; "The Invisible Hand," "The Iron Man," and the "Great Radium Mystery" are typical examples. 26 In its annual report for 1896, the N.C.W.C. published a list of periodicals which were prohibited from transmission through the Canadian mails. It is not surprising to find the Police Gazette, the Detective Library, and a journal dubiously entitled Climax listed, but some of the more innocuous titles are unexpected: Our Country Home, Youth and Home, Music and Drama, and the American Farmer. There are many similar titles on the list, and it can only be assumed that perhaps one serious objection was the fact that the majority were American, purveying ideas and mores anathema to English Canadians. A shorter list indicated titles that had once
been banned but were now reinstated, as the publishers had co-operated in removing "objectionable matter." Among these, too, there are some surprising titles such as Farm and Home, the Illustrated Family Herald, and the Housekeeper.27

Returning to the main stream of public library development, the Minister of Education thought that the greatest impediment to the proliferation of free libraries was the cost of providing suitable premises. Highly visible locations, if not distinctive buildings, was an important factor in promoting libraries. This was such a concern that Education Department regulations stated specifically that premises chosen for a library facility had to be easily accessible, and carry a sign over the door reading "public library" in four-inch letters.28 The Superintendent's report for the year ending April 30, 1896 projected an optimistic outlook for the movement. May remarked on the steadily improving quality of library provision in terms of accommodation and collections, with a concomitant increase in the level of patronage by all segments of the population. Even the poorest communities could, with assistance from the Government, provide libraries containing "good healthy literature," which, he believed, had largely supplanted "pernicious dime novels" formerly sold in large quantities in village stores.29

At the time of this report the province contained a total of 356 free and association public libraries. This is an impressive figure, but it should be borne in mind that the majority of libraries remained small in terms of collection size. For example, only fourteen libraries had collections that numbered between 4,000 and 5,000 volumes, but in contrast to the smallest libraries of less than 250
volumes (thirty-one), the Toronto Public Library far outstripped them all with a collection in excess of 93,000 volumes. 30 From 1883 to 1896 the province's public libraries issued almost 12,000,000 volumes and operated on an income that totalled more than $1,500,000. 31

The Canadian Magazine declared in 1896 that the cultural life of Canada was improving, one sign being the demand for high quality books and magazines for which sales had never been better. 32 This certainly augured well for public libraries, as not everyone purchased reading matter. In the same year, at the annual meeting of the American Library Association, George Iles, a Canadian literary figure, delivered an address directed at librarians and library boards which was reproduced in the Week with the intention, no doubt, of attracting the attention of Canadian librarians. He was particularly interested in the relationship of the public library to the museum which together, he suggested, catered to the needs of popular culture. Iles admitted that improved classification schemes and more efficient methods of administration had greatly increased the usefulness of the public library, but it still had much to learn from the museum in terms of advertising its resources.

The curator labelled and presented his artifacts colourfully and attractively; the librarian presented a simple listing of titles which told the reader nothing of their intrinsic value or comparative merits, making the selection of suitable reading matter difficult. Iles was essentially advocating annotated library catalogues, noting that some librarians thought these belonged more properly in bibliographies. He disagreed and thought that while "library machinery" as it stood was excellent, it would be
greatly enhanced by annotated catalogues. He ended by suggesting that the implementation of his innovative idea should not be hurried; the notes should be prepared "in sensible form" and be "of the right quality."  

Because it is usual to think of the public library as an institution that is democratic and non-partisan, its value in political "window-dressing" can easily be overlooked. In a speech to the Legislature, delivered on March 4, 1897, George Ross, Minister of Education, spoke glowingly of the achievements of Ontario’s school system, described at the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago as "almost IDEAL in the perfection of its details and the unity which binds together in one great whole all the schools from the Kindergarten to the University." The Liberal Government was clearly claiming this system as its own, and one important adjunct was, of course, the public library. Ross was at pains to show that the increased use of public libraries over the years was a clear sign of intellectual growth in the province, and that the inhabitants were displaying a strong disposition to read "useful and instructive literature." After staunchly defending the reading of recognized novelists of the calibre of Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, the Minister expressed gratification that the amount of fiction circulated had declined.

The editor of the Canadian Magazine, writing in 1897, thought it worth remarking that there was a noticeable increase in literary activity in the country, but despite this fact, the inhabitants in general remained a comparatively "ignorant people." In making this judgement, he applied rather interesting criteria. There were many newspapers in circulation, which, with some exceptions, were superior to their predecessors and to their contemporaries,
native and foreign. Numerous new volumes of indigenous poetry and fiction were on the market, and a growing interest in Canadian history was in evidence. Missing was that "breadth of knowledge," necessary to culture and refinement, and this despite a good educational system, cheap literature, and "free reading rooms," by which he presumably meant public libraries. He looked forward to the day when there would be a national art gallery, a national theatre, and scientific and literary societies across the country. These were goals that could be achieved in the coming years, providing the individuals who had the power to bring these things about were prepared to act. It was estimated that there were 384 public libraries in the province in 1898, of which 103 were totally free. Between 1883 and 1898 well over 16,000,000 volumes had been issued at a cost of less than $2,000,000 for the system, an average of just under twelve cents per volume circulated.

The question of school libraries was raised in 1898 when the Minister of Education regretted the fact that so few school boards had taken advantage of the legislation that enabled them to establish these facilities in their schools. He did not consider it a serious omission in urban communities where public libraries had been established, but pointed out that in rural areas there was a "lamentable" shortage of suitable reading matter for both children and adults. There was, however, a qualification to this statement, because even where public libraries existed, their collections tended to reflect the needs of adults (children, at this time, were not usually admitted until they had reached the age of twelve). Consequently, there was a real need to establish libraries in every school, stocked with the best of English-language literature. The Minister believed that, by contrast, the high schools and
collegiate institutes were reasonably well-served. He concluded by reminding trustees that one of the principal aims of education was the inculcation of discriminating reading habits and tastes in every pupil.

Early in 1900, the Minister's attention was drawn to the fact that school inspectors and teachers had frequently recommended the development of libraries in rural schools. A section of the school act listed the duties of trustees, one of which was the power to purchase books for school libraries, but they were often reluctant to do so without the incentive of Government assistance. The Minister was also reminded that there was "a hungering for good literature, among Young people especially, in country places," which needed to be gratified. As the basic legislation was already in place, new enactments would not be necessary. All that was needed was a set of regulations and a suitable appropriation from the Legislature, the recommended sum being between $4,000 and $5,000. School libraries would be encouraged to include agricultural works in their collections, but no grant would be given for fiction of the lighter variety. It was estimated that there were about 4,000 rural schools, but it was anticipated that only 800 to 1,000 would apply for assistance in the first year, which meant that the grant for each school library would be somewhere between four and six dollars. To qualify, it would be obligatory on the part of each board of trustees to provide initially a sum large enough to establish the nucleus of a library.

The Minister of Education remarked on the value of school libraries in his annual report for 1900. As most libraries (even those in developed urban locations) did not necessarily give first place to the needs of young readers,
a good school library was therefore essential. It would support that important function of the school: directing reading habits and selecting suitable reading matter, something which could not be left safely to parents. Although fiction was generally to be avoided, the exceptions would be "master pieces of English literature" which were calculated to alleviate the boredom frequently attributed to rural life. By the following year, some progress had been made. School inspectors, boards, teachers, parents, and children were co-operating in the formation of libraries, but they were cautioned that in book selection they were to avoid a predominance of "light" fiction. School libraries were also discussed at the annual convention of the Ontario Educational Association, in 1901, when John Millar, Deputy Minister of Education, stated that the establishment of such libraries in rural areas would be a factor in the overall improvement of education.

The question of school libraries was of sufficient interest to prompt a discussion in the Ottawa Evening Journal. As reading from standard authors was accepted as a normal part of the school week, then it seemed a natural step to have school boards provide circulating libraries for the use of pupils. Some schools already possessed libraries, but these were of the type pioneered by S.B. Hatch of St. Thomas, who built a classroom library from funds contributed by the teacher and his pupils. The Journal, continuing its proposal, thought that $100, or even less, per annum would be sufficient to start a small library, but if a school board was particularly impecunious, an appeal to the public-at-large would no doubt have the required result.
In the year 1902, the Education Department published a catalogue of books suitable for young readers, together with regulations governing school libraries. School boards would receive a share of provincial grants providing they purchased books from the approved list. This would amount to half the sum expended locally, but would not exceed ten dollars in any one year. While this sum was modest enough, if the total appropriation was smaller than anticipated, then it would be distributed on a pro rata basis. Each school principal was to perform the duties of librarian. By 1903, there were 320 school libraries in operation which had received during 1902-03 slightly under $3,000 in provincial grants. Making particular reference to rural schools, the Minister was naturally pleased at the "excellent beginning" made in library provision, but warned that the presence of a public library was no excuse for failing to establish a school library. He further noted that in a number of communities boards of trustees had been assisted in the work of developing libraries through private contributions.

A less sanguine view of the situation was taken by Edwin Austin Hardy. He considered the school library a necessity, but was appalled that so far (1903), trustees had been "deaf to the blandishments of school libraries." Nevertheless, in the following year, the Minister referred to further progress, noting increased expenditures on books. He also remarked on the influence of good literature on the moral and intellectual welfare of the individual. In addition, it was a compensatory factor in the lives of those who would be unable to pursue a secondary education; fifty percent of all children left school before the age of twelve years.
School boards in rural districts expended almost $7,000 on library books in 1903, just over $8,000 in the following year, and slightly more than $11,000 in 1905, which was a sizeable increase over 1904. The Government gave a special grant of $5,000 to promote school libraries in 1907. The apportionment would be five dollars maximum per school, providing at least ten dollars had been expended at the local level in the previous year. A new regulation formulated in 1908 allowed each school to receive a maximum grant of ten dollars in a given year, with the local expenditure requirement remaining at ten dollars.

J.W. Emery, in his 1917 treatise on school and public libraries, noted a number of defects in school library collections that needed to be remedied. Although the Education Department had produced an official catalogue of some 2,000 titles to aid book selection, it was still possible, Emery claimed, to develop an "unsuitable" library. Selection was often in the hands of trustees without specialized knowledge, or teachers with little experience. When teachers changed schools, their successors were likely to develop collections that suited their own predilections, without reference to the collection building of their predecessors. In particular, there was a lack of books for very young readers, besides a shortage of reference materials, agricultural works, and periodicals.

The practice of transferring the collections of defunct public libraries to local school sections, where they were presumably incorporated into existing school libraries, would also have influenced the nature of the collections. A lack of funds that meant stagnation was another factor. In terms of collections size, a typical school library could possess as few as twenty or as many as 400 volumes, the
average being around 100. Story books predominated and represented between fifty and sixty percent of each library. In the final analysis, however, regardless of the size and quality of collections, it was the consensus of opinion that the success of the school library depended almost entirely on the teacher.

Not everyone regarded school libraries in a favourable light. In the discussion that followed a paper on library work with children at the O.L.A. conference of 1911, a Dr. Dales took the view that they drew children away from public libraries. It was "just simply having the child go to very small streams instead of going to the fountain head." He described the typical school district where libraries tended to replicate each other. These could be replaced by a handful of judicially-placed public libraries, making much greater resources available to young readers than was possible under the existing system of discrete and independent school collections.

A simple and straightforward counter-argument was presented by a Mr. Steele who declared that the teacher was the person best qualified to inculcate good reading habits and taste, utilizing the school library. A Mr. Grant suggested that there was a place for both the school library and the public library, the province of Ontario being rich enough to support both kinds, although in the case of the latter, accessibility was an important factor if children were to make use of it.

E.A. Hardy drew attention to the fact that school and public libraries were part of the educational system and should co-operate; the public library should send books to the schools, and the schools should send children to the
public library to carry out projects assigned by their teachers. They might also engage in co-operative bookbuying. The Board of the London Public Library cooperated with local school boards to put collections into the schools. Each jurisdiction contributed towards the cost of the books, which, nevertheless, became the property of the city library. They were distributed and exchanged by the Chief Librarian, working in concert with the Inspector of Public Libraries.

From the point of view of public librarians, close cooperation with schools was not without hazards. The Education Department favoured the notion that it was in the best interests of education generally for boards governing the various types of educational institution to consolidate where this was practical. In 1904 legislation was proposed that would have enabled municipal councils to amalgamate school boards and public library boards, which would have meant the elimination of the latter. This was strongly opposed by the Ontario Educational Association, the O.L.A., and library boards generally. Two years later, the same concern surfaced when the executive of O.L.A. was instructed to watch for any proposed legislation that might threaten the independence of library boards and oppose it.

Such an occasion arose in 1913 when the Legislature attempted to amend the act by inserting a clause (cloaked in a so-called "omnibus" amendments bill) that would have changed radically the composition of public library boards without the knowledge or consent of interested parties. Normally, a board would consist of three members appointed by each municipal council, three by each board of education (Protestant), and three by each separate school board (Catholic). It was now proposed to form a board consisting
of three individuals appointed by each municipal council and six teachers appointed by the boards of education. There was so much outrage and protest at the measure, which, among other things, would have meant the loss of numerous able citizens on boards, it was set aside. This, in effect, meant its death-knell, for it would then have required a decree from the Lieutenant-Governor to bring it into force, which was not very likely to happen.69

By 1920, about eighty-two percent of rural schools had libraries,70 which, over a five-year period, was actually a sixteen percent reduction.71 These figures tell us nothing about the quality of the libraries, but many years later, in 1933, a Commission of Enquiry into Canada's library services noted that, in Ontario, the libraries in public and high schools, and even collegiates, were inadequate. "Indeed," the report continued, "in many hundreds of Ontario's schools libraries are non-existent." Curiously, the solution proffered was greater co-operation between the public library and the school.72 This is not the end of the story of school libraries, for they would feature as one solution to the chronic problem of the survival of the small library, especially those situated in rural areas, which is discussed in chapter five.

There were many librarians who were against any form of co-operation that was not undertaken on library premises. In their view, it was essential to encourage the child to use the public library where first-class resources and expert assistance were available. Consequently, the development of the children's department within the overall structure of the public library soon became the focus of attention.73 For Ontario, the pioneer in this work was Patricia Spererman, of the Sarnia Public Library, who, as
early as 1906, had abolished the age limit, adopted an open-access policy, and conducted the province's first story hour. Despite the number of teachers involved in the library movement, who did much to promote cooperation between the school and the public library, the American system of providing direct service in the schools was little followed in Ontario. The preference was to persuade children to use the public library. A variation on the so-called "American practice" allowed teachers the privilege of borrowing substantial numbers of books to be issued to their pupils for home reading, but they were also encouraged to bring their classes to the public library.

Among the prerequisites for successful work with children were the abolition of the age restriction (usually around twelve or fourteen years) and open access, besides the more obvious requirements of specially designed furniture and fittings, separate collections if not separate rooms, proper supervision and assistance, supported by such stimuli as story hours and reading clubs. The age restriction was eventually abolished, the Inspector of Public Libraries remarking in 1913 that it had not been very long since "children in the public libraries, like dogs in the parks, were unwelcome." Now public libraries could no longer impose an age restriction without the special sanction of the Minister of Education. Open access, on the other hand, would be pondered for some time before its widespread adoption.

Impeccable book selection was a crucial factor in the success of a children's department. The Inspector of Public Libraries thought that there was a major lack of books suitable for young readers in many libraries. He attributed this defect to those librarians who had abdicated their
responsibilities in this area in the misguided belief that the needs of children should be served by school or Sunday school libraries.\textsuperscript{79}

Recognition of the importance of library services for children was acknowledged in the appointment of Patricia Spereman as a consultant for the Department of Education in 1907. Her services were offered to public libraries free of charge, and she visited a number of them, setting up children's departments. In some cases she also classified and catalogued the collections, and even gave instruction on bookbinding and repairs. Her first report covered seven months, during which time she visited seventeen libraries that varied in size.

One important aspect of her work was the presentation of story hours which were extremely popular. She was also able to exercise a great deal of influence over library boards, persuading them to improve their facilities for children.\textsuperscript{80} The following year, it was decided to relieve her of her duties connected with bookbinding and repair as these were considered to be "too onerous for a woman." A new duty was added, however, which entailed the installation of new charging systems. Miss Spereman also took every opportunity to press for open access and the abolition of an age restriction, while a special mission was the promotion of the story hour.\textsuperscript{81}

Patricia Spereman's background and credentials are worth some exploration as an indication of the manner in which training and experience in the field of children's librarianship was acquired in the days before formalized professional education was available. In 1904, the Board of the Sarnia Public Library, realizing that more could be done
for children, began to investigate the matter. Lists of
good quality reading matter for children were acquired and
orders placed from them. The children, accustomed to "story
books," were slow to respond to this new class of
literature, but it gradually gained ground.

The next step was to appoint someone to function as
children's librarian; Patricia Spereman proved ideal, so, in
addition to her normal duties as assistant librarian, she
was given special responsibility for the children's
department. This was seen as an incentive to make the
department successful, which proved to be the case and
earned the Board the approbation of the townspeople. Miss
Spereman read all the available literature on work with
children and also visited Port Huron Public Library which
possessed a model children's department that was up-to-date
in every way. She soon built up a rapport with the children
in her own library so that she was able to influence their
reading tastes, which was considered to be very desirable.
Finally, a separate children's room was created with
fixtures and fittings scaled to suit children of all age
groups. The young readers patronizing the room were then
made responsible for its upkeep and care. 82

It was reported in 1903 that while three public
libraries (Chatham, Brantford, and Lindsay) were including
children's rooms in their new buildings, a number of library
boards continued to be either opposed to them, or simply
indifferent. 83 Ten years later, Walter Nursey was able to
paint a much happier picture: "In the country farm-house, in
the city tenement, and in the school-room, as well as under
its own roof, the juvenile department in the public library
is bringing the child to a knowledge of a great new world."
A suitable motto that would match this "magnificent if
pressing need" had been coined some years earlier: "the right book to the right child at the right time."85

John Millar, who served for a number of years as Deputy Minister of Education, thought that the presence of a public library in a community should not preclude the establishment of a library in the school. If a choice had to be made, it would be better to manage without the public library, as the needs of the children should take precedence. But ideally, the resources of the public library ought to supplement those of the school library.86 And in speaking of the public library, Millar had very decided, though not necessarily unique, views on its nature and function. He saw the public library as the "people's university," a classless institution belonging to all. It was the natural outcome of the school system, and its chief aim was not to provide amusement but to give instruction. To this end, it was important for the librarian to be a scholar, and the collections "educative" rather than "popular." Necessary adjuncts included reading rooms, reading clubs, and reading courses, perhaps as part of university extension programs, or modelled on the American system known as "Chautauqua."87

Among the many interests of James Bain was the provision of adequate library facilities for the scholarly community. Although Toronto, for example, could boast of a number of excellent libraries, such as the Toronto Public Library, the library of the Canadian Institute, that of the University of Toronto, and the legislative library, there was obviously nothing to compare with an institution like the British Museum to serve the scholarly community. To obviate the need for students and scholars to travel abroad for their research needs, Bain proposed combining the collections of the reference division of the Toronto Public
Library, the general literature collection from the Legislature's library, and the library of the Canadian Institute to create a provincial reference library. Available to every student in the province, it would, in many respects, function as a national library. It was certainly an idea with a great deal of merit, but for reasons not readily apparent, it came to nought, and several decades were to pass before a truly national library would come into being.

In the final year of the nineteenth century, revised regulations governing public libraries were issued by the Education Department. The most significant clause related to reading rooms in rural areas. It appeared that boards of management in small communities were finding it difficult to maintain reading rooms, as the newspapers they provided were little read. The obvious solution in such cases was to close them. By way of compensation, the Department ruled that libraries without reading rooms could purchase magazines from the grant and circulate them as books, binding them into volumes at the end of the year. This change was to take effect on December 31, 1899. Much had been accomplished in the century, but the problem associated with reading rooms (on the surface, a matter of minor importance) was symptomatic of the imperfections that remained in a system that was still in its formative stages.
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5Ibid.

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11Paul W. Bennett, Years of Promise, 1896-1911 (Toronto, Grolier, 1986), pp. 74-75.

12"Notes In My Library," the Week, XII(April 5, 1895), pp. 444-445.


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22. Many reports from local councils are reproduced in the annual proceedings of the N.C.W.C.


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Speech by the Hon. G.W. Ross, Minister of Education, on the Policy of the Education Department, Delivered in the Legislative Assembly, March 4, 1897 (Toronto, Warwick & Rutter, 1897); the quotation is on the title page.

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See: Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897, 2 vols., II, Chap. 292, Sec. 67(2), p. 3354, which enabled municipalities to "raise by assessment such other sums as it may deem expedient for the establishment and maintenance of a school library."


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"Memorandum for the Minister's Consideration," pp. 1-4, passim.


55Emery, The Library, the School, and the Child, p. 139.

56Ibid., pp. 143-147, passim.


58Emery, The Library, the School, and the Child, pp. 150-151.

59Ibid., p. 141.

60Ibid., p. 151.


62A Mr. Steele, in the discussion following a paper by Jessica Potter, "Library Work with Children," p. 106.

63A Mr. Grant, in the discussion following a paper by Jessica Potter, "Library Work with Children," p. 106.


Memorandum to the Hon. Richard Harcourt from the Sarnia Public Library Board, March 26, 1904, Archives of Ontario, Records of the Education Department, RG 2, P-2, V, no. 25.

The Ontario Library Association: an Historical Sketch, 1900-1925 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1926) p. 140. Although his name does not appear on the title page, this work is by Edwin Austin Hardy. The history includes the minutes of the annual general meetings for the period reviewed, the originals of which are in the archives at O.L.A. headquarters in Toronto.


Emery, *The Library, the School, and the Child*, p. 83.


Ibid., pp. 60-63. "Chautauqua" was an American form of adult education which began in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It takes its name from Chautauqua Lake, New York, where the system had its origins. It consisted of popular lectures, plays, music and similar educational entertainments designed to produce a better-informed public. In the early twentieth century, it took the form of a travelling show when lectures and other educational offerings were given in tents to communities across the United States.


CHAPTER FOUR  
NORTHERN (NEW) ONTARIO

The library developments described so far were largely concentrated in southern Ontario, the older and more settled area of the province. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the vast wilderness known as northern or "New" Ontario was gradually opened up. As centres of population were created and developed, the need for cultural and educational institutions like the public library soon manifested itself. Notable in this respect were Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Kenora (Rat Portage), Port Arthur and Fort William (Thunder Bay), and New Liskeard.

The Ontario Government found the idea of colonizing this region attractive for a number of reasons, not the least of which was an abundance of mineral and forest resources. Over a period of time, the Government was successful in attracting fairly large numbers of settlers. Coupled with generous corporate investment, this enabled the development of important mining, lumbering, and pulp and paper industries, besides correcting, to some extent, the distributional imbalance caused by the heavy concentration of population in the southern part of the province. Agriculture was given a boost by the discovery of areas that became known as the Great Clay Belt and the Little Clay Belt, although many who were lured to the former came to realize that they were the victims of "Ontario's Great Clay Belt Hoax," as successful farming there proved to be.
anything but easy.

In the decades after Confederation, a number of new districts were organized, followed by the creation of appropriate administrative structures to govern them. The improvement of communication systems was naturally an important priority; this meant the construction of colonization roads and railway systems of which the outstanding example is the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway, completed in 1885. In the 1870s, northern Ontario was a sparsely populated wilderness. By 1901 it had a population in excess of 100,000 people, which increased during the next twenty years to slightly over 267,000 when the six northern districts could claim about nine percent of the province's entire population.²

Sudbury is known today as an extremely important mining centre. In 1883, while the Canadian Pacific Railway was under construction, the site of the present-day city was chosen as a terminal. The results of this decision, coupled with the eventual discovery of the area's rich mineral resources meant prosperity and growth in the years ahead. The population numbered only about 1,500 souls in 1895 when a group of citizens petitioned the Town Council to establish a library, prompted, no doubt, by the new library legislation enacted that year. The necessary by-law was approved in the following January, but it appears that the initial venture was shortlived as the library "withered away" from a lack of financial support sometime after 1897. It was resuscitated in 1912 at the instigation of the local Council of Women (presumably affiliated with the National Council of Women of Canada). A petition was circulated asking for assistance, which resulted in a response from 135 citizens willing to pledge sums ranging from one dollar to

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fifty dollars for the library. As a result, an association public library was formed which opened on April 10, 1912.

In the library's first year of operation, its membership numbered 183, served from a book stock of 627 volumes for adults, and fifty-two volumes suitable for children. The circulation among adult members was a modest 355 volumes; for youthful members, it was thirty-five volumes. In the next year, the Town Council, responding to a request for financial aid, voted $500 for the library's support. Adequate funding and suitable accommodation were two matters that plagued successive library boards. For example, the Carnegie Corporation tentatively agreed in 1914 to grant $15,000 for a building but nothing came of it. The financial situation was so bad in 1916 that serious doubts were raised concerning the library's future. The only solution was to ask the Town Council to assume responsibility for it. The library contained 1,500 volumes at this time and served a membership of 100. The Council agreed, and conversion to a free public library was accomplished on January 22, 1917.

The inaugural meeting of the Board of Management took place shortly after, on February 12, 1917. An important priority was the acquisition of premises, and a suitable site was recommended for purchase to the Town Council. Unfortunately, nothing came of the proposal, and although various locations were investigated over the years, it was not until 1950 that the Board finally purchased a site and built its own premises. Until that time, the library operated in a variety of rented facilities. At the Board's April meeting in 1917, it was decided that the Inspector of Public Libraries should be approached to assist in acquiring the services of an "expert cataloguer." With regards to
hours, the library and reading room were to be open six days a week, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and from 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m., excluding public holidays.

At the May meeting, it was agreed to offer ten dollars per week for a librarian, and appoint a caretaker (a position sometimes combined with the post of librarian) for the princely sum of one dollar and fifty cents per week, a wage established at the June meeting. Two other important items of business were conducted at that meeting: the formulation of rules and regulations, and a request to the Town Council to levy the sum of $1,500 for library purposes. A Miss Thompson had been appointed Librarian, and in January 1918 she received a salary increase that brought her remuneration up to sixty dollars per month.†

A useful innovation was the incorporation in the Board’s minutes of synoptic information from the Librarian’s reports indicating the library’s progress. For example, at the end of December, 1918, the membership stood at 717, thirty new members being added in the final month. The appointment of an assistant for Miss Thompson, which was approved in December of the following year, suggests that the library was increasing in popularity. The Librarian’s salary was further increased on February 1, 1920 to seventy-five dollars per month, by which time the membership had reached 368, with almost 1,300 volumes borrowed in the previous month.§ While these are hardly astronomical figures, it should be borne in mind that as late as 1921 the population was still under 9,000. Further proof that the library was in a period of growth is furnished by the Board’s commitment in June 1920 to make efforts to increase shelving space in the library.¶
Sault Ste. Marie is situated in an area lying between Lake Superior and Lake Huron, and occupies a strategic position in the Great Lakes system of waterways. Visitors to the city, today, cannot fail to be impressed by its excellent public library which has its roots in the late nineteenth century. Between 1881 and 1921 the population rose from just under 800 inhabitants to slightly over 21,000. An early fur-trading post, it was not to achieve real prominence until the twentieth century, although prospects for its development seemed favourable when it was reached by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1887, the year in which the community achieved township status.10

Francis H. Clergue, businessman and entrepreneur, while passing through on his way to Fort William in 1894, recognized the potential of the area and stayed to found what was little short of an industrial empire based on the mineral and timber resources of the area. In the years between 1893 and 1903 the population increased fourfold to 8,000 inhabitants and included, besides those of British extraction, French-Canadians, Finns, Italians, Hungarians, Germans, Poles, and the Irish. After enjoying prosperity in these years, the community suffered through the collapse of Clergue's empire in 1903. Fortunately, with assistance from the Provincial Government, the town recovered to become, once again, important and prosperous.11

As early as 1873 the tiny community of Sault Ste. Marie became aware of the need for cultural stimuli, and in that year organized a literary society.12 Not much is known about this early endeavour, but in 1890 a mechanics' institute was organized. Board minutes are unfortunately sketchy, but the early months were taken up with organizational matters. These included a search for premises, the drafting of by-
laws, the establishment of membership at one dollar per annum, and a decision to canvass for subscriptions. The Town Council was approached for financial assistance which resulted in a grant of eighty dollars. In its formative years, the assets of the institute were quite modest: for the year ending April 30, 1891 the figure was almost $367, the book collection accounting for the major part of this sum.

George Dawson was appointed Secretary and Librarian in September, 1891 "at the usual remuneration," which was not stated.13 The library was housed in two small rooms above the town hall.14 George Webber was appointed as a caretaker in May, 1893 at one dollar per week. At the same meeting, George Dawson was reappointed Librarian at a salary of forty dollars a year. A John Dawson occupied the position of Secretary and reported that almost 1,600 books had been circulated in the 1892-93 year, representing an increase of about thirty-one percent over 1891-92. The Board was called together in May, 1894 to confirm the appointment of Miss Vaillancourt (about whom little can be ascertained) as Librarian and Caretaker for a salary that was six dollars per month in the summer and ten dollars a month for seven months in the winter when the hours of business were longer. Combining these positions was an economy measure and meant that George Dawson and George Webber could now be relieved of their respective duties, for which they were duly remunerated and thanked.

Miss Vaillancourt resigned in December, 1894, being succeeded by a Mrs. Cadot. In the same month, a delegation from the Women's Christian Temperance Union waited upon the institute's Board requesting either a "more convenient" reading room or improvements to the existing facility.15
This organization carried some weight as it provided financial support to the institute. A subcommittee was struck to meet with a committee appointed by the W.C.T.U. to discuss ways of improving the reading room. Concern for the safety of women readers is suggested by the fact that the women's organization was reimbursed for the cost of lighting the entrance to the reading room.

During the Board's first meeting of the new year, the President reported that Miss Vaillancourt had approached him at the end of the December meeting and expressed her willingness to resume her position as the Librarian, having reached a satisfactory arrangement with Mrs. Cadot. Although the Board decided to advertise the position, Miss Vaillancourt was reappointed in January, 1895 at a monthly salary of fifteen dollars until May of the same year. For the months of June and July her salary was reduced to eleven dollars per month, reflecting shorter summer hours. Attempting to live on a fluctuating salary, and without any fringe benefits, must have been extremely trying, but typifies the precarious financial condition of many of the smaller institutes of the period.

The Superintendent of Public Libraries visited Sault Ste. Marie in August, 1896 to promote the idea of conversion to a free library. Dr. May argued that it was important to provide young people and the poor with access to free reading matter. He drew attention to the existence of grants, available if the town was also prepared to raise funds for library support. He obviously made a strong impression, for the resolution to change the mechanics' institute into a free library was passed by the Board of Management on September 1, 1896, and then immediately presented as a petition to the Town Council where it
received unanimous approval. Early in 1897 the new Board granted the Librarian a salary increase to twenty dollars per month with the condition that the reading room was to be kept open six days a week, from 2 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Again, this suggests that the library was popular in the community. In time, Miss Vaillancourt surrendered the post of Librarian to a Miss Brown who was eventually forced to resign through ill health, a Miss Champion being her replacement in May, 1900.17

The first decade of the new century was important for the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library as the town entered into negotiations with Andrew Carnegie to secure a building. The Sault Star for December 19, 1901, while pointing out with caustic wit that every morning Carnegie had "four freight carloads of money dumped into his back yard," informed its readers that H. Russell Halton had written to the benefactor and had received an offer of $10,000. It simply required an agreement on the part of the Town Council to provide annually a sum equal to ten percent of the grant for the maintenance of the library. The Council's property committee would be meeting the next day to discuss the library project.

The property committee presumably met on December 20, 1901, but whatever transpired there was overshadowed by a subsequent meeting on February 3, 1902, when it was recommended that Carnegie's offer be declined as the town was going to improve the fire hall for library purposes. It is not clear what happened over the next few months, but in June the Town Council decided to accept Carnegie's offer.18 The proposal to have a library building went ahead, with the Star for June 19, 1902 giving most of the credit to the tenacious Halton. Consequently, in the following year, on
August 20, the newspaper happily announced that the new Carnegie library building was about to open, only weeks before the Clergue empire collapsed and put 3,500 men out of work.19

At a special meeting of the Board of Management on December 19, 1906, arrangements were made to renew the fire insurance. The books and periodicals were valued at $700 and the furniture and fittings at $300. On March 6 of the next year the library, fire hall, and town hall were destroyed by fire. The total loss was put at $39,000; the insurance figure quoted for the entire complex was just $19,000.20 The library’s share of the insurance money was $4,500, so the Board authorized the Town Clerk to approach Carnegie for another grant, asking this time for $5,500 to bring the total to $10,000 to enable rebuilding. Attention was drawn to the plight of the many workers employed by the area’s industries who were now deprived of the "luxury" of the library. James Bertram, acting for Carnegie, was clearly annoyed that the library had been insured for only $4,500 when it was worth more than twice that figure. The lame excuse proffered was that, because the library and fire hall were contiguous, they were absolutely safe from fire.21

Meanwhile, towards the end of 1907, the Town Council attempted to borrow the insurance money from the library’s Board at six percent interest, as the town was in financial difficulties. The request was refused because the Board intended to commence rebuilding a one-storey structure in the following spring.22 A further appeal went out to Carnegie in March, 1908, followed in April by an assurance that a Council resolution would guarantee the insurance of the new building to its full value each year. Finally, the sum of $5,500 was granted and the library was rebuilt in
There were soon signs that the public library was valued in the community. Later in 1909, an assistant was appointed, and during the next three years the salaries of the Librarian and the Assistant Librarian were raised to forty dollars and fifteen dollars per month respectively. At the urging of Walter Nursey, Inspector of Public Libraries, the Assistant Librarian was provided with full expenses to attend library school in Toronto during the summer of 1913.

As it happened, the increasing demands placed on the library proved to be too much for Miss Champion and she resigned in 1917. Her successor, Norah Thompson, was cast in a different mould and soon made a very strong impression on the community. The Sault Daily Star for February 20, 1919 remarked on the "wonderful change" that had taken place in the administration of the library under the direction of Norah Thompson, B.A. By this time she had assembled a staff of dedicated young women who enthusiastically exploited the growing book collection. Displaying a great deal of initiative, Norah Thompson persuaded the American public library, just across the river in Michigan, to co-operate and lend a collection of works on commission government which happened to be a prime topic in Sault Ste. Marie at the time.

Norah Thompson's term of office ended in 1919. The annual report for that year shows that the collection stood at slightly more than 9,000 volumes (of which seventy percent were fiction), serving some 20,000 people, with an annual circulation of just over 72,000 volumes. Looking back at the statistics for 1896, we find that a total of
just under 2,000 volumes had circulated among less than 2,500 people from a collection of under 1,000 volumes. These comparisons show that, while collection size had roughly kept pace with population growth, circulation had increased almost thirty-eight times, which is testimony to the utility and popularity of this particular public library.

At the head of Lake Superior stands the city of Thunder Bay, newly formed in 1970 by the amalgamation of the cities of Fort William and Port Arthur. Besides being one of the country’s largest ports, it is the focus of Canada’s most important pulp and papermaking region, and has a population in excess of 100,000. Like many other parts of Canada, the area was first visited by explorers, missionaries, and traders. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Fort William was built by the North West Company as its headquarters for the fur trade and was fought over at various times by that company and its rival, the Hudson’s Bay Company, a dispute that was settled in 1821 when they combined. It was incorporated as a town in 1892 and as a city in 1907.

Just north of Fort William, Port Arthur was established as a settlement in the 1850s, and like numerous other communities across the country, it became more important with the appearance of the Canadian Pacific Railway from the middle of the 1870s onwards. It was incorporated as a town in 1884 and achieved city status in 1906. When it lost the railway’s business to Fort William, it suffered a temporary decline, recovering its position when the Canadian National Railway (now the CN) made it its headquarters. With the opening of the prairies, Fort William and Port Arthur achieved prominence as centres through which grain was
shipped east. The rich natural resources of the area also added to the stature of both communities, epitomized by the Silver Islet Mine which yielded silver ore worth $3,250,000. Fort William had a population of just over 3,600 in 1901; twenty years later, the figure stood at more than 20,000. Port Arthur had a similar population in 1901: slightly more than 3,200, but this had risen to only slightly under 15,000 by 1921.

The beginnings of public library service in Port Arthur may be traced to the 1870s when a group of individuals determined to form a mechanics' institute which was first housed in the school, opening every Thursday evening for the exchange of books. It was taken over by the city in 1901, although the first meeting of the new Board of Management was apparently held in October, 1900. As it was an association public library charging fees, it is not clear what the city's responsibilities entailed unless it provided grants. The library became free in 1911, at which time the hours were increased and an assistant appointed at a salary of $400 per year, the Chief Librarian being paid $500. There is no way of knowing how these salaries were determined, or what significance may be attached to the differential in terms of duties.

Accommodation was a continuing problem over the years, and though there was some hope that the Carnegie Corporation would provide funding for a building, the negotiations came to nought. It was, in fact, 1951 before the library moved into premises built specifically for its purposes. Nevertheless, the annual report for 1919 shows that the library was providing reasonably good service to the community with a circulation figure of over 81,000 volumes from a collection that numbered almost 16,000 volumes.
Fort William Public Library owes its beginning to the Canadian Pacific Railway. At a meeting of the company's employees, sometime in 1885, they were persuaded to form an institution that would promote the reading of "good wholesome literature" and provide amusements that were of benefit to both the mind and the body. At first, it was established in the company's roundhouse in West Fort William, but was moved to the new roundhouse in East Fort William in 1891. Although it took a great deal of patience and tenacity on the part of the Board's first President, R. Bowman, by the end of 1891 the library, which included a smoking and recreation room, was in a flourishing condition.

It had a membership of over 100, and assets in excess of $1,000, which, bearing in mind the size of the community, was quite a respectable showing. The collection numbered about 1,000 volumes at that time, and in the following year the sum of $500 was expended on new acquisitions, a sum that represented considerable purchasing power in those days. There was also a healthy collection of newspapers and magazines reflecting a broad range of reading interests. Men, women, and children were eligible to join for an annual membership fee of only one dollar and twenty-five cents. An extremely curious feature was the presence of a bathroom which contained two baths with hot and cold running water. This facility was available during the library's hours of business; a fee of twenty-five cents was charged to non-members.

Unfortunately, the Board's minutes for the early period have been mislaid, but they apparently began in January, 1897 when Bowman was Secretary-Librarian. He received a stipend of ten dollars a month which was reduced to fifty
percent of membership subscriptions received, during financial crises. The modern public library began with an offer from the employees of the C.P.R. who wished to present their library (which was struggling financially) to the city, providing it was used to establish a public library. The offer was accepted and a Board of Management appointed. The library of some 2,000 volumes was moved into the basement of the town hall early in 1906 and organized as an association public library with an annual membership fee of one dollar. By the end of 1908 it had 182 members, which was not a large number from a population that was in the thousands.

The by-law making the Fort William library free was passed in January, 1908 when Mary Black was appointed Librarian. Alexander Calhoun noted that she had learnt "library techniques" at the Ottawa Public Library, and further remarked that "Miss Black's long, devoted, and able service as Librarian made our choice a very happy one." She served until 1937 when ill health forced her to retire. The Board naturally became interested in procuring a building and approached the Carnegie Foundation which provided a grant of $50,000. The new library opened in the spring of 1912, and was described as "a massive structure of cement, steel, stone and Milton pressed brick with wood work of solid oak." It was, furthermore, "a striking symbol of western enterprise, the logical result of the march of civilization," situated in a region that was only recently a wilderness but was now "an up-to-date commercial centre of humming industry."

A 1913 report of a social survey conducted by the Methodist and Presbyterian churches contains a clear picture of the new facility. Besides the main library, the building
included a children's room, with its own librarian, a smoking and newspaper room, and an auditorium, facilities which were seen as alternatives to the bar and the poolroom. The readership numbered 1,200 men, 1,000 women, and, under the age of eighteen, 400 girls and 600 boys. The library was open eighty-one hours each week. The survey also noted the presence of "reference libraries" of about 300 volumes each in the city's schools, in addition to numerous Sunday school libraries. Besides organizing reading clubs for its juvenile readers, the public library attempted to provide literature suitable for a large immigrant population comprising a variety of ethnic groups.\(^{33}\)

From 1900 to World War II the principal form of assimilation recommended for immigrants whose backgrounds were neither British nor French was "anglo-conformity" which required them to adapt to the prevailing values and institutions of Canadian society (largely Anglo-Saxon and Protestant).\(^{33}\) The nature of the literature used for this purpose is not known, but its provision shows that the public library had a role in the assimilation process. In the year 1920, the library circulated over 117,000 volumes. Population size at this time was close to 20,000, served by a library collection of slightly more than 32,000 volumes. A sum in excess of $22,000 was expended for library purposes, which represented one dollar and twelve cents per capita.\(^{40}\)

Formerly called Rat Portage, Kenora is a remote community situated in the western part of northern Ontario, not far from the Manitoba border. Despite its comparative isolation, it has an interesting library history which, like Thunder Bay, began with the coming of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Before the railway arrived, fur-trading was the
principal industry, exploited by the Hudson's Bay Company and its rival, the North West Company. The construction of the railway, the development of a lumber industry, and the discovery of gold all contributed to the increasing importance of the area. Census figures show a population rising from a little more than 1,800 in 1891 to just over 6,000 in 1911, but with a loss of almost 1,000 people by 1921.

The exact year in which the C.P.R. started a library for its employees is the subject of debate, but it was between 1884 and 1886. An important stopping place on the trans-continental railway, Kenora was predisposed to institutions like the public library by virtue of the numerous and diverse cultural attractions available in the town. It was visited by many touring artists, including actors, singers, musicians, magicians, and lecturers. Not a great deal is known about the original library, but it is believed to have been substantial, serving a fairly large membership.

The book collection of the railway employees' library went to form the nucleus of a mechanics' institute in 1894, and became the Rat Portage Public Library in 1895, which was simply a response to the change of name decreed in the 1895 legislation. A report from the Minister of Education states that it became a free library in 1906. Local records, however, give 1907 as the year in which the library became free and point to a number of lean years during which financial difficulties forced the library to close for a period of time. It is surprising, therefore, that in the same year, Andrew Carnegie was approached for a building.
The negotiations took time, for it was not until 1913 that a grant of $15,000 was offered. Building operations were delayed, so that it was 1916 before the town's Carnegie library finally opened for business. It was built on the site of the former fire hall which had burned down, the land having been donated originally by the Hudson's Bay Company.

The growth of Kenora's public library seemed to follow a normal pattern of development, with a circulation that, despite some fluctuations, enjoyed an overall increase over the years. The only surprise was a substantial jump from just over 5,000 volumes in 1902 to more than 14,000 in 1903, for which there is no apparent explanation.

An illustrated supplement to the Temiskaming Herald, published in February, 1905, stated that "five years ago New Liskeard was but a name, and the Temiskaming District to the average man of Old Ontario, a wilderness of stunted pine and rock. Today it is the talk of Ontario." New Liskeard (at first called Thornloe) is situated at the head of Lake Temiskaming in a clay-belt region that was considered extremely good for agriculture and lumbering operations. It was first settled in the 1890s, and became more attractive when silver deposits, among the largest in the world, were discovered in 1903 at Cobalt, about ten miles south of New Liskeard. Early in the twentieth century, the Government constructed a railway to open up the area and link the new communities with southern Ontario.

According to the Temiskaming Herald supplement, the first settler arrived in 1891. Within seven years the community was large enough for the inhabitants to express interest in the creation of a library. A meeting of the provisional directors of the Thornloe Public Library was held in the local school on November 10, 1898. The Board of
Management was to consist of five men and four women, which is an interesting innovation in a period when public office was usually the domain of men. One of its members, a Miss Dowzer, was appointed Librarian.

Lacking a building, the collection was housed in the school and was available only on Saturdays from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The female members of the Board constituted the book selection committee. The first Librarian's report was issued on April 2, 1899, and showed that the membership numbered 112 people, but only sixty-four of these had borrowed from the library's total collection of seventy-five volumes. These figures are at odds with those published in the Minister of Education's report which show a membership of 105, with 160 volumes in the library and a circulation of 182 volumes. At the Board meeting of April 2, 1899, the membership fee for the coming year was set at twenty-five cents.

In October 1900, Miss Dowzer was replaced as Librarian by the Revered F.E. Pitts. The library's hours were slightly improved in 1902 to provide three hours of service a week. The response must have been sufficiently encouraging to prompt the Board to exploit it by doubling the membership fee to fifty cents. At the end of 1902, the library contained well over 600 volumes with a circulation figure for the year of over 2,200 volumes. The Town Council took over responsibility for the library on August 4, 1904 in accordance with part two of the 1895 legislation. No doubt, this was considered a more efficient arrangement, likely to encourage greater financial assistance, as a lack of municipal support was often a problem for independent boards. It was also a useful interim measure until the Town Council felt it could afford to levy a tax specifically for
the library's support, according to part one of the Public Libraries Act.\textsuperscript{34}

After the book collection of several hundred volumes, together with bookcases and catalogues, had been handed over to the new Board, there remained the question of accommodation. This was eventually settled by accepting the offer of a Miss Linton who, for fifty dollars a year, agreed to house the library in her living room; she would provide light, heat, and act as Librarian. The library would be open on Tuesdays from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m., Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m., and Saturdays from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. The nearby community of Dymond was invited to make use of the library and co-operate in its running by providing an annual grant of twenty-five dollars and appointing one member to the Board. Operating under the new arrangements, the New Liskeard Public Library opened its doors officially to the public on November 21, 1904. In July of the following year, a request was made to the Town Council for a grant of $200.\textsuperscript{34}

At the end of 1905, the public library was featured in the Temiskaming Herald. It is obvious that the town was very proud of its library, the paper pointing out that the approximately 1,000 volumes had been carefully selected and were being read. In the same issue, the town's progress was lauded. It already had macadamized roads, an expensive fire engine and fire hall, a new post office, one school in service and another in the course of erection. It also possessed a sophisticated telephone system with one hundred subscribers. Planning was under way for electricity services, a waterworks, a sewage disposal plant, and a hospital with modern equipment.\textsuperscript{55} The library, unfortunately, was still without a permanent home. The Town Council was approached in April, 1907 for permission to
house the library in the town hall; this was approved. 56

Letters were sent out in January, 1910 asking other public libraries in the area for advice about the steps necessary to obtain a Carnegie grant. 57 In April, 1910 the Chairman of the Board received a letter from Carnegie's secretary, James Bertram, indicating that the benefactor was prepared to give $10,000 for a library building, providing the Town Council would make the customary guarantee of maintenance funding equivalent to ten percent of the grant. 58 In order to qualify for a Carnegie grant the library had to be absolutely free in accordance with part one of the library act, so the Town Council was requested to levy the requisite tax of one-half mill in the dollar, and this was approved. 59 Besides maintenance, the Council was required to provide a suitable site, which naturally provoked a great deal of discussion, with the Temiskaming Herald debating at length the ideal location for the new institution. 60

For reasons not made apparent, $10,000 was not enough, and an increase was requested. 61 Bertram responded in January, 1911 with the news that a further $900 would be forthcoming, providing a corresponding increase in the annual maintenance figure was guaranteed by the municipality. 62 In April of 1911, a committee was struck to draft rules and regulations for the new library. Later that year, July 3 was set as the date for the official opening. In the following weeks, the Board's business centred on such matters as a telephone for the boardroom, filling the position of Librarian, setting new hours, and debating whether girls from the local high school should be permitted to use the ladies' lavatory. Access to this facility was finally settled in September when the Board gave its approval and set a charge of five dollars per term. By the
end of 1911, the Board was encountering difficulties with the Town Council over the size of its grant. Just before Christmas, a cheque was received for $500 when the correct amount should have been $1,580; this prompted a letter of protest.

The next few years were taken up with fairly routine matters, but in 1915 a modest change of direction took place. At its September meeting the Board received a petition from the ladies of the town suggesting the addition of table games to the smoking room for the use of boys who might want to spend their evenings there. The idea was approved and put into effect in October, the library thus taking on a new recreational role. Spanish influenza struck the town in 1918, and the library was closed as part of the campaign to combat the disease. When the epidemic subsided, it was decided to fumigate the book collection with formaldehyde, allowing a weekend for the chemical to do its work.

As late as 1919, the Board was still encountering problems with the Town Council over funding. C.A. Byam, a member of the Board, decided to seek legal advice while attending the annual conference of the Ontario Library Association in Toronto. The minutes do not provide a full discussion, but it seems that the finance committee of the Town Council was interfering in some way with the workings of the library’s Board, and had withheld the maintenance grant pledged under the terms of the Carnegie award. Byam was assured by his legal advisers that the position of the Board was correct and, if necessary, the funds could be acquired by process of law.
By February 1920, the financial situation was serious; the Board's bank account was overdrawn, making it necessary to borrow from the Town Council. An entertainment committee was struck to raise funds for the library. In 1920, the library contained slightly more than 5,000 volumes and circulated 10,503 volumes among a population of 2,000. Total expenditure for that year was just over one dollar per capita. The library managed to survive and gave continuous service over the years. Today, it is an important part of New Liskeard's cultural and recreational life.

Northern Ontario was a vast area of some 300,000 square miles, with much of it still uninhabited and the rest sparsely populated. This created innumerable problems for the staff of the Education Department in its attempts to provide and supervise educational services in the region. On the same note, C.M. Byam, from New Liskeard, had asked delegates at the 1914 conference of the O.L.A. what could be done to assist the new communities that had taken root on the province's frontiers? His solution was to charge an individual with the responsibility for commencing libraries in each community and ensuring that they became viable. Another solution to this problem was the use of travelling libraries, an option the Education Department had taken up many years before to solve a variety of problems relating to library service.

Melvil Dewey, an innovator in several areas of librarianship, is credited with being the first in North America to introduce the concept of travelling libraries in 1893, when he was State Librarian of New York. These were small collections of twenty-five, fifty, or 100 volumes which, for a small handling charge, were loaned for periods of six months. It is not known where Dewey got the idea.
but he was no doubt aware of a similar scheme that had operated in Scotland many years before. In 1817, a merchant named Samuel Brown had financed a system of small book collections which were placed in the villages and hamlets of East Lothian and exchanged every two years.69

In Canada, a James Potter of Kingston devised a system of "floating" libraries for seamen which was sponsored by the Upper Canada Tract Society.70 The first collection from McGill University's travelling library system was sent out in September 1901 and grew to serve remote communities from coast to coast. The collections included travel books, biographies, historical writings, non-sectarian religious works, poetical offerings, and a selection of "good" fiction which constituted about one third of each consignment. Books on flora and fauna were included for young readers.71 The Aberdeen Association was formed on November 12, 1890 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, to distribute literature to settlers in deprived and isolated parts of the country. The scheme received a great deal of encouragement, including free mailing privileges, and branches were eventually organized in other parts of the Dominion.72

The story of travelling libraries in Ontario began with Walter James Brown, a journalist, agriculturalist, and economist. In January, 1900 he wrote to Richard Harcourt, Minister of Education, suggesting the formation of a bureau to administer a system of travelling libraries for the province. The bureau would also encourage the creation of reading circles, debating clubs, literary societies, and a number of other cultural activities. He recommended the division of the province into roughly sixty districts, making the postmasters in rural areas librarians and custodians of the book collections. Each community would
normally get one box of books, but two or more could be sent to towns and villages that did not have access to public libraries. The collections were to be circulated on a three-monthly basis.\textsuperscript{73}

Brown wrote again to the Minister on March 15, 1900, stating that he had followed the Minister's suggestion and now possessed detailed information regarding travelling libraries in the United States. "In my scheme," he informed Harcourt, "I have given you the benefit of my experience as a trained educator and librarian." All that he wished was the opportunity to "render this service to the people of this country." Apart from its benefits as part of the educational system, Brown thought that it would strengthen the position of the present (Liberal) government, "giving it an additional hold on the affections of the people." The initial cost would be approximately $10,000. He gave two reasons for pressing the matter at that moment: Ontario's Legislature was in session, and he had recovered fully from an unnamed illness and was looking for something purposeful to do.

The Deputy Minister informed Brown on March 16 that the Minister was not prepared to express an opinion as to the future of travelling libraries, but asked to be kept informed of developments elsewhere. On March 21, 1900, Brown wrote to the Minister again, drawing attention to the broad nature of his scheme which would include what Brown called "temptation" libraries (special libraries put together for study groups and reading circles), museum artifacts, pictures, and lantern slides. The system could be organized and materials distributed through means of a bureau, presumably set up as part of the Education Department. The response to this letter is not extant, but
Brown wrote a further missive on May 11, 1900. He reminded the Minister that the printed information collected from several of the American states had been sent to the Department, and expressed the hope that, as the recent session of the Legislature had closed, the Minister would now have time to examine his scheme. A few days later, on May 14, the Deputy Minister replied curtly that the Minister could not see his way "in the near future, to maturing some plan for Travelling Libraries."

Major Brown was not to be put off, and his letter of July 11, 1900 had a slightly threatening ring to it. After reiterating all the virtues of his scheme, Brown hinted that, if the Education Department was not going to undertake the provision of travelling libraries, then he would withdraw his plan and take his business elsewhere, submitting his scheme to "a private concern." He was quick to point out that this could mean the predomination of business interests over educational goals, which would be most undesirable. The Minister was adamant. Writing on July 13, 1900, the Deputy Minister repeated that nothing was likely to happen in the near future, so Brown was at liberty to promote his enterprise wherever he wished. Any consideration of libraries that might take place in the future would involve much broader issues than simply travelling libraries.

For some reason, Brown took this to be a positive response, and in reply to the Deputy Minister on July 17, 1900, interpreted that gentleman's remarks to mean that the scheme should not be abandoned to private enterprise. Brown inferred from the statement that the whole library situation was to be examined by the Education Department, with the likelihood of a movement starting that would "include
everything that is practicable for adoption in Ontario of
the long list of auxiliary educational agencies known to
educationists, which have been found so successful
elsewhere, and are greatly needed in this Province." He had
hoped that his scheme for travelling libraries would be the
"entering wedge," with all other forms of library service
following as a matter of course. Again, he was to be
disappointed for the Deputy Minister replied on July 18 that
the Minister did not intend to co-operate officially with
anyone in the provision of travelling libraries. Brown was
told quite bluntly that anything he did in this regard would
be considered private enterprise and entirely his own
responsibility.

There the matter rested for about six months when Brown
was moved to write to the Minister again. This time, it was
a response to an announcement in the Toronto Globe (January
24, 1901) that the Minister would ask the Legislature for
funding in order to introduce a system of travelling
libraries to remote settlements. Brown, referring to the
proposal as his scheme, expressed delight and hoped that the
appropriation would be at least $10,000, noting that a
further five appropriations of similar size would be needed
to complete the project. He reiterated his willingness to
assist, and offered to support the scheme by publicizing it
in the newspapers without, of course, implicating the
Government in any way. The scheme went ahead, but no
direct credit was given to Brown.

About two years later, Brown revealed the fact that the
Minister had been criticized by the Government's Opposition
for requesting only $1,200 for the entire project. Brown's
own criticism centred on the fact that the libraries had
been sent to lumber camps instead of farming districts,
which was the original intention. He went on to observe that, although the Government had been congratulated during the opening of the 1902 Legislature on its successful introduction of travelling libraries, only $2,000 had been voted for them during the session, compared to more than $60,000 for public libraries and other cultural institutions, which tended to favour those living in the more accessible and populated areas. Brown expressed regret that he had submitted his proposal to the Education Department, inferring that it ought to have gone to the Minister of Agriculture as the person mainly concerned with the interests of farmers. 5

The extent to which Brown influenced the Education Department in its eventual decision to introduce travelling libraries is difficult to calculate. But in the same year (1901), the Reverend Alfred Fitzpatrick, founder of Frontier College, approached the Department for assistance in providing library collections to lumber and mining camps in northern Ontario. He was a Presbyterian minister who had done some missionary work in California. On his return to Canada, he had applied for similar work in the Algoma District of northern Ontario, where he discovered the work that would occupy the remainder of his life: caring for the education and welfare of those who laboured under the most appalling conditions in the province’s lumber and mining camps. As a measure of Fitzpatrick’s assertiveness, which perhaps outweighed that of Walter Brown, the case of the Nairn Centre Public Library provides a good illustration. It also serves to show the narrow bureaucratic thinking of the Education Department that must have hindered rather than helped many struggling libraries.
Nairn Centre, situated about forty miles southwest of Sudbury in the southern part of northern Ontario, prided itself on its public library which was organized around 1898 and incorporated in 1900. Of modest size, it possessed in its early years between 500 and 600 volumes. It claimed to be a free library and the first to provide library facilities for the numerous workers in the neighbouring camps. Unfortunately, the library managed to fall foul of the Education Department, largely because it failed to follow regulations to the letter. As a result, between 1903 and 1904 a lively correspondence ensued. The Department's complaints included inaccurate record-keeping, allowing library materials to be borrowed without adequate safeguards for their return, and purchasing books and periodicals on the strength of promissory notes and loans borrowed against the expected grant. This was a practice that made the Education Department very nervous because it was a way to avoid raising any matching funds at the local level. A library would purchase, say, books to the value of $200 with the borrowed money and claim the matching grant. When the money arrived, it was used to pay back the loan, so that nothing was actually raised at the local level.

Fitzpatrick, at the time Chairman of Nairn Centre's Library Board, was brought into the picture in November 1903, when he was invited to visit the Education Department to discuss the situation. The results of this interview are not known, but near the end of December, 1903, Fitzpatrick was informed that the grant was being withheld, pending resolution of the Minister's concerns. Fitzpatrick's response went straight to the heart of the matter: if the Superintendent of Public Libraries would not give Nairn Centre the grant on the strength of the vouchers, then he should not have done so for numerous other library boards,
and if the grant was not received within ten days, the Superintendent’s methods would be exposed in the newspapers. The Department quickly agreed to provide a sum of fifty dollars, which was to be regarded as meeting the Government’s obligations to the end of 1903.

In February, 1904, Fitzpatrick fired his parting shot. After briefly reviewing the claims and counter-claims, he stated that he had no more time to spend on the matter and was referring it to his fellow Board members, presumably viewing the fifty-dollar grant as, at least, a partial victory. The Superintendent of Public Libraries saw it differently; the Minister had been very generous, particularly when Nairn Centre Public Library was, in his opinion, nothing more than a camp library.  

In August, 1900, several months after Walter Brown had made his first overtures to the Education Department, Fitzpatrick wrote to the Superintendent of Public Libraries. He explained that he had been interested for some time in the improvement of the “so called ‘working classes’,” believing that small libraries should be placed in lumber and mining camps and coupled with lectures and sermons. This was an idea he was promoting among company contractors and operators, and intended giving up his congregation to devote himself entirely to work among the camp labourers. At this point, he was only interested in receiving financial assistance, for he would develop the libraries himself.

In a letter to lumber and mining camp officials dated August 7, 1900, Fitzpatrick explained that he had been in touch with a publishing company to provide a number of small libraries of between 100 and 200 volumes which would be put into locked cases for ease of travel. They would not be “of
a sentimental, goody-goody nature, but the latest and the best works on vital and up-to-date subjects." Newspapers and magazines would also be provided. Each camp would be expected to form a club and charge a membership fee of one dollar. Fitzpatrick was curious to discover if Government aid would be forthcoming, should the scheme take "practical shape," and wrote to the Minister accordingly.

In late August he received a reply from the Education Department stating that there was no provision in the act for this type of library, and that similar schemes had been tried and had failed because the intended recipients of the service could not read. In October, 1900, Fitzpatrick wrote again, supplying endorsements for his scheme from eminent clergymen, lumber firms, and several newspapers. The Deputy Minister's response indicated that the Minister considered the scheme to be important and was giving it his consideration. 

In the same month, Fitzpatrick heard from the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The organization was naturally pleased at the efforts he was making on behalf of camp labourers, but was concerned about the nature of the literature. The W.C.T.U. considered public libraries in the cities and towns to be "detrimental to the spiritual needs of our people." It was prepared to support the camp scheme, providing the collections were formed from gifts contributed by churches, temperance societies, and similar organizations. Fitzpatrick also tried to persuade public libraries in the vicinity of camps to provide services for them. The Manitowaning Public Library, on Manitoulin Island, is typical of those that refused to co-operate because it believed that the books would be damaged to the point of being no longer useful.
The Little Current Public Library, also on Manitoulin island, exemplifies those that were prepared to co-operate, and Fitzpatrick was quick to make this fact known in a broadside addressed to lumber and mining camp operators in the region. The leaflet outlined recommendations, which included the establishment of a commission to oversee the work of travelling libraries, the provision of Government grants to libraries like that at Little Current to assist them in sending library collections to the camps, and the organization of camp library clubs to work with library boards and other interested organizations. Clearly, the hope was that the Government would eventually become directly involved through travelling collections prepared and administered by the Education Department.

Libraries in the United States were approached for advice on establishing camp libraries. McGill University Library, in Montreal, was asked to co-operate in Fitzpatrick's venture, through its system of travelling libraries. Charles Gould, the University Librarian, wrote to Fitzpatrick on October 30, 1900, stating his willingness to co-operate and asking for an indication of the kinds of books he should send. This led to the provision of one library on an experimental basis.

These events heralded the formation of the Canadian Reading Camp Association (or simply the R.C.A.) which was the foundation of Frontier College, an educational institution that is still active today. It had quite broad objectives. It was to encourage and assist "various Departments of Education" in organizing reading rooms and other recreational facilities for workers in the lumber and mining industries, and also those in railway construction.
In addition to literature, it was to supply games and other forms of entertainment. Instruction was also to be provided in tandem with the development of a system of home study. The few who did not support the scheme raised two basic problems: long working hours and large-scale illiteracy. There was little that could be done about the former, but in the latter case, classics like *Robinson Crusoe*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, and *Pilgrim's Progress* were provided in "one-syllable" editions. As a matter of fact, Fitzpatrick was optimistic about the level of literacy in the camps, stating on one occasion that about sixty-five percent of the men could actually read and write.

Fitzpatrick emphasized that even if every public library became involved, this would not serve in the long run; the experiment was intended to attract the Government's attention where the real responsibility lay, and would serve until the Education Department developed a complete system of travelling libraries. As the Government's revenue from lumbering operations was almost $1,500,000, it could certainly afford to assist the labourers who made such a bounty possible. In fact, the Government did provide grants, which were supplemented by donations from numerous organizations and individuals.

The Little Current Public Library approached the Minister of Education in September, 1900, for permission to supply nearby camps. In October, the Minister told Fitzpatrick that libraries had permission to assist in this way, expressing the hope that a "good beginning" would be made in the coming season. Three experimental reading camps were created, and were supplied with libraries in English and French from the Nairn Centre Public Library; a fourth camp was supplied by McGill University's travelling library.
Outbreaks of smallpox and other serious diseases among camp labourers posed threats to travelling libraries. Solutions aimed at preserving the system entailed either sending cheap paper editions for the exclusive use of a single camp which could be destroyed at the end of the working season, or the inclusion of a powerful disinfectant in book boxes. The provincial Board of Health moved to prevent libraries travelling from camp to camp at times when disease was prevalent. One camp actually turned its reading room into a temporary hospital in order to cope with an outbreak of smallpox. In time, the fear of epidemics was greatly reduced as sanitary conditions improved and better medical services were instituted.

Fitzpatrick was interviewed by the Toronto Globe, which provided some excellent publicity for the reading camp movement. By the autumn, it was expected that thirty-five reading camps would be in operation, but there was still room for expansion. When asked about the kinds of material considered suitable he replied "Clean, healthy literature," and gave a few examples. In his R.C.A. report for 1905-06, Fitzpatrick recommended the London Illustrated News, the Canadian Magazine, Boy's Own Paper, the Youth's Companion, and Punch, among others. He did not seem to have an aversion to fiction, naming as suitable such novelists as Ralph Connor (Charles William Gordon), G.A. Henty, Conan Doyle, and Alexandre Dumas. He though that church papers would be most unsuitable, confirming the non-sectarian nature of the movement. Attention was drawn to the appointment, as Librarian to the R.C.A., of Edwin Austin Hardy, Secretary of the O.L.A., who was prepared to receive books or money towards building collections. Hardy,
working with the Victoria County (East and West) Teachers' Association, was also responsible for the creation of a series of travelling libraries designed for the use of study clubs.99

In addition to the supply of reading matter, the other basic component of the movement was the provision of elementary education. Instructors, both university graduates and undergraduates, were provided with a heated and lighted building that contained a blackboard, globe, maps, some chemicals for simple experiments, and a travelling library from the Education Department. The teacher would labour alongside his students during the day and offer them instruction in the evening.90 In keeping with the times, the Canadianization of the foreigner was naturally considered an important part of the educational process.91 While the usual teaching facility was a building constructed by the camp operator, in some cases it was found more practical to convert a railway car into a library and classroom and locate it near a camp.92 Because the name "Reading Camp Association" was a misleading name that reflected only part of the organization's function, a charter was secured in 1919 under the name Frontier College.93

The Education Department sent out its first collections in 1901 to eight communities that had requested assistance. Freight charges were paid by the recipients. They consisted of fifty volumes each, and the loan period was set at six months, although, with special permission, this could be extended. While recognizing the special needs of mining and lumbering camps, stressed by Brown and Fitzpatrick, the new communities that were growing in northern Ontario, and those in remote areas of the older parts of the province, would
also receive consideration. In a confidential letter to the Reverend J.B. Fraser of Annan, Ontario, the Minister expressed confidence that the introduction of travelling libraries would be a great success. He went on to say that "low class fiction" would certainly be excluded from the collections which would be chosen with great care.

By 1903, thirty-one libraries of fifty volumes each had been sent out. A sampling of the volumes in these collections shows a fairly broad offering: together with other classical and popular writers, Scott, Dickens, Kipling, and Jules Verne are represented; included also were such popular titles as *What Katy Did*, *Tom Brown's School Days*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Sherlock Holmes stories. For the more serious-minded, there were works of travel, biography, history, and popular science. Fiction was usually limited to between thirty and thirty-five percent of each collection.

Revised regulations for public libraries, reading rooms, and travelling libraries became operative on January 1, 1907. Any small public library with limited resources could now borrow a travelling library, providing it would pay the freight charges from the Education Department. If a public library loaned a collection to a camp, then the camp assumed the charges; the Education Department paid the freight charges when collections were returned. The loan period was reduced to three months, the more frequent turnover allowing a much better choice for readers.

T.W.H. Leavitt, as Inspector of Public Libraries, had noticed that there were about 100 small libraries scattered throughout the province that would probably benefit from travelling libraries. He hoped that the Government would
approve an appropriation in 1907 of $3,000 which, together with the books on hand, would provide about $4,000 worth of assistance. However, it was to be made clear to each beneficiary that, while the first library would be sent without any conditions attached, if no effort was made at the local level to provide additional support, then travelling libraries would not be sent in the future.

The scheme was modified in 1907 by the creation of two classes of travelling library: the fixed collection and the open-shelf collection. The first type was described as a "miniature public library," designed for the "average" community. Most libraries loaned were of this kind. The second category was intended to satisfy specific requirements in reading matter, or reflect the needs of a particular locality. Typically, these collections might relate to a specific trade or industry, or be directed at people attempting to improve their qualifications. Apart from public apathy, advertising the availability of travelling libraries and appointing librarians were major problems in those areas that were difficult to reach. But once a reading camp had been properly established in a village, it was likely to be used to good advantage by both the residents and the farmers in the surrounding area.

By 1908 the range of recipients for travelling libraries was quite impressive: small struggling libraries; rural communities; women's institutes; mining, lumbering, and other industries in the northern part of the province; schools without libraries (but only if the need was particularly pressing); public libraries in industrial centres; public libraries requesting special reading matter for children and young adults; literary institutions; library boards; study clubs, and individuals engaged in home.
reading courses.\textsuperscript{101} Although the scheme was enjoying a large measure of success, it was still necessary to promote it, but plans to send the Inspector of Public Libraries out as a "missionary" were unfortunately thwarted by Leavitt's death in 1909.

As part of the promotional campaign, attention was given to the manner in which the travelling library was received in the community. As the forerunner of the public library, it demanded publicity, and its presence was to be advertised in the local newspaper. A suitable place was to be found to house it, a store being preferable to a private house, and a barber's shop more congenial than an undertaker's parlour. The custodian was to be "an interested librarian in its truest sense."\textsuperscript{102}

In its early years, the system was governed by Departmental regulations, but in 1909 it was included in the legislation enacted that year.\textsuperscript{103} The clause also enabled the Minister to employ paid assistants to promote and administer travelling libraries. During the year ending in 1911, 241 libraries had been loaned. This meant that an estimated 12,000 volumes had circulated among approximately 36,000 readers in a territory that was just over 260,000 square miles and was home to a scattered population of over 2,500,000.\textsuperscript{104} Travelling libraries increased in popularity so that by 1916, the year in which nearly 2,000 volumes of new works were added to the collection, the Education Department was experiencing serious space and staffing problems.\textsuperscript{105}

A new direction was taken with the advent of the First World War when military camps, and later hospitals and related institutions, were supplied with collections.\textsuperscript{106} The
Inspector of Public Libraries emphasized the importance of the travelling library this way: "The cow catcher of the locomotive may be the advance guard of colonization but it is the travelling library that is the civilizer that reconciles the pioneer to the isolation of the outposts." 107 Although the primary intention was always to regard the travelling library as a "missionary enterprise" that would lead to the establishment of a permanent public library, 108 it remained part of the public library scene until the 1970s.
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CHAPTER FIVE
1900 - 1904

The start of a new century was naturally a time of great excitement and anticipation. For Canadians, it was also a period of economic expansion and growth, with changes in society drastic enough to constitute a "social revolution"; it was an era to which the epithet "materialistic" became truly appropriate.¹ In the same period the library movement came of age, and despite the fact that there was a degree of shortfall in terms of attempted goals in the early decades, progress was made towards the development of a rational, province-wide system of public libraries.

According to the census of 1901, in the age bracket of five years and over Ontario’s population stood at just under 2,000,000 of which ninety percent were literate.² In theory, at least, this augured well for the future of library development. The Superintendent of Public Libraries saw clear evidence that progress had been made in the library field. It was manifested not only in the increase in the number of libraries, but in the gratitude of the people, "uneducated men and women" who were grateful that their children could receive further education through the public library after leaving school. In other words, the large number of people the Superintendent claimed originally opposed the establishment of public libraries no longer existed, quite the opposite now being true. This statement
was supported by statistics for reporting institutions which give some idea of the situation in 1900. Association public libraries outnumbered free libraries by slightly more than two to one. Twenty-five libraries did not report for 1900, while four more were removed from the official list, which meant they had not reported in the previous two years. It is likely that some of these non-reporting libraries were actually defunct, although it is impossible to establish the number.\textsuperscript{3}

Statistics for 1901 show a broad disparity in the size of collections. Within the reporting groups of 132 free libraries and 283 association public libraries, nine had collections of less than 500 volumes. At the other end of the scale, the Toronto Public Library possessed in excess of 100,000 volumes. Between these extremes, 304 (the largest group) had collections that ranged from 500 to 3,500 volumes. Next to Toronto in size was the Hamilton Public Library, although it had a much smaller collection which was between 20,000 and 30,000 volumes. Toronto’s population at this time numbered almost 210,000, while the figure for Hamilton was a little under 53,000. The total number of volumes in association public libraries was almost equal to that of the free libraries, but spread among more than twice as many libraries. The latter group, however, circulated almost 2 1/2 times more volumes in the year than did the association public libraries. Unfortunately, the large increase in the number of public libraries had necessitated a \textit{pro rata} reduction of twenty percent in the Government grants.\textsuperscript{4}

Until this time, the major agency directing public library growth was, of course, the Department of Education. A second agency was now about to enter the field that would
complement the activities of the Education Department, offering support where necessary, but willing to challenge legislation and regulations that did not appear to serve the best interests of the movement. In June 1900, a group of Canadian librarians attending the American Library Association conference in Montreal met and resolved to form a counterpart to the American association. A small committee was then formed, chaired by James Bain, to organize the Canadian Library Association. The provisional committee met the following October, in Toronto, but for some reason only two of the original five-member committee attended (James Bain and E.A. Hardy), together with three new members.

The matter was discussed very carefully, after which, it was decided that a national association would not be practical at that time, so the committee opted for a provincial organization to be named the Ontario Library Association (O.L.A.). The following Easter, the first annual conference was held in Toronto when the objectives of the Association, its constitution and structure were discussed and formalized. When its formation was announced in the Library Journal, the Association was described as "practically a new auxiliary of the American Library Association," and so was expected to align itself with the American state associations. However well-meaning, this could hardly have pleased the more nationalistic members of the Canadian library community.

The principal purpose of the Association was to promote the welfare of libraries. This was to be achieved by encouraging their establishment and development, and improving those already in existence through co-operation, the exchange of ideas, Government lobbying, the enactment of
legislation, and the furtherance of the interests of all who were engaged in the library field. As may be expected, every conceivable aspect of library endeavour was discussed and debated over the years at the annual conferences, with some topics naturally receiving more attention than others. The library in relation to the community generated a great deal of interest, as did buildings and equipment, training for librarians, technical education, service to young readers, the survival of the small, rural library, and library administration (especially classification which for many years was chaotic). All of these matters were threads that ran through the entire fabric of Ontario's library history during this period of development.

The mood at the first annual conference was clearly one of optimism. E.A. Hardy, the newly-appointed Secretary, provided a comprehensive outline of the work that lay ahead for the Association. He justified its creation by pointing out that in the period 1883 to 1899, the years between the free libraries act and the birth of O.L.A., over $2,250,000 had been spent by the province's public libraries, which had in circulation close to 21,000,000 volumes. This was clearly the time for "a cooperative movement in library matters," which could be accomplished in four distinct areas: assistance to libraries, to the general public, to the schools, and to Sunday school libraries.

More specifically, success could be achieved largely by the introduction of scientific methods of book selection, modern methods of library administration, standardized classification and cataloguing, and training for librarians. In addition, it would be necessary to encourage small libraries to co-operate with their larger neighbours and promote the affiliation of special libraries. Also
important would be the stimulation of public interest, the development of relationships between the school and the public library, and guidance to Sunday schools aimed at improving the quality of their libraries. In closing, Hardy thought that these goals could be achieved by having all O.L.A. publications sponsored by the Government and made freely available to the libraries of the province through adequate library funding, and by the appointment of a library commission to administer and oversee a province-wide library system. ⁹

In some quarters Ontario was already considered the "premier province" in terms of a progressive library system,¹⁰ but this view was not shared by everyone. The public library of the early 1900s was remembered by at least one individual as a place where direct access to the shelves was denied and children were not welcome; the librarian was not uncommonly a senior citizen who might otherwise become a financial burden on the community.¹¹

Remarking that good library buildings could be counted on the fingers of one hand, a Mrs. Willoughby Cummings painted a gloomy picture of the average public library of 1901. Access to "a bare hall unadorned" was often up stairs that were inadequately lit and not very clean. A "cheap clerk" was in charge of an institution in which the local citizens had little pride because it was poorly stocked and badly run. Counter to the view held by the Education Department and many in the library field, the writer was of the opinion that public libraries had been viewed as luxuries for the privileged few rather than part of the educational system. It was a question of finding someone capable of putting libraries back "on their proper footing." The answer appeared to lie in a small Ontario town where,
allegedly, three millionaires idled away their time, looking for an ideal way to spend their money.12

The principal benefactor who did come forward was not from Ontario at all. He was the Scottish-American philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, who, over a period of years, provided the funds for numerous library buildings throughout the province and across the entire country.13 In Ontario, Windsor was the first to benefit from a Carnegie grant, early in 1901. Construction was unfortunately delayed, so that the first Carnegie building actually completed was that at Chatham, east of Windsor, which opened on September 14, 1903.14 Ottawa, the nation's capital, was also scheduled for a grant in 1901, although some Canadians were a little uncomfortable with the knowledge that it would be due to the generosity of someone other than a Canadian. An editorial in the proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada made it clear that such grants were not to be seen as a reflection on wealthy Canadians as they would have come forward willingly, had they been requested to do so. If doubts still lingered about the propriety of taking Carnegie's money, these could be dispelled by adopting the view that national or geographical obstacles should not be allowed to impede the advancement of learning and culture; the most important factor was the benefits the grants would bring the entire community.15

Nevertheless, the controversy continued, opposition in some cases springing from resentment at Carnegie's "one-time bitter denunciation of British institutions and his expressed contempt for Canada as a part of the Empire."16 It was to be expected that the labour movement would take an interest in Carnegie's benefactions, and his detractors were quick to point out that his wealth was largely acquired at
the expense of the working man. Early in 1903, when Toronto learned it was to receive $350,000 for a central library and three branches, the labour unions raised objections. Thomas Keilty, a factory inspector and American Federation of Labor organizer, wrote to Samuel Gompers, the Union's President, for advice. Gompers replied that, while it was doubtful that Carnegie could have amassed his fortune if the labour force had been treated justly, the matter had to be viewed realistically, especially as the millionaire could have put his wealth to much worse use. The money should therefore be accepted and the workers organized in order to acquire better conditions (especially a reduced work week) so that they would at least have the chance to make some use of Toronto's projected enlargement to its library services.

An editorial in the *Canadian Magazine* expressed concern that public library growth in North America was dependent upon the "caprices of a Carnegie," and was gratified to note that some communities had refused the millionaire's largesse. There was something radically wrong with a society that allowed an individual like Carnegie to acquire, in a comparatively short time, a fortune calculated to be worth some $450,000,000. There was, furthermore, a serious flaw in a system that permitted people like Carnegie and Rockefeller to become inordinately wealthy while a large percentage of North Americans were in real need. The editorial concluded that Andrew Carnegie could be considered "the modern representative of the buccaneers of the middle ages." This article was published in June, 1905, at which time thirty-three grants worth a fraction under $940,000 had been made to libraries in Ontario.

Another perspective on Carnegie's grants may be gained from the criticism directed at the St. Catharines Public
Library Board for requesting an additional sum to complete the building's furnishings. In the eyes of the critic, Lawrence Burpee, the subsequent refusal constituted a "well-merited snub." But the humiliation that remained would be felt by "all intelligent Canadians," stemming from an act of a community so lacking in civic pride and self-respect that it had no qualms about attempting to exploit an already "generous foreigner" by asking for more money. It was an action likely to confirm the view held by some that such benefactions adversely affected that important attribute of the Anglo-Saxon race: "sturdy self-reliance." Despite the controversy, the donations continued, so that Judge Hardy, in his presidential address before the O.L.A. in 1910, could state that the library movement had received a "great impetus" from Carnegie's grants.

The report of the Inspector of Public Libraries for 1916 records a complaint made by the Carnegie Corporation that twelve or so of the libraries that had received grants were not honouring the agreement to raise an amount equivalent to ten percent for the purpose of maintenance. Under an act that legislated the allowable maximum tax rate, but set no minimum, it was quite possible for a parsimonious council to underfund its library board, making it difficult for it to honour the maintenance agreement. The Inspector believed, however, that, providing a library board was receiving its due from the municipality, to set a mandatory minimum tax rate would be an infringement of local autonomy. Instead, he employed what he vaguely described as "persuasive means" to induce the recalcitrant library boards to fulfill their commitments to the Carnegie Corporation. And bearing in mind the burden the world war was placing upon the populace in 1916, he was happy that he had been successful in almost two-thirds of the cases.
Before the twentieth century began, there were probably less than six buildings designed specifically for library purposes in Ontario. In total, 111 building grants were made to libraries in Ontario between 1901 and 1917 at a cost of almost $2,000,000. It has been suggested that greed rather than "civic concern" was one factor that prompted municipalities to accept Carnegie's financial aid. After such a lapse of time, it would be difficult to prove the avaricious motive, but library development would have been slower had Carnegie not provided encouragement in the form of buildings. Libraries would, no doubt, have continued to offer services in old mechanics' institute buildings, church and school premises, or in rented rooms above stores. Some communities were, in fact, fortunate to find local benefactors. Belleville, for example, received a renovated building worth $25,000 to house a public library, from Senator Henry Corby. As for Andrew Carnegie, he was once invited to give the O.L.A. membership his opinion of the public library's value as a social force. It was "one of the most important educational agencies of the community," he declared. Its principal value lay in "furnishing the multitude who frequent its halls, the accumulated knowledge of all ages, in every department of human endeavor." A chronic problem that beset the library movement over the years, and became a major concern in the twentieth century, was the survival of small libraries and their ability to provide library service to principally rural communities. James Bain, who was very interested in the question of library provision in rural areas, agreed with the Minister of Education's view that library service in the cities and towns was reasonably good, but noted that there were many townships and villages where the only source of
information regarding the arts and sciences was the weekly newspaper. In order to keep the farmer, and especially his children, on the farm it was important to make their intellectual environment as satisfying as possible. Addressing the Canadian Institute in 1900, Bain again drew attention to the plight of agricultural communities living at great distances from educational facilities whose reading matter, in his opinion, was "poor and tawdry." The long winter months, when farming operations were virtually at a standstill, should have been providing farmers with the opportunity to read and study, with books as the best "teachers." Bain's solution was the development of a large central library to serve the entire province; with the co-operation of the post office, books would be delivered to individuals in any part of Ontario through the mails. At the time, the only library that even faintly resembled a provincial resource was the Toronto Public Library, but to implement Bain's scheme, the library of the Canadian Institute would have to have been enlarged to embrace much broader subject areas. Although nothing came of the proposal, it serves to illustrate the innovative ideas that were being put forward to solve this particular problem.

Besides concern for the survival of the small library, the Minister of Education was very unhappy with the quality of rural library service, especially in unincorporated villages, but had a ready solution that involved the use of school libraries. He recommended in 1903 that, as a practical and economical measure, library boards should be replaced by school boards. The library could be placed in the school, obviating the need for another building, while the teacher, for a slightly increased remuneration, could function as librarian.
Some years later, the Inspector of Public Libraries supported this approach which was based on the recommendations of "experienced library workers." This meant that the school library in a rural community would become, in effect, a public library (an idea reminiscent of Egerton Ryerson's school-based public libraries of the 1850s). He first suggested a co-operative plan which involved a combination of school libraries and travelling libraries, serving three types of clientele: attending pupils, children who had left school, and adults. Every six months the collections constituting these "combination libraries" would be circulated among school sections with new books being added annually. The school house was considered ideal for this purpose as it was centrally located, was the only building in a rural community that was commonly owned, and meant that the teacher could be prevailed upon to act as librarian. The objection that hours of access would be limited was answered by the suggestion that the school house could be opened on a Saturday for the exchange of books.

The Inspector also suggested that school library provision in northern Ontario (and in adjacent areas of southern Ontario where service was also a problem) could be solved by travelling school libraries. In the case of older, established counties, the system could be financed through the levy of a county rate which, in combination with a Government grant, would be sufficient to float the scheme. Despite its apparent merits, this exact plan was not implemented. As noted in the previous chapter, travelling libraries had been used for some years as one form of assistance to small struggling libraries, where failures were due in part to inappropriate book selection
and insufficient supplies of new acquisitions. As the Inspector aptly remarked: "With fresh books a country library remains as vigorous as a city library." Additional factors in failure were poor management, constant changes in the composition of library boards, and the necessity of having to beg municipal councils for mere pittances.

J.W. Emery, while researching his book on school and public libraries, sent a circular to teachers in the province enquiring whether the school library functioned as a public library. Of the 150 responses, only twenty-five percent claimed to have readers who were not pupils, while use was clearly not heavy. Emery was of the opinion that many parents did, in fact, read the books brought home by their children, but one teacher only indicated that her library functioned as a centre for the community. Nevertheless, the idea of a free library in every school section had its attractions.

As the school act required each school to provide a library, even if there was a public library "next door," it seemed logical for a community to concentrate its efforts on the combined school-public library. Emery had problems with this concept, partly because adults would avoid places mainly intended for children, and collections could become top-heavy in adult material, already a fault, in his opinion, in many school libraries. The principle would only work if the school became a community centre in the full sense of the term by including facilities for farmers' clubs, women's institutes, literary societies, and similar organizations.

A scheme involving school libraries, proposed and executed by the journal Canadian Farm, was apparently
successful in one particular area of the province. The journal's editor remarked on the ideal opportunity presented to farmers and their families by the long winter evenings that afforded them the opportunity to read. Unfortunately, many did not have access to public libraries, so the journal proposed the following: any community that could raise twenty subscriptions would receive a well-selected library of fifty books, chosen by the local teacher, trustees, or inspector, which would be placed in the school. A typical collection would include poetry, classics of English literature, history, and other non-fictional works of general interest.38

Problems associated with small libraries surfaced at the O.L.A. conference in 1910. In a paper on the subject, Andrew Denholm calculated that eighty percent of the province's libraries could be considered "small," a designation he unfortunately did not define to any useful degree.39 Among the association public libraries, at the end of 1910, about twenty-two percent had libraries of under 1,000 volumes, which may be considered small. As for free libraries, only one was in this category and that happened to be a branch of the Toronto Public Library.40

Denholm estimated that, among the smaller institutions, only about twenty-five percent were free libraries with, at most, the same percentage of the population as readers. In the association public libraries, the reading population was close to ten percent. He was particularly concerned about the number of dormant libraries, believing many to be the victims of a regulation brought in some years earlier by the Education Department. In applying the granting system, the Department interpreted dollar-for-dollar to mean fifty cents of Government money for every full dollar raised locally.
This caused a great deal of confusion and was the death-knell for many small libraries. The O.L.A. had, in fact, challenged this ruling in 1904 when it had discussed the matter with the Deputy Minister of Education who said that the interpretation was the result of consultation with Crown lawyers and it would not be changed.

There happened to be a direct relationship between this interpretation of the granting system and the not uncommon practices of buying books with borrowed money, promissory notes, or proforma invoices. Publishers and jobbers would encourage the creation of new libraries by offering to supply invoices certified as paid (although no money had actually changed hands). These could then be submitted for the Government grants which, on receipt, would be handed over to the vendors at no cost to local boards. The proliferation of new libraries naturally affected the distribution of the global sum available which tended to be a fixed amount. It had to be spread among a greater and increasing number of libraries, hence the reduction to fifty cents on the dollar. Legislation was enacted in 1903 that disallowed claims for Government grants that were based on expenditures in any form other than cash raised legitimately at the local level. As a consequence, libraries that had been financing themselves through such means as bank loans and promissory notes were soon in difficulty.

Many boards thought that they would have to close their doors, but the Inspector reassured them: there probably would not be a further pro rata reduction in the grant. Books were now fairly inexpensive and could be imported free of duty, while greater assistance could be expected from municipalities. There is no apparent explanation for the long delay, but some relief was provided in 1906 when new
legislation permitted libraries that had been "caught" by the 1903 statute to claim payments that would have been due to them in that year, had the restrictive legislation not been enacted. 45

The Inspector of Public Libraries naturally shared the concern over the survival of small libraries. He wrote to sixty-one institutions urging them to report in order to avoid being struck off the list of libraries receiving grants, but only thirteen responded. He estimated that, in 1911, the province contained about 500 townships and just over 800 municipalities. Sixty percent of the former contained libraries, which, in the Inspector's opinion, was a fairly good showing. But more municipal assistance for the smaller libraries was necessary, as many councils and boards did not contribute. As a strong believer in the Smilesian concept of self-help, he made the almost contradictory remark that it was possible to make life too easy for the rural population, as things attained too cheaply were not usually appreciated. 46

The figure of sixty percent was probably an educated guess on Nursey's part, for his report for 1913 (with statistics for 1912) provides a detailed analysis of the situation in the townships and indicates that only fifty-four percent of them had libraries. There appears to be no pattern or ready explanation for the presence or absence of libraries in them, which vary in number from county to county, but there are a few points that do stand out. First, in many instances, the inhabitants of townships without libraries resided at fairly long distances from library facilities. Admittedly, there were cases where the distance did not exceed three miles, and might be as little as half a mile, but ten, twenty and thirty miles were not

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uncommon, the distance in one instance being fifty-five miles.

The county of Renfrew, in the north-eastern part of southern Ontario on the Quebec border, exemplified the problem. Of its thirty-two townships that were without libraries (the largest number for all the counties), twenty had to rely on the town of Pembroke for library service. The long distances suggest that many would-be readers probably never made the effort to borrow. Pembroke's free library served a population of just over 5,800 people, its collection numbering slightly more than 2,200 volumes, which was not large. It did quite well financially, receiving grants from the Government, its municipality, and possibly the county, as well as raising funds from borrowers' tickets and similar sources. In northern Ontario, which was divided into eight large districts instead of counties, about seventy-three percent of the townships were without libraries, which, considering the still-undeveloped nature of much of the region, was understandable.  

At about this time, librarians, trustees, and others interested in the movement were debating whether the ideal administrative unit for rural library service should be the township or the county, there being a variety of opinions on the matter. The legal committee of the O.L.A. considered the options and also noted recommendations from the membership. It finally concluded that the township would be a more practical unit than the county. The act governing public libraries would therefore need amending to give townships the right to establish libraries. 48 After a long delay, the necessary legislation was enacted in 1916. 49
It will be recalled that an amendment to the 1895 act was brought into force in 1896, allowing townships to form libraries under part two of the act.\(^5\) This was followed in 1898 by legislation that permitted a police village to petition the township in which it was located to provide it with a public library. The statute included a clause that called for a tax at a rate not to exceed the customary one-half mill in the dollar, making it a free library.\(^5\)

Townships were included in major legislation enacted in 1909, but in a different context. Under part two there is no longer a mention of them establishing public libraries in their own right. Instead, association public libraries could be formed within them under conditions usual for this class of library as described in part three of the 1895 act.\(^5\) In other words, the notion of township libraries had been dropped from the legislation. As noted above, in 1916 they were firmly re-established in the statutes under part one of the act, which automatically made them free libraries, a provision reaffirmed in another major piece of legislation enacted in 1920.\(^5\) It seems obvious from the foregoing, that despite its proponents, the option was never very popular. In fact, many years after the 1916 legislation, only a few township libraries existed.\(^5\)

The means of providing adequate library service to rural Ontario was debated at the annual conference of the O.L.A. in 1915. Two-thirds of the population were not being reached by libraries that were completely free. Because many association public libraries were so small, they could not afford librarians to run them. All of this meant that an education process that should normally be life-long was being terminated when formal schooling ended. The suggested solution was to transfer all association public libraries to
their respective municipalities, whatever the level (town, township, village, etc.), and make them completely free. In the discussion that followed this paper, Inspector Carson favoured the county model which, if not administered by a county council, could be contracted to a large city for the provision of administrative services to branches scattered throughout the county.55

In trying to discover the best form of library unit that could provide effective rural library service, something which seemed to be beyond the capacity of the average small library, it was pointed out at the O.L.A. conference of 1915 that three or four schemes had been studied in the past, but the wide variety of opinion on the question had been a principal stumbling block. A more cynical view expressed was that the appointment of another committee to study the matter would be a sheer waste of time as it would do nothing. Nevertheless, the matter was referred to the Executive and further discussion deferred for another year.56

The opinion was ventured on one occasion that the reason rural libraries were "languishing" was not because the inhabitants did not read, but because they had all the books they needed in their homes which were, on average, better stocked than the libraries. Books were cheap and could be acquired through grocery stores, bookstores, drug stores, city department stores, and mail-order houses. Further proof of the rural dweller's self-sufficiency was the disappearance of the book agent who no longer roamed the province soliciting subscriptions for books that were of the "coffee table" variety.57 At first, the large number of small libraries had been considered an impediment to the progress of the library movement,58 but by 1920, their
presence, at least in one view, was seen as a positive blessing. Scattered throughout the province, they were more beneficial than a handful of large urban libraries, as they functioned as substitutes for high schools and recreational centres found in the cities and towns. 59

Like Carson, E.A. Hardy believed that the solution to the small library problem and rural library provision lay in the development of a county-based system. Typically, there would be a central library with branches throughout the county, supported by "deposit stations," book wagons (forerunners of mobile libraries), and postal delivery for isolated readers. 60 Although his proposal generated some support, this level of service was not introduced until 1932 when seven libraries in Lambton County began a co-operative venture. This example was followed by the counties of Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford, Simcoe, and Essex, a system perceived as being the "chief hope" for the upgrading of library service in rural Ontario. 61 From the 1930s to the mid-1950s, the county library concept and forms of rural cooperation were discussed again when regional systems and even larger units of library service were under consideration. 62

An overview and "state-of-the-art" summary of conditions and practices in the whole library field, including comparisons with other countries, was published in 1902. In looking at the Canadian situation, the majority of public libraries were still to be found only in Ontario, with a handful scattered throughout the other provinces, and these could be "numbered upon one's fingers -- with a good margin over." 63 On another occasion, this was explained by the fact that culture and refined tastes alone were simply not sufficient to support public libraries. Amassed wealth
and an established urban population were also needed, factors which characterized Ontario with its preponderance of public libraries. A lengthy discussion on open access (called the "open shelf" system) concluded with the opinion that it had come to stay, and, if any doubts lingered, they were in the minds of librarians, as the benefits to readers were "inestimable." Printed catalogues were still very much in vogue, although card catalogues were gradually being introduced and, in some instances, used in combination with printed versions.

An early project of leaders in the library field was the establishment of a library commission to oversee and administer the province's nascent library system. The suggestion was first raised by E.A. Hardy in 1901 when he outlined the kinds of work that he thought the Association should undertake. At the annual conference in 1902, a resolution carried that requested the appointment of a library commission to examine the whole question of library services throughout the province as problems seemed to be increasing. The wording of the resolution suggests that it would not have been established on a permanent basis, which was the case in a number of American states. The Executive was instructed to bring it to the attention of the Minister of Education. Unfortunately, the attempt did not meet with success, but this was later viewed not as a defeat, but only as a "preliminary skirmish."

At the 1903 conference of the O.L.A., H.H. Langton, Librarian of the University of Toronto, made a strong case for the formation of a permanent commission. He remarked that the library movement held a position "well in the rear," due in part to an indifferent public and partly to an ineffective system of library inspection, assistance, and
encouragement. Librarians wanted the development of a provincial system placed in the hands of a body whose ideals were of a missionary rather than an administrative nature (an obvious euphemism for bureaucracy). It would stimulate public interest in libraries and provide the necessary leadership. The governance of library systems through commissions was well-established in the United States where twenty-one states possessed permanent library commissions at this time.

Based on the American experience, the model commission for Ontario would consist of five or six members, all but the secretary working without remuneration, and drawn from representative areas of the province. The bulk of the work would fall upon the secretary, who, as an expert library administrator, would assume many of the duties currently undertaken by the Inspector of Public Libraries. As much of the work of a library commission in fact paralleled that of the Education Department and would have usurped much of its power, including the distribution of Government grants, it is not surprising that the idea generated little enthusiasm on the Government's part.

It was reported to O.L.A. delegates at the 1904 conference that little progress had been made with the Government, so members of the appropriate committee were instructed to press the matter vigorously. The following year, a continuing lack of success was reported and in 1906 it was explained that the Government was too busy to give the recommendations serious thought. It was supposedly the intention of the Association to keep on agitating for a commission (described as its most important project) until the Government either changed its own mind and recognized the need for such a body, or it was changed by force of
Whatever the reason, it does not appear in the Association’s proceedings after 1906. It may be coincidence, but as criticism was largely levelled at the office of the Inspector of Public Libraries, S.P. May’s resignation in 1905 may have had something to do with the Association’s failure to pursue the idea of a library commission after 1906 when it possibly hoped for improvements under a new inspector.

During the 1903 session of the Legislature, public libraries were subjected to adverse criticism which was countered by statistics showing the progress of the public library movement. Certainly the Minister of Education was pleased with progress, describing the movement as "eminently successful," even though the number of newly-formed libraries had decreased due to the "wise" legislation that curtailed the practice of purchasing reading matter on credit. In 1904, encouragement was given to the more affluent municipalities through an amendment to the Public Libraries Act which allowed councils on a two-thirds majority of their members to increase the tax levy for free library purposes from a rate of one-half mill in the dollar to a maximum of three-quarters of a mill.

Writing about the Ontario library scene in 1904, E.A. Hardy shared the Minister’s view that progress was being made in the field. He noted that libraries were circulating some 3,000,000 volumes a year at an approximate cost of $250,000 per annum, the Government’s annual share being over $60,000. Hardy did have reservations, for what he termed "modern library science" was still practically unknown in the majority of libraries which probably never saw a professional journal. Paying tribute to library boards, Hardy described them as the "backbone of the movement," and
looked forward to the day when the public library would be one of society's most important educational institutions.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


7 The Ontario Library Association: an Historical Sketch, pp. 24-25.

8 Ibid., pp. 34-35.


13 There are a number of accounts of the Carnegie benefactions, but for Ontario, the most useful is by Margaret Beckman, Stephen Langmead, and John Black entitled The Best Gift: a Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario (Toronto, Dundurn Press, 1984), which is described as a photographic and historical record of an important part of the province's heritage.
14"Ibid., p. 31.


24*The Ontario Library Association: an Historical Sketch*, p. 43.


34 Emery, The Library, the School, and the Child, p. 148.


36 Canadian Farm, March 4, 1910.


40 The Ontario Library Association: an Historical Sketch, p. 131.


50. 59 Vic., Chap. 57, 1896, Sec. 6.
51. 61 Vic., Chap. 27, 1898.
52. 9 Edw., Chap. 80, 1909, Part II, Sec. 17.
54. Undated letter from Lorne Bruce, University of Guelph, Ontario.

56. Ibid., pp. 57-59.


Ibid., pp. 1-8, passim.


"Canadian Library Notes," Public Libraries, VIII (November, 1903), p. 439. Unfortunately, the discussion in the Legislature could not be located as the Newspaper Hansard for the period is incomplete.


Edw. VII, Chap. 10, 1904, Sec. 55.

The year 1905 witnessed a change of government; the Liberals had been in power since 1871, but now it was the turn of the Conservatives, led by James Whitney. In the same year, there were changes in the staffing of the Education Department, R.A. Pyne replacing Richard Harcourt as Minister of Education and T.W.H. Leavitt assuming the office of Inspector of Public Libraries on S.P. May's resignation. In his first report (1905), Leavitt recorded his awareness of a steady improvement in the library field, attributing it largely to Carnegie's benefactions. He also applauded the O.L.A. for its influences on progress which he considered powerful, and reinforced once again the notion of the public library as part of the educational system. Association public libraries outnumbered free libraries by more than two to one in 1906, but the latter, many of which were in the more urban areas, were providing service to a far greater number of readers and circulating a considerably larger number of volumes, reflecting the fact that, by-and-large, association public libraries continued to be small institutions in rural communities.

Norman Gurd, in his presidential speech before the O.L.A. in 1907, acknowledged that progress had been made, but pointed out that much more remained to be done to bring the province's libraries up to modern standards. Although Andrew Carnegie had spread his wealth with "lavish hand," it
was to be remembered that libraries consisted of "books, not bricks," as effective library service could be accomplished without a beautiful building. Among the aspects of library service noted by Gurd that would need attention were the lack of trained librarians and the means of acquiring qualifications, the provision of standards of library awareness and performance for trustees, problems of communication and co-operation created by the isolation of so many libraries, the revision of antiquated rules and regulations, the removal of any age limit for children, and the elimination of unnecessary bureaucratic barriers interposed between readers and the collections. 3

Towards the end of his address, Gurd's initial optimism seemed to have deserted him, for he felt that Ontario's libraries had not won the approbation of the people and were never part of public discussions on education, all of which was underscored by the view shared by the Legislature's two party leaders that the public library under the present system had, in fact, no educational value. The biggest drawback, Gurd thought, was a general feeling of self-satisfaction. And in attempting to end on a more optimistic, even patriotic, note, he paraphrased Sir Wilfred Laurier's remark that the twentieth century belonged to Canada by suggesting that it would also belong to the public library. 4

In searching for the ideal way to administer the province's libraries, Inspector Leavitt drew an analogy with the business world, describing the modern librarian who was slowly emerging as "the executive head of a business undertaking." Libraries that could not be persuaded to face up to their responsibilities and modernize should be denied Government assistance and allowed to perish. In a
philosophical mood, Leavitt saw the public library as a combination of "social and civilizing forces" that ennobled the entire community. It was the "prophet of the future" and was an antidote for narrow, parochial thinking, greed and selfishness, and the modern delusion that the accumulation of wealth was the most important pursuit in life. It also imbued those among whom books were circulated and read with sympathy and concern for the less fortunate of their fellow-creatures. Warming to his topic, and without any sense of hyperbole, Leavitt claimed that the ideal state, yet to be created, "must issue from the womb of the Public Library." It could have no other "mother," and all were urged to do everything in their power to "speed the library plough."

Missionary zeal of this sort exemplifies the kind of thinking that was common in library circles at the time, distorting the true position of the public library in the community. On a more practical note, Leavitt discussed the public library as a financial investment. Taxpayers frequently complained that there were no financial returns on the money invested in public libraries. Leavitt's response to that indictment was to describe the public library as an information centre, prepared to answer questions on all the leading municipal problems of the day, whether social, economic, administrative, or even something as mundane as sanitary improvements.

On May 23, 1908, James Bain died. A little over a year later, on June 21, 1909, T.W.H. Leavitt also died. He was eulogized as a "progressive of the progressives," and was considered an effective and efficient administrator, although not everyone agreed with his views. Dying suddenly after a short illness, he left a number of unsolved problems
for his successor, Walter R. Nursey, who, in his first report, took the opportunity to outline the numerous duties of Inspector. High on the list was the inspection of libraries, which, bearing in mind the distances frequently involved in covering such a vast province, was no little task. His administrative duties involved analyzing and tabulating reports from hundreds of libraries and incorporating the data into his own annual reports. In addition, regulations had to be drafted, library institutes (district meetings for the exchange of ideas and training sessions) organized, and catalogues and finding aids prepared. He was also required to deal with a vast amount of correspondence, organize travelling libraries, supervise staff, and attend O.L.A. meetings. Further duties involved developing policy for the Minister's consideration and finding solutions to the many chronic problems relating to public libraries. It is not surprising, therefore, that he approached his new position with some trepidation.

About two months before Leavitt's death, another library act had passed through the Legislature. The previous act was that of 1895 which, with some modifications incorporated in the revised statutes of 1897, had therefore been in force for some fourteen years. Although the new act retained some of the clauses from the earlier legislation, there were sufficient changes to warrant its description as a new statute. Under part one, free libraries could be formed in the manner prescribed in the 1895 act. That is, on a petition to the municipal council from at least 100 people in a city, sixty in a town, and thirty in village or police village, a by-law would be submitted to the electorate for approval.
Another noticeable change was the reduction from three parts to two, sections from part two of the earlier legislation having been redistributed and, in some cases, modified. For example, it will be recalled that a mechanics' institute or an association public library could, on the basis of a petition, be taken over by the local municipality under part two of the 1895 act, but no tax levy was possible without a by-law approved by the electorate, even though such libraries were required to be free. This anomalous situation was removed in the 1909 act. A clause that allowed a transfer on the basis of a by-law approved by the electorate was carefully placed in part one which dealt with the creation of free libraries. This was to ensure that such libraries received tax support which was mandatory under this part of the act. Once this had taken place, the old association public library was simply dissolved. There were no changes in the method of creating association public libraries under part two of the act: ten or more individuals, residing in an area without any library facilities, could band together to form a library, providing all were British citizens and at least twenty-one years of age.

The monetary aspects of library legislation were always guaranteed to be of great interest, and not infrequently the cause of a certain amount of confusion. It will be recalled that under the 1895 act, grants were given on the basis of a matching dollar for every dollar raised locally, a system suddenly interpreted by the Education Department around 1902 to mean fifty cents for every local dollar; this principle was now embodied in the new act. Consequently, library boards would receive sums equal to fifty percent of local expenditures on books, bookbinding, and materials used for classification and cataloguing to a maximum of $200. For
magazines and newspapers it would also be fifty percent of local expenditures, but to a maximum of fifty dollars.

A contentious issue was the fiction grant. Originally, Inspector Leavitt had recommended in 1905 an increase in the fiction allowance from twenty percent to forty-five percent. The implication was that it would be based on the total grant, although it would be the right of the Minister to reduce it at his discretion. This was approved, and the Minister published the new regulation in his annual report for 1907, but indicated that the increase would actually be based on "the total sum paid for the purchase of books," which appeared in the statute as "the amount expended on other books." This implied a different intention from that expressed originally by Leavitt. During a discussion of the bill at the O.L.A. conference of 1909, this was recognized by a delegate who took the charitable but rather unrealistic view that it was simply a mistake in the wording. A curious result of the uncertainty that surrounded the interpretation of this stipulation was that Leavitt's intended increase was now seen as a decrease. One delegate was concerned that a reduction in fiction on the shelves of his library would drive readers away.

Returning to the act, any unearned balance in the Government's appropriation (a not unusual occurrence) would be made available to libraries with active reading rooms, pro-rated on the number of hours open, and to libraries with low incomes that were in dire need of support. There was some improvement in the qualifications needed by association public libraries to share in the grant. Under the previous legislation, at least 100 members had been required, of whom at least fifty were to have been twenty-one years of age or over; now, this was reduced to simply a membership of at
least fifty persons aged twenty-one years or over.

Within the remaining clauses, evening classes could still be organized, although, according to the Ministry's reports, none appears to have been offered after 1902. In certain cases art schools and museums could be established. Women's institutes were now added to the organizations (teachers' and farmers' institutes) that had been permitted to unite with public libraries under the earlier legislation. Clauses were included for travelling libraries and library institutes, as these innovations had been introduced since the 1895 act.

One clause was designed to prevent libraries setting age restrictions on children and denying the public direct access to library collections unless the consent of the Minister of Education had been sought. Lawrence Burpee took exception to the latter portion (open access), believing it to be based on an erroneous principle; it was merely a "mechanical question" that depended solely upon the structural design of the particular building. Whether this was true or not, it is clear that the enshrinement of these principles in the 1909 statute demonstrates clearly the application of a democratic process aimed at making the libraries of the province accessible to the entire population.

At a meeting of British librarians in June 1912, J.W.C. Purves discussed "library ideals" in the context of Canada and was particularly complimentary about the 1909 act. He began by remarking that the early development of the library movement in Canada (by which he actually meant Ontario) was almost a replica of the British experience. The difference was that Ontario had learned much from the British and the
American experiences (especially the American) so that it now had an enviable library system, the success of which was due in no small part to the fact that the “right men” had taken control.\textsuperscript{14}

Purves thought the 1909 act to be superior to any British legislation currently on the statute books. In highlighting it for his British audience, he pointed out that it anticipated many of the difficulties encountered by the British library movement. This was principally a reference to the fact that Ontario’s libraries were not hampered by the restrictions of a penny rate. Furthermore, the Government of Ontario was generous in the provision of grants and other incentives, and its Education Department had an extremely good working relationship with the O.L.A. All of this added up to a situation in Purves’ mind that, if replicated in Britain, would make librarians there feel that they were “nearing ‘Utopia’ so far as library administration was concerned.”\textsuperscript{15}

Among the more interesting “unsolved problems” left by Inspector Leavitt was his attempt to broaden the role of the public library in technical education which was increasing in importance and was actually part of the Conservative Government’s commitment to educational reform.\textsuperscript{16} It will be recalled that public libraries had been given a role in technical and industrial education as early as 1889 when they were authorized to provide evening classes in subjects related to the “mechanical and manufacturing arts.”\textsuperscript{17} Legislation enacted in 1897 had reinforced the public library’s role in technical education; municipalities had been given authority to establish technical schools, not under a special statute, but in accordance with the requirements of the Public Libraries Act (1895). Should a
technical institution be established in a community already possessing a public library, the school was to be placed under the public library board. 18

Because mechanics were not always comfortable receiving technical education in very formal settings (oddly, the old term "mechanics' institute" is used as an example), Leavitt hoped to provide a more acceptable form of training through the public library. 19 He recognized the difficulties attendant upon a service that was new to public libraries, and so in his report for 1908 he provided guidance. He noted at the outset that technical knowledge was required on the parts of both librarians and trustees, failing which, outside experts would have to be retained. His instructions for collection building were largely matters of common sense. Materials purchased should reflect the principal industries and trades of the locality; there should be a reference collection and a loan collection; elementary books should be bought first, gradually building on these with more advanced works. Speaking more broadly, Leavitt perceived the public library as the "people's university," designed to cater to that ninety-five percent of the province's young people whose education did not reach beyond the elementary level. Many such individuals were taking expensive correspondence courses sponsored by private enterprise in Canada and the United States. 20

What, in effect, was Leavitt's "swan song" was an address to the O.L.A. conference of 1909 on technical education and the public library. Being too ill to attend, the paper was read for him by Walter Nursey. It began with the rather startling statement that a truly public library did not exist in Ontario. While in theory libraries were available to every inhabitant, in practice they served only

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a portion of the population. The time had come to extend their benefits beyond the professional classes, in particular to farmers and industrial workers. Of particular concern was the married man with a family whose opportunities for further education were limited, especially when compared to the more independent single man. 21

Repeating much of what he had said in his 1908 report, interlarded with a certain amount of rhetoric and examples of progress in the United States, Leavitt listed the possible courses of action. First, the O.L.A. should do what it could to incorporate public libraries into the educational system. Next, cost-sharing schemes for providing technical literature should be developed among groups of public libraries in industrial centres. The Inspector would recommend a Government grant to finance technical travelling libraries. Utilizing local teachers and experts in the various technologies, courses organized along the lines of correspondence schools could be offered. These would culminate in examinations held in public library buildings, with diplomas endorsed by the Education Department awarded to successful candidates. 22

The discussion following the paper provoked a mixed reaction. Most liked the idea, and it was proposed that a committee be set up to examine its feasibility, but George Locke, James Bain's successor at the Toronto Public Library, struck a more cautious note. He was uncomfortable with the notion of endorsing a proposal that he had not had time to study, a point of view that received some support. Such caution was reinforced by the reminder that a similar idea had been tried in the recent past and had failed. 23 Nevertheless, a committee was struck and reported at the 1910 conference. It had met and discussed Leavitt's paper,
endorsing a number of the recommendations, namely, those that dealt with co-operative ventures among public libraries, travelling technical collections, the identification of local trades and industries to assist in book selection, and the method of financing the project. Before proceeding any further, however, a subcommittee had been formed to study the situation in the United States, a proposal which had received the approval and support of the Minister of Education.24

To all intents and purposes the 1910 tour was a success, with visits to libraries in New York (city and state), Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. On its return, the consensus of the subcommittee was that Leavitt's proposals were "along the right lines," and so gave its support to the recommendations approved earlier by the full committee. Based on correspondence with other American libraries, the subcommittee further recommended the establishment of lecture series and evening classes, but had reservations about courses and examinations offered through the public library. The subcommittee embellished Leavitt's recommendations. The creation of a separate room in the public library was suggested, designed especially for the mechanic and containing reading matter of most interest to him. The formation of reading clubs and discussion groups led by foremen were also recommended. Libraries were advised to subscribe to trade journals and publicize the availability of technical literature in every possible way. Picture collections relating to structural design and architecture were considered to be useful adjuncts to the technical literature.25

On the surface, it appeared as if the public library was about to assume another important function, but within
the next few years its role would be drastically circumscribed by the new directions taken in the development of technical education. The Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education was appointed in June, 1910. It held hearings between July, 1910 and February, 1911, producing an interim report in March, 1911 and its final report in May, 1913. A section was devoted to testimony relating to public libraries, the Commission receiving a written submission from Mr. Justice Hardy, President of the O.L.A. He reiterated the concern of the former Inspector of Public Libraries that large amounts of money were leaving the province to pay for expensive correspondence courses offered by American schools. Hardy underlined the pressing need to provide further education for the large number of young people whose education did not extend beyond the primary level. In this respect, he described the public library as a "natural rallying point for the people." It was, moreover, "supported by the taxation of all alike," and could be said to be "the most democratic public institution." While it could not undertake technical education in the broadest sense, he was anxious that its potential should not be overlooked.

E.A. Hardy, the O.L.A. Secretary, appeared before the Commission and stated quite simply that in a comprehensive system of education, supported by public taxation, all were entitled to equal opportunities. But technical schools were expensive, and so tended to be confined to the larger industrial centres. This denied many working men the privilege of technical education, a situation which the O.L.A., in co-operation with the Education Department, proposed to remedy through the public library. He then outlined the principal findings and recommendations of O.L.A.'s special committee that arose partly from the
American tour of 1910. The appearance before the Commission of Mabel Dunham, Librarian of the Berlin Public Library (now Kitchener), was particularly interesting as she claimed that the idea of offering technical education in the public library had been conceived in the boardroom of her library between 1907 and 1908. In fact, in terms of this particular type of provision, Berlin considered itself to be in the vanguard, attempting a number of innovations designed to attract mechanics and tradesmen to the library. One that is particularly worthy of note was the practice of placing reading lists in the pay envelopes of factory employees.

The committee of the O.L.A. responsible for technical education noted in its report to the 1911 conference that the Inspector of Public Libraries had been overwhelmed by requests for technical travelling libraries, which was an indication that public libraries were pushing ahead with this type of provision. Attention was then drawn to the new legislation on technical education, which was the result of a report by John Seath, Superintendent of Education. The act made provision for the establishment of a variety of technical and industrial schools, but section sixteen effectively removed the power of library boards to conduct evening classes of any sort.

This change must have been met with some sense of shock, but the O.L.A., while uncertain of the implications, remained unshaken in its belief that the public library still had a responsibility to function as a technical depository and make the literature widely available. It was believed, moreover, that the public library would remain for many years the most accessible agency for working men seeking to improve their technical skills.
It was announced at the 1914 conference that the schemes devised earlier in co-operation with the Education Department had come to nought. As the Department had lost interest and was, for example, offering evening classes in the elementary schools, there was no longer any point in keeping the committee responsible for technical education active. The report ended rather lamely by suggesting that, in technical education, the public library could still cooperate with other types of institutions.¹⁴ Some years later, the Inspector of Public Libraries applauded the work of the province's libraries in providing technical literature, 120,000 books on the "useful arts" having been circulated in a typical year.¹⁵

An event of major importance took place in 1911 which was the result of years of preparatory work: this was the establishment of Ontario's first training school for librarians. Before the gradual adoption of modern methods of librarianship and formal training schemes for library workers, most libraries in Ontario operated in more-or-less splendid isolation with untrained personnel. Anything approaching "professional" work in those days might frequently be undertaken by trustees. E.A. Hardy, for example, as Secretary to the Board of the Lindsay Public Library in the late nineteenth century, had attempted such tasks as classifying and cataloguing the library's collection. To assist him in work of this sort, he had looked for advice among experienced people in the field, notably James Bain, and Carrie Rowe, from the Brockville Public Library, a woman whom Hardy considered to be "modern" in her methods which were strongly influenced by American practices.¹⁶
Even when library personnel became more experienced and began to take on professional roles, trustees still retained a great deal of responsibility for the administration of their libraries. In the central matter of book selection, for example, the trustee was admonished to "exercise an intelligent supervision in the matter," even though, in the larger libraries, it might be left largely to librarians. In a small library where the "librarian" was completely untrained and might be simply occupying a sinecure, then the library board could be expected to exercise a great deal of responsibility for book selection. In fact, E.A. Hardy perceived an important role for boards in advancing the library movement.

Norman Gurd accepted the need for qualified librarians, but considered it just as important to have qualified trustees, a topic he thought had been neglected. In his view, the will of the library board was, in all matters, "supreme." It made all the rules and regulations, approved book purchases, and had complete control. Consequently, the choice of trustees was important. Although it was unreasonable to expect them to become experts in all areas of library administration, it was thought that their performance could be improved if they took the trouble to read one professional journal, such as Public Libraries, in order to be informed of progress and innovations in the library field. Trustees were, of course, appointed not elected, so it was important to avoid choosing those who were interested only in the honour. Citizens willing to take a keen interest in the library, and who were prepared to discharge their duties responsibly were needed.

The issue of formal education for those employed in the library field had been noted in Secretary Hardy's manifesto
for the O.L.A. in 1901. Trained librarians were essential to direct the work of libraries. The public library was considered to be the "great public university," financed through public funds, so taxpayers were entitled to "skilled management." Hardy thought this could be accomplished through summer courses in "literary work," offered in the larger urban centres. These would have the advantage of allowing students the opportunity of observing the functioning of the more sophisticated city libraries. Although this system would not produce experts, it could only be a considerable improvement on the situation as it then stood. Hardy also ventured the suggestion that the Education Department should get involved and offer a short course on "library history and science," culminating in the award of a certificate. Financial incentives could then be offered to library boards appointing certified librarians. 41

Something which suggested a need for formal training was the gradual move away from the role of the librarian as custodian to one of an administrator providing a service. Lawrence Burpee, who noted this changing role, was also of the opinion that the time had past when the position of librarian was reserved for failed politicians, teachers, and other professionals; librarianship was now a profession of honour. 42 Despite such lofty sentiments, however, there are sufficient hints in the literature to suggest that patronage was still very much in vogue. 43

Walter James Brown, it will be remembered, had been an early advocate of travelling libraries and had tried to become involved in their creation and administration; at the third annual meeting of the O.L.A. (1903), it became clear that he now had a new "crusade." He recognized the growing need for trained librarians for public libraries of the new
order which were no longer "book-jails" but "educational factors of increasing importance." Brown then informed delegates that the Canadian Correspondence College (an institution of which he was Principal) was about to offer courses in library science. The programme was open, without further entrance requirements, to university graduates and those with junior matriculation. All other applicants would be required to provide evidence of a good general education that included a knowledge of books, and also pass an entrance examination. All aspects of library work would be covered, including book selection and reference work, in addition to more mundane matters like stock-taking and book-binding and repair. Little is know about Brown's library school, but later trends in library education suggest that if it did, in fact, actually launch and sustain its programme, it was outside the mainstream of developments.

In the continuing debate on education for librarianship in Ontario it was questioned whether the Education Department should offer some form of certification for librarians. Speaking before the O.L.A. in 1904, W.J. Robertson offered three basic options: the matter could be left entirely to the private sector, or, like the teaching profession, it could become the responsibility of the Government; training might possibly be undertaken by private enterprise but tested with standards set by a Government agency (the Education Department) to ensure a satisfactory level of performance. Robertson thought that it would be possible to manage training in non-professional duties through the elementary and high schools, although he did not specify how this might be accomplished. He seemed a little unclear about the precise differences between "professional" and "technical" training, but was certain that the latter could be managed in a good business college, if training...
schools in technical matters did not arise from demand.

Robertson admitted that there were currently no facilities for the professional aspects of library education, but he was aware that it was necessary to go beyond technical training. Drawing an analogy with the teaching profession where the teacher, he claimed, could only be trained by teaching, he recommended an internship in a library. For an intelligent person, "an extended probation" would not be required. Robertson then proposed what was, in effect, his third option. While it would be unnecessary for the Education Department to set up schools for librarians, the standard-setting and qualifications should be under its control. Normally, private and semi-private organizations could be trusted to certify only the "really competent," but there was the danger that, in the scramble for students, standards might be lowered. He also believed that, in addition to passing an examination and being physically fit, a candidate for a library position should also be tested for the qualities of tact, judgement, courtesy, and firmness.45

E.A. Hardy was also someone who thought a great deal about professional library education. In looking at the possible options, he listed summer schools, correspondence courses through established library schools, full-time attendance at a library school (which, in 1906, meant the United States), and attendance at a summer school that could be created in Toronto.46 A Canadian summer school had been established at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, in 1904 under the direction of Charles Gould, the University Librarian. Although it was a very successful school, only a limited number of people from Ontario's libraries attended. This was due partly to the distance, which made it
expensive, and because the library movement in Quebec was perceived to be well behind Ontario in terms of progress.\textsuperscript{47} This was certainly not true of the school, however.

To return to Hardy's options; he believed that, normally, the best course of action would be to take a full-time programme at a library school, but this was the worst option for Ontario, as graduates were often induced to remain in the United States where the financial rewards were greater. A remaining option was the development of what he called county institutes.\textsuperscript{48} As a high school teacher, Hardy was familiar with teachers' institutes, designed to assist professional development. He thought that the principle could be applied to library practices, and put his idea before the O.L.A. conference of 1903.\textsuperscript{49} These library institutes (which was their usual appellation) did achieve some measure of success as gatherings where a wide variety of library issues could be explored and discussed. Unfortunately, the principle was slow to be accepted.

Although the Executive Committee of the O.L.A. appointed a subcommittee each year, it was some time before anything positive was done. Finally, in 1907, with financial assistance from the Education Department, the first institute was hosted by the Board of the Brantford Public Library and was a huge success. This prompted the O.L.A. to plan additional meetings. As noted earlier, the library act of 1909 made formal provision for these institutes which included the payment by the Education Department of travelling expenses for one delegate from each library board. It was possible for a board failing to send a delegate to be penalized by losing part of its annual grant to a maximum of five dollars.
Topics discussed at these institutes ran the entire gamut of library theory and practice, and often reflected the issues and concerns expressed at the annual meetings of the O.L.A. Broader subjects included the history and function of public libraries, the public library's mission, the modern public library and its policy, and the place of the public library in the educational system. On a more specific level delegates discussed, among other things, the disinfection of library books, work with children, book selection, and "Encouraging Intensity of Reading rather than Extensity." The problems of small libraries were often in the forefront of topics selected for the institutes. Practical instruction was also provided in such subjects as classification and cataloguing.

An examination of the reports of the institutes reveals many resolutions that cover a whole range of concerns which would often be aired at O.L.A. meetings, but were usually directed at the Government. In order to facilitate the organization of the institutes, ten, and eventually eleven, "districts" were created. At first, these were confined to the older, southern part of the province. In 1912, two additional districts were organized for northern Ontario: the northern, with a base at North Bay, and the western, based on Fort Frances and Rat Portage (Kenora). In all, the area to be covered was more than 400,000 square miles, over three times the size of the British Isles.

Reporting on the institutes in 1916 (there were now fifteen districts), the Inspector was concerned that they were not having the kind of impact they should. He believed that the average library did not adopt the principles of administration expounded in the sessions, due to the prevalence of what he termed "amateur management." Until
1917, the institutes were offered under the auspices of the O.L.A. with the co-operation of the Education Department. In that year full responsibility passed to the Department. At the same time, the number of districts was reduced to eight or nine larger units,\(^5\) a remodelling undertaken at the prompting of the O.L.A.\(^4\) Another innovation lay in the transfer of much of the organizational responsibility to individuals at the local level where there was always "an abundance of local talent," a move that was considered to be highly successful.\(^5\) Some curtailment of activities was recommended by the Inspector of Public Libraries in 1920 when he suggested that the full series should not be offered every year. Travel and hotel accommodation had become costly whereas the budget for institutes was limited and unlikely to increase.\(^6\)

The question of library qualifications was discussed at the 1907 annual meeting of the O.L.A. It was introduced by Secretary Hardy with a quotation that read in part: "It is really absurd to have fine buildings in the control of men fit only for janitors." Those present were reminded by one delegate that the Minister under the former Liberal Government had been memorialized some years ago, but there had been no satisfactory conclusion. Now that a Conservative Government was in power, there was fresh hope. After more discussion a motion was put forward indicating that it was highly desirable that librarians should be qualified in some way.

In the discussion of the motion, it was pointed out that the type of qualifications needed for a very large library like that in Toronto could be quite different from those required in a small country library. In the latter type, only a meagre salary could be paid to someone who,
because the collection was so small, would actually be overqualified. In view of this sort of complication, the matter was referred to the Executive with instructions to discuss it with Government officials.\textsuperscript{57} The Inspector of Public Libraries noted in his 1908 report that, as staff members from Ontario's libraries could seldom be induced to attend the library school at McGill University, he would recommend the establishment of a summer school in Toronto. He thought that arrangements could be made with the Toronto Public Library Board to allow the school to be held in the new reference library that was expected to open the following spring.\textsuperscript{58}

Hardy described the need for library training in his O.L.A. report for 1909-1910 as a question that was becoming increasingly pressing.\textsuperscript{59} Finally, lobbying by the O.L.A. brought results, and in 1911 a summer school was opened under the aegis of the Education Department. Mabel Dunham, of the Berlin Public Library, was appointed as its principal instructor. Entrance to this first school was fairly relaxed with no examination, although a high school course or its equivalent was expected. In the prospectus it was made clear that the primary purpose of the school was to raise standards in the smaller libraries. The study of literature was included in the programme for those who had never acquired the "culture conferred by wide, general reading." The course lasted four weeks and covered cataloguing, classification, book selection, reference work, work with children, bookbinding, and a variety of administrative matters. Books, supplies, and travelling expenses were covered by the Education Department, leaving the student with the single expense of room and board.\textsuperscript{60}
A case was made for the school to be established in Mabel Dunham's home town of Berlin. It was considered to be more typical of the smaller communities from which many of the students would be drawn, making it a more appropriate setting than a large city like Toronto. It was also suggested that the school alternate with the McGill programme. The Inspector of Public Libraries reviewed the arguments but decided in the end that Toronto was still the best choice. Thirty-one students enrolled of which only two were male. No final examination was given, but students were graded on their practical work, with twenty-three completing the course.

Consequently, library training in Ontario was destined to develop along somewhat different lines from the British system as the O.L.A., for example, had nothing in its constitution that provided for the holding of examinations and the issuing of certificates. As for the United States, there were approximately eleven schools at this time (1912), but these offered much more ambitious programmes than Ontario's fairly elementary summer school. Many ran for one year, or thirty-six weeks, although it was possible for a complete course to last two years. In some cases, schools connected with universities offered programmes that combined academic and professional courses. Furthermore, entrance to most was through a very difficult examination. These circumstances reduced accessibility to American schools for many students from Ontario.

It was quite natural that the Inspector's report for 1912 would make some reference to the first summer school which was described as "an unqualified success." It had been suggested, however, that it might have been more judicious to put the school in the care of a male librarian,
possibly a dean from the University of Toronto with all the prestige the position implied. The Minister of Education had not agreed and had placed it under his department, mainly to avoid discouraging the class of student the school particularly wished to attract: individuals from the smaller urban centres and rural areas; people who might be intimidated by a university setting.

Reference has been made to the predominance of women in Ontario's first library school which would become a trend and has a bearing on women and librarianship generally. The growth of the women's movement and of women's studies has encouraged a great deal of writing and publication on a variety of related issues, not the least of which is that of women and the professions. Speaking of librarianship, Veronica Strong-Boag has drawn attention to the Victorian trait of identifying women with culture, characterized by the large number of women that staffed Canada's libraries. Nursing, teaching, social work, and librarianship were approved occupations for mostly single women who needed, or wanted, to work, providing "an institutionalized maternal role removed from the family circle."

In the history of Ontario's libraries, a much more pragmatic reason can be found for employing women. As early as the 1880s, women were recommended to run libraries in mechanics' institutes because they were relatively inexpensive and made first-rate librarians, providing, of course, they could be persuaded to remain in their positions for reasonable lengths of time. According to Thomas Kelly, by contrast, there was a greater reluctance to employ women in British libraries. He notes that the prejudice against female staff "died hard," only twelve percent of the British library workforce being women at the turn of the century.
In the United States at about that time, the figure was almost ninety-five percent.  

Some idea of the situation in Ontario a decade later may be gleaned from a table published in 1911 which lists the librarians in charge of 350 public libraries, both free and association. Taking all the libraries together, fifty-two percent of the positions were occupied by women. In the free libraries, women occupied sixty-two percent of the positions, while in the association public libraries they occupied only forty-seven percent. Seventy-three percent of the women were single.  

The one-month, summer school format was offered until 1914. For financial reasons, no courses were offered in 1915, but in 1916 a short course of one month's duration was offered from mid-September to mid-October, its entrance requirements being a little stiffer than those needed for the earlier summer schools. Inspector W.O. Carson discussed at some length the future of library training in Ontario. Admitting that a short course of one month had some value, he believed greater efficiency in the province's libraries would not be achieved until something more substantial was available. As some form of longer course had been already approved in principle, and additional funds to support it placed in the provincial estimates, Carson hoped that the scheme would receive final approval. He proposed a course of three months in length, concentrating on aspects of librarianship that could not be readily understood without an instructor. The first month was to be similar in format to the 1916 short course, designed for students who could not stay for the full three months. All of this sprang from Carson's belief that taxpayers were entitled to a satisfactory level of service, which meant
trained and qualified library personnel.72

The proposal was discussed and opinions sought from instructors, librarians who might send students, and the Education Department. As a result, a two-month course was decided upon and offered between September and November, 1917. The rationale was that two months was probably the longest period that many trainee librarians could afford to be away from their home libraries.73 The *Ontario Library Review* advertised the school and exhorted trustees to encourage the attendance of their librarians and assistants. It also recommended keeping them on full salary. If they could not be spared then substitutes should be appointed; otherwise, the libraries should be closed for two months.74

The Inspector was pleased with the results of the two-month schools offered in 1917 and 1918, but considered the course "too intense" for the average student, the majority finding it very difficult. Three types of courses were needed, he thought: a one-month course for librarians in small towns and library assistants in larger towns and small city libraries; a three-month course similar to that offered in 1918; a course offered over a full academic year, all of which could be part of one library school. But for practical reasons he returned to the notion of the three-month course,75 and this became a reality in 1919. The school was very successful, with several applicants being refused admittance through lack of places.76

In 1920 the format was changed slightly. The "small libraries" mini-course that had occupied the first month of the 1919 school was eliminated, making a single course of three fully-integrated months.77 The Public Libraries Act of 1920 formally recognized the establishment of training and
examination facilities for librarians. It also included a new inducement for potential students: in addition to the free provision of books and supplies and the payment of travelling expenses, the Minister of Education now had the discretion to pay board and lodging expenses for students from small (impecunious) libraries. The training school was held each year until 1927 when responsibility passed to the University of Toronto which began offering a one-year course in 1928.

In order to complete the picture of library education, a word should be said about conferences. Although travel in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was not that easy or convenient, a certain number of librarians, library assistants, and trustees managed to attend conferences. For example, at the second international library conference held in London, England in 1897, a number of Canadian delegates were present, including such notable librarians as James Bain (Toronto Public Library) and H.H. Langton (University of Toronto). The crucial American Library Association conference that was held in Montreal in 1900, and was attended by a number of Canadians from the library field, has been noted. The A.L.A. met again in Ottawa in 1912. This was another conference of importance for Canadians, with many notable figures from Ontario's libraries present.

The September issue of the A.L.A. Bulletin for that conference year includes membership figures for Canadians in the A.L.A. There were sixteen members in 1910, nineteen in 1911, and ninety-four in 1912. A breakdown by province is given for 1912 only, but is quite revealing: five were from British Columbia, two from Alberta, one from Saskatchewan, three from Manitoba, ten from Quebec, one from New
Brunswick, and seventy-two from Ontario. International visits of a more informal kind were also encouraged. For example, the O.L.A. received a communication informing it that the Executive of the British Library Association had formed an international committee charged with a number of responsibilities among which was the encouragement of "intercourse between British and foreign libraries." The Secretary asked to be advised of impending visits from Canadian librarians so that the "proper courtesies" could be extended.

The legislation of 1909 and the developments that led eventually to the formalization of training and qualifications for library personnel partly characterize the progress of the library movement in the decade that ended with the beginning of the First World War. The Inspector's report for 1910 included some cautionary notes relating to the types of progress and the speed at which it might proceed. He detected a tendency in the library community to desire every innovation in library science that emanated from the United States, while ignoring the constitutional and societal differences in the two countries. It was Nursey's opinion that American librarians had just as many problems to solve as did their Canadian colleagues, remarking that "we can afford to deliberate without marking time."

In April, 1908, a committee appointed by the O.L.A. had waited on the Minister of Education with a view to securing improvements in the Government grants. At that time, the act of 1895 was still in force in the form of a revised statute of 1897, with the grant simply divided between books, and magazines or newspapers, a maximum of $200 being allowed for the former and fifty dollars for the latter. A third
provision, $100 for evening classes, had been repealed in 1903. The O.L.A. had proposed fifty dollars for maintenance, fifteen dollars for the reading room, ten dollars for the expense of classification and cataloguing (an inducement to convert to the Dewey Decimal system), $150 for books, and fifty dollars for periodicals, all of which totalled $275. The Minister's department had deliberated carefully, making full use of legal resources, and then had agreed to the following distribution: nothing for maintenance, ten dollars for the reading room, fifty percent of local costs for classification and cataloguing (so no actual figure), $200 for books, and fifty dollars for periodicals, for a total of $260.

The Association had also recommended that professional qualifications be recognized as a means of obtaining additional grants, but this had been refused. A number of prerequisites to enhance the grants had been included in the package, however. Libraries with incomes up to $500 could earn additional grants of between five and twenty dollars. A departmental bookbinder and repairer was available to libraries free of charge. Grants of up to twenty-five dollars, taken from any residue in the total library appropriation, would be given to deserving libraries that were "struggling," with further assistance coming from access to slightly-used travelling libraries.

Between 1905 and 1910, ninety-one libraries were removed from the Education Department's list of libraries eligible for assistance. This was about twenty-two percent of those "on the register." The reason given was "non-compliance with the act," which often meant annual reports had not been submitted to the Department for two consecutive years. As may be expected, most were libraries with small
collections, over fifty percent being under 1,000 volumes and only one exceeding 3,000 volumes. Eleven of these libraries were given permission to sell or transfer their collections, totalling over 12,000 volumes, to schools or other public libraries. This left about 70,000 volumes in the system to be located and redistributed. As a footnote, among the 816 municipalities, just over fifty percent had public libraries, whether free or association.

Many in the library field may have thought that this projected a rather gloomy picture. But the Inspector of Public Libraries was not deterred from proclaiming the "steady march in library progress," which was due, not merely to renewed interest, but to "a new and seemingly hungry desire on the part of the community to share in the increasing opportunities for library expansion extended by the Department." Warming to his subject, Nursey referred to numerous letters, and magazine and newspaper articles that complimented Ontario's public library system, with congratulatory communications coming from the United States and Britain. In general, credit for this metamorphosis (which, according to Nursey, had put Ontario in the vanguard of library development) was due to the work of the O.L.A. and the Inspector of Public Libraries, not forgetting, of course, a sympathetic Minister of Education and a beneficent Government.

More specifically, massive correspondence and official publications that emanated from the Inspector's office, coupled with the work carried out in the library institutes, had brought about much of the change. The metaphors that were used to describe these proselytizing efforts, some with decidedly sexual overtones, are epitomized in the following quotation: "A stream of well compounded business
information, advice and encouragement, has thus been
irrigating the library field, which, whether fallow land or
virgin soil, has been saturated and fertilized with library
lore until a harvest has been reaped beyond expectation.\[91\]

Compared to library developments in the rest of Canada,
there was certainly some cause for feeling proud and self-
satisfied. At this point, only Ontario had an act designed
specifically for the establishment of public libraries
province-wide. In the other provinces, special powers
provided under local acts had to be invoked to bring public
libraries into being. The small number of public libraries
located in the eastern provinces of New Brunswick, Nova
Scotia, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island, and in the
prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta
were confined to the larger communities. The retardation of
library development in Quebec was due to problems peculiar
to the province, which were the dual language and the
predominance of the Roman Catholic Church, its clergy
possessing less-than-liberal views on the dissemination of
literature. British Columbia had made more progress than
most, and was attempting to emulate developments in
Ontario.\[92\]

An alarm bell was sounded at the annual meeting of the
O.L.A. in 1912 when an American librarian informed delegates
that in the United States moving picture shows, cheap
magazines and newspapers were replacing books. The last-
named were no longer America's principal reading matter, a
phenomenon that had prompted the publisher Henry Holt to
speculate that the time would come when no more books would
be published.\[93\] In Canada, a similar situation was slowly
developing and would become a matter for concern in the
years ahead.
Some measure of the progress of the library movement may be gleaned from an analysis of library provision based on data collected in 1911 and published in 1912. The material falls roughly into two categories, "urban" and "rural," but the term "urban" is interpreted rather liberally and includes cities (populations 15,000 and over), towns (populations between 2,000 and 15,000), and villages (populations between 750 and 2,000). Within these definitions, sixty percent of the province's public libraries (free and association) were classified as "urban." Furthermore, they owned jointly over 1,000,000 volumes, or eighty-four percent of the books in the entire public library system. They served ninety-three percent of the entire urban and rural "library" population (the term "library" being interpreted in this context as that portion of the rural population, excluding minors, potentially receptive to some form of library service) and circulated in the year over 3,000,000 volumes. Under the above terms of reference, the libraries classified strictly as "rural" served only seven percent of the population, had a combined book collection of just under 215,000 volumes, and a per capita circulation for the year of 2 1/4 volumes.\\n
At the O.L.A. conference of 1914, E.A. Hardy outlined what he believed should be the basic areas of concentration for library development over the next ten or fifteen years. He grouped them under three headings: efficiency at the local level, co-operation, and the extension of library services to embrace the entire province. Local efficiency involved designing library services to encompass all classes of the community and exploiting all local resources in terms of people and potential income. It also meant persuading every citizen that the institution belonged to all,
regardless of "age, race, creed or color," and being aware of modern methods of library administration. Co-operation could take many forms, but one specific example was the development of an interlibrary loans system. Hardy considered "extension" to be the most urgent need. All but one of the major cities had free libraries, the exception being Kingston which had an association public library. In the roughly 275 towns and villages, about seventy-three percent had free or association public libraries. As for the approximately 550 townships, thirty-nine percent had no libraries within their boundaries. The remedy lay in new, or modified, legislation and larger units of library service. E.A. Hardy expressed his hope before the O.L.A. in 1914 that within the next ten or fifteen years a system of public libraries would blanket the province, reaching every community, regardless of size, "bringing the cheer of good books everywhere." It would be accomplished by the combined efforts of librarians, trustees, the O.L.A., and the Government. 95

As was customary, the annual meeting took place at Easter, but the outbreak of the First World War was only a few months away. I have described elsewhere the direct contributions of public libraries to the war effort46 which mainly involved supplying books to military camps, functioning as information centres on the progress of the war, as social centres for patriotic efforts, and eventually as providers of vocational reading materials for returning veterans. The basic impact of these roles was to raise the level of awareness of the public library as a factor in the community and no doubt gave some impetus to its development. The degree to which this occurred is not easy to establish, for although the war did intrude, it was sufficiently remote to enable the library movement to continue its struggle with
the more mundane problems besetting its progress.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


4. Ibid., pp. 179-180.


6. Ibid., p. 155.


12. Ibid., p. 78.

13. Ibid., p. 76.


15. Ibid., pp. 445-455, passim.


17. 52 Vic., Chap. 38, 1889.
1860 Vic., Chap. 58, 1897.


Ibid, pp. 39-44.

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Edwin Austin Hardy, The Public Library: Its Place in Our Educational System (Toronto, Briggs, 1912), pp. 134-144, passim.


Ibid., pp. 2178-2180.

Ibid., pp. 2134-2136.


43 See, for example, the comment on sinecures in a paper by W.J. Robertson, "Should the Education Department Issue a Librarian's Certificate?" Public Libraries, IX(May, 1904), p. 210.


45 W.J. Robertson, "Should the Education Department Issue a Librarian's Certificate?" Public Libraries, IX(May, 1904), pp. 211-212.


61 Ibid., p. 547 and pp. 550-551.


68Ibid., p. 204.


72Ibid., pp. 112-113.


10-11 Geo. V, Chap. 69, 1920, Sec. 82.

Sec.

See: Bertha Bassam, The Faculty of Library Science, University of Toronto and Its Predecessors, 1911-1972 (Toronto, Faculty of Library Science, 1978).


Ibid., p. 475.

Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897, Chap. 232, Part IV, Sec. 8.

3 Edw. VII, Chap. 23, 1903.


CHAPTER SEVEN
1915 - 1920

Opening his fifteenth annual report to the O.L.A., Secretary Hardy declared: "The disturbances which have prevailed throughout the world during the past few months have rather stimulated than decreased the activities of the library, and altogether the year has been one of steady progress." At the same conference, W.O. Carson, who was still Librarian of the London Public Library at this point, spoke of the Canadian public library as a social force. He stressed that, once the war was over, Canada would have to develop closer ties with the Empire, believing that independence would ultimately mean becoming part of a North American federation (a concept that would be anathema to most Canadians). Public libraries would have a responsibility in this regard. It did not mean the spreading of propaganda, but rather the provision of literature that would enable the public to weigh the issues and reach informed opinions.

W.O. Carson succeeded Walter Nursey as Inspector of Public Libraries in April 1916. In his first report he expressed the view that, in the matter of inspection, free libraries should take precedent over association public libraries. The latter were largely small with limited services and were incapable of giving "modern public library service." Their problems could be solved through correspondence and the new professional journal, the Ontario
Library Review. Free libraries, on the other hand, were capable of extending and intensifying their services with the aid of expert advice, which meant personal visits from the Inspector. Although Carson believed all of this to be true, his position was partly motivated by the fact that the time available to him for library inspection was fairly limited. To speed the process, he developed a methodology. This involved placing the aspects of the library to be examined under several headings: the plan and arrangement of the building; the various departments (reference, lending, children's, and reading room); collection evaluation; financial matters; technical services; equipment; administration; impact on the community; and lastly, the librarian and supporting staff.

The basic message of library development in 1916 was that free libraries were forging ahead; association public libraries were retrogressing. In the ten years between 1905 and 1915, expenditures on free libraries had increased almost 3 1/2 times, with circulation figures rising almost 2 1/2 times. Besides a small reduction in the number of association public libraries, their aggregate expenditure had dropped by more than $14,000. Many of them were, of course, quite small, and in the discussion of the small library problem in chapter five, reasons have been advanced for their lack of viability. The Inspector of Public Libraries was particularly concerned about the effects of poorly-run association public libraries on the community. As they might possibly prejudice people against the formation of free libraries, he speculated that perhaps it was time to precipitate their conversion. In the final analysis, about fifteen percent received the Inspector's mark of approbation.
As far as the business of the O.L.A. was concerned, the year 1916-1917 was characterized as one of "quiet and steady progress." The Secretary was particularly gratified that some libraries were realizing the importance of advertising their services and were making use of their local newspapers for this purpose. Looking at progress in extending library services throughout the province, he thought that little had been achieved over the previous twenty years as the number of public libraries in existence had fluctuated over that period of time. In 1916, public libraries were to be found in all twenty-two cities, and in seventy-four percent of the towns and villages. The situation in the townships is harder to judge, mainly because the figures cited are not accurate. Also, it is not clear whether the information refers simply to libraries within township borders, or to libraries actually under the control of township councils who received that power in 1916. In summary, approximately eighteen percent of the population was without library service.

At the end of this report, Hardy took the opportunity to discuss what he termed the "mission of the library." He saw the world war as a struggle of "ideas against ideas." The hard-won freedoms of speech, thought, and life-style, coupled with a Christian philosophy, were pitted against the "oppression of autocracy, oligarchy and bureaucracy, linked together with a practical materialism and a superman philosophy of sheer, domineering force." The library's role or "mission," was not simply to store knowledge and ideas, but to disseminate them as widely as possible. "Knowledge, more knowledge and still more knowledge must be sent out," he declared. Librarians had to be considered part of a larger professional community (in this case, composed largely of clergymen, journalists, and politicians),
committed to assisting in bringing the war to a successful conclusion and then contributing to the business of reconstruction.¹⁰

Hardy's remark on the lack of progress notwithstanding, demands on public library service had increased by about three hundred percent in the eight years previous to 1917, which made it imperative for libraries to operate on a sound financial basis. A need to improve the system of taxation was recognized, but it was also understood that the times were not propitious for change; a more suitable opportunity would arise when the war was over. In attempting to define a level of expenditure that would provide reasonable library service to the average community, the Inspector of Public Libraries suggested between thirty-five and forty cents per capita, although in some cases it would need to be in the range of forty-five to sixty cents. In other words, for any library operating with an income below the recommended minimum of thirty-five cents per capita, poor patronage brought on by inferior service could be expected.

To illustrate his point, the Inspector randomly selected twenty-six free libraries to show the income from taxation that was "demandable," although this was no guarantee it would be forthcoming. The libraries represent communities with widely disparate populations, ranging from Toronto, with almost 474,000 inhabitants, to Ailsa Craig, where the population did not quite reach 600. The thirty-five cent criterion applied to two libraries only: London, situated in south-western Ontario (thirty-five cents), and Fort William, in northern Ontario (fifty-eight cents). Many of the remaining libraries were well below the benchmark, with fifteen communities under twenty cents.¹¹
In 1917, the *Ontario Library Review* looked at libraries in communities with populations of 10,000 and over, and also those in communities with populations under 10,000, all but one being free. They provide the opportunity to compare actual *per capita* expenditures with the potential *per capita* incomes calculated by the Inspector. The first thing that is noticeable is that four did not reach the *per capita* figures predicted for them. In terms of the benchmark of thirty-five cents, forty-six percent (twelve) achieved that figure or better, which suggests income additional to that raised from taxes (Government grants, for example).

Surprisingly, among all the communities examined, the village of Tavistock had by far the highest *per capita* expenditure rate. Its population in 1916 stood at 1,025, the year in which its association public library became free. A sharp rise in income followed, raising the library’s *per-capita* rate from thirty-six cents to one dollar and two cents. The library actually expended only a slightly larger amount in 1918, but the community experienced a drop in population sufficient to raise the *per capita* expenditure to one dollar and thirteen cents.

Circulation figures cited by the *Ontario Library Review* vary enormously from library to library and do not appear to bear any relation to either population size or collection size. The *Review* took the view that the considerable variations in the figures given for places of similar size was due to the fact that many libraries were not established on "an adequate basis." This may well have been true, but it can also be explained in terms of the dynamics of library service operating under the influence of factors that could vary enormously from one community to the next. We have already noticed the possible effects of converting from an association public library to a free library and
fluctuations in population; the fortunes of a library would also be affected by the acquisition of a Carnegie building. For a library to be considered "an educational and social force," the Review was convinced that, of all the factors necessary, the two most important were staffing and the book budget. Of the former, there would have to be a sufficient number, all of a high calibre, while the latter would need to be generous and coupled with an acquisitions process that was based on efficient book selection.14

A paper presented at the 1918 O.L.A. conference by Mary J.L. Black, from the Fort William Public Library, anticipated the period of reconstruction that would follow the signing of the armistice, which would take place before the year was out. Ostensibly, she intended to dispel some popular misconceptions regarding the public library and its role in the community, but a closer inspection reveals a subtext that projected the fears and uncertainties of a young profession, hypersensitive to criticism and anxious to understand and fulfill its true mission to society. The eighteen years of the Association's existence had been a period of broad experimentation, unhindered by restrictive precedents and "rules and regulations." Now, the changing times called for a different approach (termed "aggressive construction" by Black), but no progress could be made until a number of obstructive misconceptions had been corrected.15

There was a belief both within and beyond the profession that everyone working in a library was a "librarian." Black admitted that librarianship was a "queer intangible thing," and attempted a rather vague definition which hinged on the notion that clerical assistants were set off from librarians because they did not have "the spirit of librarianship," a characteristic Black did not try to
define. Added to this, however, was the most telling characteristic: the assistant's lack of a "sense of proportion," which presumably meant the ability to exercise judgement in library matters, although, again, this is not defined. The persistence of this particular misconception was explained by the fact that, even within the library environment, it was not customary to distinguish between librarians and assistants, a phenomenon that also emphasizes the tenuous nature of the profession at that time. Black's reaction to the notion of librarians as omniscient beings was clearly defensive, pleading with her colleagues to refuse the label of "walking encyclopaedia" which suggested a role it was impossible to play.16

Viewing the public library as merely a piece of decorative architecture that every community should possess was among the more colourful misconceptions: taxation should support it because it possessed cultural value and it was a point of civic pride, but there was absolutely no need to make use of it. This was a case for re-education so that those who thought this way would come to realize that it was an institution that catered to the needs of everyone, even the educated who perhaps owned book collections. Black was convinced that if the library was not "an embodiment of democracy and universal in its service," it was not fulfilling its mandate, for as a democratic institution, the public library was required to welcome "the scholar and ditcher, the school boy and the society dame" on equal terms. It was unfortunate that some of those who stayed away did so because they found the apparent complexities of the classification system and the catalogue intimidating.17

Among the remaining "misconceptions" there is only one of any importance, and this was apparently prevalent among
many librarians of repute. They believed that the library was nothing more than a straightforward business concern, and to consider their work as vocational, or as some form of community service, was nothing short of affectation. In refuting this fallacy, Black focused on librarianship as a profession, with the inference that, as far as she was concerned, "librarianship" and "vocation" were synonymous terms. She pointed out that there were, after all, services rendered that could not be measured in remunerative terms. "Librarianship is undoubtedly a profession, even though a very immature one," she declared, "and the person who thinks differently is holding a fallacy, the dissemination of which will do great harm."

Like many such presentations, the paper ended on a note of exhortation in the form of rhetorical questions, intended to accent the conference's theme: "Service." When would librarians come to the realization that their work had only just begun? Would they wait until the public rose in its "righteous wrath," demanding value for money, or would they take the initiative and show their patrons that they had gained enormously from past errors, and that ahead lay progress? There was no question about it in Black's mind: librarians would join the ranks of the "great civilian army of effective and sane workers," and would live up to the conference's motto.

It was generally assumed that the conclusion of the war would herald a new era, and that the public library would occupy an important position in the post-war world. Rural depopulation and growing industrialism, both of which had been at work long before the war began, had progressed to the point where they were creating problems that communities found difficult to solve. It was thought that the public
library could assist in the alleviation of these chronic concerns. In the years ahead, the primary and secondary school systems (which, together with public libraries were cultivating a taste for literature among young people) would produce a new class of reader who would make even greater demands on the public library. Furthermore, the likelihood of a shorter working week would mean more leisure, and this naturally implied the increasing use of the public library. When the war finally ended, H.J. Cody, Minister of Education, boldly announced that the new era would need volunteers to assist in the making of a greater Canada. The principal part in reconstruction would be played by education, but as the public library promulgated popular education, there were opportunities for librarians and trustees to take part in this important work.

On a more mundane level, the Inspector of Public Libraries used the termination of the war as an opportunity to take stock. The first point of note was that, although the war effort had been the major concern during the past four years, not inconsiderable progress had still been made by the public library movement. There had been an increase in expenditure amounting to some forty-four percent, with circulation figures up fifty-three percent. In fact, in 1917, 450,000 volumes more were circulated than in the previous year. An encouraging sign for the profession was the improvement of salaries in many libraries, while trained librarians and assistants could now expect remuneration that reflected their qualifications.

This statement, incidentally, was at odds with an editorial in the Ontario Library Review which claimed that ninety-eight percent of librarians and assistants in Ontario were underpaid, which apparently had always been the case.
As a result, several well-qualified assistants had been compelled to move into other types of work where the salaries were better. Continuing his review, the Inspector drew attention to the need to expand the staff and offices of the Public Libraries Branch of the Education Department, which was another sign that there was growth in the public library system. One important experiment involved visits by a member of the Inspector’s staff to three communities which seemed to have potential for the formation of libraries. In each case, his visit was successful: a library was organized and funding arranged, with the result that all three were soon functioning satisfactorily.

Free libraries received financial encouragement in 1919 through amendments to the Public Libraries Act that improved the public library rate. Previously, communities with populations under 100,000 could increase the basic half-mill library rate to three-quarters of a mill on a two-thirds vote of the municipal council. Now, a simple majority of council could raise it to one whole mill in the dollar. Cities with populations of 100,000 or more had been restricted to one-quarter of a mill, exclusive of "debt charges," which meant that a further undetermined levy was necessary to meet debts and interest charges. Under the new amendment, a city council was not required to levy a rate greater than one-quarter of a mill, but "the total amount of the rates to be levied in such city may be increased by the council if it thinks proper to an amount not exceeding in the whole one-half of one mill in the dollar." This was provided chiefly for the benefit of Toronto, Hamilton, and Ottawa, large cities that were feeling the restrictions of the lower library rate.
For police villages, the one-half mill rate could now be increased to one mill on a petition from the majority of ratepayers. Some municipalities had difficulty honouring maintenance agreements assumed as integral parts of gifts, the Carnegie benefactions being the prime example. A final clause provided the necessary flexibility in these special cases by allowing a library rate above the normal statutory limit "sufficient to provide the moneys necessary to carry out the terms of such arrangement or agreement." Not explained, was the stipulation that these arrangements, or agreements, were to have been undertaken prior to January 1, 1917.

In terms of performance levels, by 1919, a degree of polarization had taken place among the province’s public libraries. Noticeable progress was only evident among approximately one-third of libraries that reported to the Minister, while within that group, most of the credit was due to the several larger libraries that were providing service of a fairly high calibre. As for the rest, there had been some perceptible advances (a number of new ones had been formed and none had been closed in four years), but they remained far short of a standard of service that could be considered wholly adequate.

The 425 libraries were graded by the Inspector of Public Libraries on the basis of merit. Twenty-four were designated "first class," but all but one were city libraries and their sixteen branches. The classification "good" was assigned to fifty-five libraries, among which association public libraries had the largest showing, twenty-six receiving this designation. The majority of those described as "fairly good" (twenty-nine) belonged to communities with populations in the 1,000 to 4,000 range.
Of special note is the fact that three city libraries were classified as being only "fairly good." The lowest classification was "fair"; surprisingly, at one end of the scale, it described four city libraries, and at the other end, the majority (216) of the association public libraries.29

Remarking that there was a direct correlation between per capita income and efficiency, the Inspector identified two requirements that would raise the system to a high standard of service: legislation providing adequate per capita incomes, and Departmental regulations designed to ensure "a reasonable standard of librarianship," but tailored to suit libraries differing in size, which, in effect, meant wider powers for the Minister of Education. Not much could be done for improving the incomes of association public libraries, denied access to a municipal tax. They would have to continue their reliance on income from membership fees, Government grants, gifts, profits from entertainments, and contributions from their local municipalities or county councils. The distribution of association public libraries showed sixty-four percent situated in communities with less than 500 inhabitants and twenty-one percent in places with populations between 500 and 1,000. Centres with populations ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 had eight percent, and towns over 2,000 had only seven percent. Looked at as a scale, the numbers for association public libraries were inversely proportional to the population figures.30

November 14, 1919 was a significant day for the province when the Conservatives, under William Hearst, were replaced by E.C. Drury and his Farmer-Labour Government, which would play a part in expediting the passage of major
library legislation to be enacted in the following year. The Public Libraries Act, which was intended to consolidate as well as amend previous legislation, received royal assent on June 4, 1920. It had three parts, the first dealt with free libraries, the second with association public libraries, and the third covered certain general provisions, but particularly the "powers and privileges" of the Minister of Education. School sections were allowed to form public libraries. This meant that every level of local government could now participate in library provision, making the dream of a rational, integrated library system on a province-wide basis a distinct possibility. With regards to the petition praying for the establishment of a free library, which was the normal prerequisite, there was a change in the number of petitioners required in a city; formerly, it had been 100, but now, like towns, it was only sixty. The number for villages remained at thirty.

Somewhat more complicated was the establishment of public libraries in townships and police villages, largely because the latter were rather loose municipal structures with jurisdictions that might traverse more than one township. Sixty electors in a township could petition for a public library, but it excluded residents of a police village that was "not situated wholly in the township." When a police village was situated completely within the boundaries of a township, it was to be considered part of that township for the purposes of establishing a library, unless it had established a public library of its own. In that case, if the township decided to do the same, the police village would become part of it, while retaining its own property. There was, furthermore, a clause which allowed for the disestablishment of a school section library situated partly or wholly in a township that decided to form
a public library. In the former case, assets would be redistributed by the Minister of Education, in the latter they would become part of the township library.

As in earlier legislation, association public libraries could be incorporated under part two of the new act by ten or more persons at least twenty-one years of age who were British subjects. The Inspector of Public Libraries considered this type of library most suitable for communities where the notion of free libraries was no popular. But the struggle for survival can be easily imagined in any community that began library service based on the will of only ten individuals, even though the lack of any age barrier meant that a reasonably-sized membership, drawn from a broad spectrum of age groups, was possible. Provision was made for transforming association public libraries into free libraries under conditions similar to the 1909 act, except that now, it was not necessary to submit the takeover by-law to the electorate for approval. Encouragement was given to co-operation among libraries through the clause that allowed boards of two or more public libraries to establish “union libraries” that might include branches or “distributing stations,” arrangements that clearly looked forward to larger units of library service like the county system.

The major breakthrough, however, was a radical change in the method of determining the public library rate. As earlier discussion has shown, the mill-rate system was the customary means of assessing a library’s portion of municipal income, raised from a tax based on an assessment of a community’s property (contemporary sources use the term “taxable assessment”). There seemed to be no adequate way of testing the merits of this system, but it gradually
became apparent that it was far from satisfactory. Basically, the problem arose because methods of assessing property differed widely across the province to the extent that it was possible for municipalities of similar size to have tax assessments that varied as much as one hundred percent. This was a particular problem in a smaller community because of the expected smaller assessment, the concomitantly reduced tax income affecting the library’s share. Libraries were intended to serve people not property, so the tax system needed to be modified to reflect a service orientation.\(^3\)

The solution, recognized in the act, was to move to a \textit{per capita} system which was set at fifty cents. This was considered sufficient to provide reasonable library services, although it was understood that there may be cases where the levels of service warranted a higher levy.\(^4\) The act provided for this contingency by allowing an increase to seventy-five cents \textit{per capita} on a majority vote of council. The beauty of the new method was that a library could expect an income of fifty cents \textit{per capita}, leaving it to the municipal council to ensure that the tax assessment, still based on property, was sufficient to provide it. On the old system a library could never be quite sure what its income might be. Inspector Carson estimated that the new system would provide public libraries, taken as a whole, with an increased tax income amounting to sixty-seven percent.\(^5\)

An editorial in the \textit{Ontario Library Review} spoke positively of the innovation, warning that some library boards would be told that fifty cents \textit{per capita} was too much to spend on library services. Fifty cents was the price of two tickets to the cinema, a box of cheap chocolates, or "five good 'smokes'," and was a small price
to pay for putting every man, woman, and child in touch with "the records of men's thoughts, of men's achievements, of men's meditations." But there were ways of dealing with likely critics, largely by pointing out that the public library cured provincialism and narrowmindedness, was a "continuation school" for the people, brightened dull lives, and brought children in contact with the great literature of the ages. If further convincing was necessary, in 1919, over 6,000,000 books had circulated throughout the province's libraries.36

It is no surprise that the majority of free libraries stood to gain substantial increases, in some cases as much as three or four times the income claimable under the former system, the irrationality of which was confirmed by the few anomalies that appeared. Fort William's claimable income under the per capita system threatened to be almost twenty percent less than was possible before. This means that there must have been an extremely high assessment of property values if the mill rate was able to provide the library with a higher income yield than the new per capita method would. Similarly affected was Port Colborne (population 3,200) which could expect a reduction in its income of just over thirty-six percent. The Toronto Public Library, on the other hand, already the largest and richest library in the system, could look forward to an increase in its claimable income of about sixty-nine percent.37

Part three of the act shows some interesting modifications to the corresponding portion of the 1909 legislation. Almost as important as the new per capita principle were the extended powers given to the Minister and his staff in all areas of public library development through a greater use of regulations, approved by the Lieutenant-
Governor-in-Council. These could be formulated, or altered, in response to changing circumstances, thus avoiding the cumbersome procedure of constantly revising the statutes. This approach was considered to be particularly useful in apportioning grants, which were no longer spelled out in the act. The educational function of the public library was reinforced by the clause that called for the establishment of a bureau of home study. The Government would pay for the creation of reading courses, the compilation of bibliographies, and the preparation of instructional manuals.

In the following year, typical regulations were published which were similar to those obtaining since the 1909 legislation. Government grants would still be apportioned on the basis of fifty percent of local expenditures on books, binding, and such other items as materials used for classification and cataloguing. The grant for fiction remained at forty-five percent of amounts "expended on other books," a somewhat vague stipulation, although the term "fiction" would not apply to reading matter "properly classifiable as children's books." The total sum payable would not exceed $200. In the case of newspapers and other periodical literature, the maximum grant, again based on fifty percent of local expenditures, would remain at fifty dollars. One change was made in the stipulations intended to encourage reading rooms: each had to be kept open only two hours per day instead of three (but still for three days a week) in order to qualify for the five dollar bonus.

Incentives for reading rooms kept open three hours a day for six days per week remained at ten dollars. Monetary assistance for low-income libraries was unchanged at five
dollars for libraries with annual incomes of less than twenty-five dollars, ten for those taking in between twenty-five and $100 per annum, fifteen dollars for libraries with incomes from $100 to $200 each year, and for those with receipts above $200 but below $500, twenty dollars per annum. The new regulations indicated what was necessary for a viable reading room: it had to be furnished with at least ten subscriptions, excluding gifts, of which six were to be "standard" monthlies; the remainder could include newspapers and any other type of periodical publication approved by the Minister. Additional recognition of the needs of libraries in small communities came in the form of special grants payable to communities with populations under 2,000 and circumstances that made them "cases deserving of special consideration," for which the criteria were not specified. Similarly, communities of less than 2,000 people that established free libraries under part one of the act were rewarded with grants of up to $100. It was to be expended solely on books, the selections requiring the approval of the Minister of Education.

There were two important changes in the stipulations that governed grants to association public libraries. Formerly there had to be at least fifty persons over the age of twenty-one years in the association; the new regulations dropped the age requirement, which was consistent with the desire to open libraries to the young. It was left simply as fifty persons for association public libraries in towns and villages and, as a further concession, just thirty members for such associations in police villages and school sections. For the purpose of grants, branch libraries were considered separate public libraries, a concession of particular value to the Toronto Public Library which had several by this time. All of this largesse was qualified by
the Minister's cautionary note that, should the Legislature vote a sum insufficient to honour these potential commitments, a pro rata reduction would be made across the board. Grants would be withheld from any board providing either inferior library service, or maintaining "a condition opposed to the best interest of a public library."

The act was considered in many quarters to be a major piece of legislation, with the per capita principle as the highlight. Approbation was expressed in many forms and from many quarters, including the American Library Association, public library boards across the province, and the press. The Toronto Public Library Bulletin observed that the legislation had been passed through the Legislature by the new Farmer-Labour Government during an extremely busy session. It also pointed out that R.H. Grant, the Education Minister, was a farmer who believed that rural areas should receive the same opportunities for "self-education" as the more urban parts of the province. The public library, as an educational agency, was entitled to the same support received by the school system. On a more pragmatic level, it was predicted that increased revenue for public libraries ought to enable librarians to achieve salaries that were equitable with those of teachers.

The Inspector, in his report for the year following the new legislation, expressed satisfaction that the revised act was working well. He had had some doubts about boards who might expend their larger budgets and not improve their services. But mostly, they had spent their money judiciously, with some actually showing restraint in circumstances where an increase in expenditure would not have necessarily led to better service. The public had responded well to the changes, and one visible result of the
new act was an overall increase of some magnitude in expenditures for books. 41

SOME CASE NOTES ON SELECTED LIBRARIES IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO

So far, the story of library development has been told from the point of view of a collective experience. After all, public libraries in both southern and northern Ontario were responding to a common set of stimuli that came from the Government and its agent, the Education Department, the O.L.A., and the public-at-large. While this suggests a similarity in case histories, there were enough unique experiences among individual libraries to provide other perspectives on library development, as the following examples show.

Converting an association public library into a free library was usually considered a sign of progress, yet the Newburgh Public Library, formed in the 1880s, actually reverted from a free library to an association public library. The municipality had provided no financial support (although under the 1882 act, the library was entitled to a portion of the tax income), while voluntary contributions had been few. In the circumstances, the principal source of income was presumably the Government grant which could not have amounted to much, so that resorting to membership fees was probably the only option. 42 In 1920, the population numbered 432. The library contained almost 2,500 volumes, with a per capita circulation for the year of between three and four volumes. The total expenditure in 1920 was a little over $200, approximately one-fourth of which was contributed by the Government. On a per capita basis that
was forty-eight cents, just two cents below the recommended figure. 43

Hamilton is a large industrial centre that rose to prominence in the nineteenth century, its incorporation as a city taking place as early as 1846. The Hamilton Mechanics' Institute was incorporated in 1849, and in 1880 had over 1,000 members and an annual income in excess of $7,000. 44 By 1882, the institute was in serious financial difficulties, so its assets were sold off at public auction. 45 Interest in a free library was not sufficiently aroused until 1885 when a by-law was submitted to the electorate, but it was defeated by almost 200 votes. 46 The Hamilton Daily Spectator thought that the old mechanics' institute had been "unnecessarily sacrificed" as its large membership and Government support ought to have been enough to keep it alive. Unfortunately, a large property debt and losses taken in "show business" (the entertainments that were often part of the social fabric of institutes) had caused it to collapse. Even then, the library at least might have been saved, but all had been affected by "apathy and carelessness," resulting in the institute's absolute demise. Fortunately, an attempt was to be made to resuscitate the institute along lines intended to make it more popular than its predecessor. In addition to a reading room and library, there would be a room for billiards and board games, and it was even possible that a gymnasium and bowling alley would be added. The moment was seen as propitious for undertaking the project, as a suitable building was about to become available. 47

The Spectator described the mechanics' institute debate that took place on November 16 as a "rousing meeting of citizens." The most influential speech of the evening was
made by J.M. Gibson. Neither his background nor his credentials were described, but in all probability this was John Morison Gibson who had strong ties to Hamilton and represented the city in the Ontario Legislature between 1879 and 1898. He was eventually knighted and served as Lieutenant-Governor of the province from 1908 to 1914.

Gibson thought that it was "unbecoming" for a city as important as Hamilton to continue without the kind of facilities that were contemplated, and did not anticipate any disagreement on this point. The membership fee could be kept low, private subscriptions solicited, and the public asked to support a "decent" municipal grant to supplement that received from the Government. He was quite sure that the old post office building could be acquired for a nominal rent from the Federal Government, provoking laughter with his observation that governments were always more amenable to the needs of the people at election time. (This was, presumably, a reference to the federal election that would take place in the following February). As for the library, that would be "the work of time," but it should include "all the best periodicals of the day." His remarks were greatly appreciated by a gathering that included those who remembered the old institute and the part it played in keeping men from the bad influences of "saloons and streets." One of these gentlemen expressed his pleasure at the large crowd, and was also gratified that the Central Labor Union had agreed to co-operate in the venture.

Because of the high costs that would be involved in developing a new institute, it was suggested that perhaps advantage could be taken of the Free Libraries Act. This was countered by the understanding that the law required three years to lapse before a new by-law could be submitted.
to the electorate, bearing in mind that the last (unsuccessful) attempt had taken place only within the past year. This view was challenged by a speaker who stated that the requirement was only one year, which was the correct interpretation.

In the ongoing debate, a Mr. Burns argued strongly in support of establishing a mechanics' institute and avoiding the issue of a free library, pointing out that two valuable collections were available to form a basic library: one would come from a city school, the other from the Grand Trunk Railway Company. Finally, a motion was put to the meeting calling for the establishment of a mechanic's institute; it carried by a "unanimous standing vote." If this was not enough, at the end of the meeting, many of those present came forward and signed the declaration of incorporation. Inspector May, in his report for 1885-86, mentioned briefly the incorporation of a new mechanics' institute in Hamilton, but, curiously, it does not appear in official reports for the succeeding few years.

Despite the obvious support this new institution was receiving, there was also a strong movement to establish a free library, although opinions differ on the direction from which the support came. Marjorie Freeman Campbell claims that the credit for the creation of the free library, opened in 1890, belonged to Sir John M. Gibson (the strong supporter of the new mechanics' institute), the Board of Education, and the Hamilton Association for the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art, established in 1857. Bryan D. Palmer, however, discussing the response of skilled workers to industrial capitalism in Hamilton, states that working men were agitating throughout the 1880s for such an institution, and it was mainly through their efforts that
the movement succeeded.

The evidence displayed in Palmer's extensive documentation is convincing, and he goes on to remark that the working men of Hamilton "had finally rid themselves of the irritable taste of class distinction and manipulation that the Mechanics' Institute's Board of Directors had left in their mouths for so many years." When a free library board was established, one member was Fred Walters, who belonged to the iron molders' union and was a delegate to the Central Labor Union which, as noted above, had supposedly supported the revival of the mechanic's institute. The laying of the corner stone for the new free library building, which took place on October 23, 1889, was reported in the Canadian Bibliographer and Library Record with the hope that other cities would follow Hamilton's example, this being the period when free libraries were very much in the minority.

The first Chief Librarian was Richard T. Lancefield whose appointment and subsequent career possess elements of the bizarre. The headline in the Hamilton Daily Times reads like the title of an eighteenth-century novel: "a long and exciting debate over the appointment, during which several amendments are defeated, and some members get hot."

Speaking on behalf of the committee charged with finding a suitable librarian, the Chairman began by informing the Board that Richard T. Lancefield was still considered to be the best choice among the twenty applications, adding that choosing from such a number had been an extremely difficult task. It was now up to the Board to accept or refuse the recommendation, and it was at this point that trouble began. At the outset, the Mayor was very disappointed because the position had not been given to a local applicant,
notwithstanding the fact that Lancefield had been in business in Hamilton in the seventies and eighties. Furthermore, having to appoint someone from Toronto suggested to him that the best Hamiltonians had not applied.

The matter was complicated by other factions within the Board, anxious to promote their particular candidates, which added heat to the debate. One of Lancefield's referees was James Bain, which prompted the remark that if Lancefield was so good, why had not Bain offered him a position in the Toronto Public Library? Later in the discussion, the Mayor brought up the fact that Lancefield had left Hamilton because his business had failed, adding that an "important public trust" should not be given to a man who could not handle his own business affairs, as it was a sign of weakness. It was Lancefield's former business that, to some degree, qualified him for the position of Librarian as he had been a printer, and also a bookseller and stationer, a business which included a circulating library. The debate finally ground to a halt with Lancefield confirmed as Librarian. He was described as a "young man in the prime of life, courteous and affable in disposition," and someone who would make "a first-class librarian."

Just over a decade later, the skeptics were proven correct in their judgement of Richard T. Lancefield who turned out to be completely untrustworthy. On February 7, 1902, the public was greeted by the sensational news that Lancefield had disappeared without trace. The reason given was that he had been "short in his accounts." Using an "ingenious method," he was able to double his salary. He would have the Chairman of the Library Board sign his pay cheque on one particular day, and then persuade the other authorized board member to sign a second one the day after.
Lancefield's indiscretions were ascribed to his gambling habit, which he indulged at the local racetrack. On the next day, it was reported that a warrant had been issued for his arrest. On February 10 it was announced that Lancefield had been embezzling for more than the current year, and that, in his absence, his family and friends were prepared to make good the losses. Once the initial fuss was over and the matter no longer headline news, attempts to find and prosecute him ceased. He died in Toronto on September 22, 1911.

Because of the increase in urbanization and the concomitant problem of rural depopulation which was evident during the forty-year period under review, it could be argued that libraries situated in the cities and larger towns present themselves as more valid subjects for study. But even though important contributions to library development were being made in the large urban centres, there were numerous small towns and villages that were nurturing their often tiny libraries, and making valiant efforts to provide adequate library service. Account should be taken of these communities for, in many respects, they characterized the Ontario landscape. The village of Lakefield, situated on the banks of the Otonabee River some miles north of the city of Peterborough, represents one such community.

Early in its history, it was considered to be ideal for development, principally because its location promised unlimited water-power, so necessary to many business enterprises. By 1886, it was already an incorporated village with a population of about 1,500, containing several small factories, flour and lumber mills, and numerous stores. It was a branch of the Grand Trunk Railway where
trains connected with lake steamers, and it even possessed a telephone service with eleven subscribers. It had a very good elementary school, a prestigious preparatory school for boys, and several churches. It was described as the county's most prosperous village, and in addition to its "industrial" enterprises, of which the lumber business was the more prominent, Lakefield could also boast of four licensed hotels, a number of lodge organizations, and a Y.M.C.A. By the 1890s, Lakefield had a property assessment value of $300,000 and its streets were lit by electricity.

The inaugural meeting of the Lakefield Mechanic's Institute took place on October 30, 1891, which, compared with many other institutes in the province, occurred rather late in the century and may be attributed to a high-point in the growth and prosperity of the village. Hopes for its success were clearly high, as the Secretary was instructed to have 200 membership tickets printed as an initial step. Membership fees were established at one dollar for a first membership, the remaining family members (if applicable) being charged fifty cents each. In order to increase revenue, a series of entertainments were planned.

The rules and regulations were quite straightforward, each member being allowed to borrow one book for a two-week period, which was renewable for a further two weeks. Fines were imposed for overdue material and defacements or damage. In order to protect the material, members were strictly forbidden from lending books outside the immediate family. It was further forbidden to smoke, make a noise, or engage in loud conversations in the library, all of which is familiar today. The printed rules and regulations indicate that the reading room would be open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., but this is probably a printer's error as such hours
seem inordinately long. The minutes of the November, 1891 meeting recorded that the hours were to be from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.\textsuperscript{70}

In February, 1892, reduced hours for the library and reading room were recommended because the patronage had turned out to be extremely small. This may have been due to an inadequate book collection, for at the March 31, 1892 meeting, the directors examined recent book purchases and found them unsuitable. They instructed the Secretary to visit Peterborough the following day and make a fresh selection. In April of the same year, the institute moved from its accommodation in the Royal Templars Hall to the town hall. At the meeting of July 16, 1895, the regulations were modified to allow persons between the ages of twelve and twenty-one years to join the institute for the modest fee of fifty cents per annum.

In July 1895, following the requirements of the new library act, the institute changed its name to the Lakefield Public Library, continuing as an association public library. The name change provided the opportunity to consider handing the institute over to the local municipality to become a free library, but it was deemed inadvisable at that moment, no explanation for the postponement being proffered. On May 4, 1897, the library's bank balance was just over ten dollars. Seven hundred and seventy-six books had circulated in the 1896-97 year among slightly over 100 residents. These facts were conveyed to a meeting of the Board.

A significant discussion took place at this meeting when the question of making the library free came up again. The following October, the village agreed to assume responsibility, so it was handed over, together with an
eighty-dollar residue from the Government grant, and free of all debts. Later in the month a Dr. John Bell was appointed Librarian at the munificent salary of twenty-five dollars per annum. It is a testimony to the interest and support shown by both the residents and their village council that after only a comparatively short time in existence (six years) the library was made free without any dissension.

Its first official report as a free library (to April 30, 1898) shows the number of readers as 227 and a library of 467 volumes, which placed it in the group of libraries possessing the smallest collections (between 250 and 500 volumes). The total circulation in this period did not quite reach 1,500 volumes; the *per capita* expenditure was only eleven cents.

By the spring of 1898 the library must have been on a firmer footing, for Dr. Bell’s salary was doubled, his duties entailing the "distribution" of books three times each week. The following year Bell also assumed the responsibility of Secretary to the Board for an additional ten dollars per year. This occurred in March 1899 when the Board asked the Council for a grant of one hundred dollars for library support. The minutes do not specify the grounds for the request, but it may be assumed that it was based on the Board’s property tax entitlement, which, if calculated at the full one-half mill in the dollar, would have been at least $150, assuming the village’s assessment value was close to the 1894 figure of $300,000. Of course, municipal councils could not be forced to grant the full amount, and avoided doing so if the financial situation was sensitive, which must have been the case at Lakefield.

Early in 1900 the Board selected twenty-five dollars worth of books (a not inconsiderable amount for the times) from a collection sent on approval, stipulating that only twenty-
five percent could be fiction, the rest to consist of history, voyages, travel, and miscellaneous works. Bell was replaced as Secretary-Treasurer-Librarian in 1901 by O.A. Langley, a local magistrate.  

At the turn of the century, the Education Department had tried to encourage the closure of under-utilized reading rooms, which library boards struggled to keep open, by permitting libraries that discarded them, and also those already without them, to continue purchasing magazines from the Government grant with the recommendation that they be circulated as books. This obviously did not sit well with the Lakefield Public Library Board, for in December 1903 the local member of Parliament was asked to intervene as the Deputy Minister of Education had ordered the closing of the reading room. At the January 1904 meeting of the Board, members discussed the interpretation of the regulations pertaining to reading rooms, but in the end, asked the Secretary to consult the Education Department.

At the March meeting it was made clear that Lakefield's particular problem was that the reading room was used for purposes besides the reading of magazines and newspapers, in which case Government grants were not applicable. As a solution, the Board decided to ask for entire control of the room, which was situated in the town hall, and to see if the Department of Education would, on special occasions only, permit local churches to use the room for entertainments. The minutes do not indicate the responses to the difficulty, but, as the Education Department reports show, the reading room remained in existence.

Efforts were made to keep in touch with new developments in the library field, for the minutes of May,
1912 and July, 1914 show that Langley attended library institutes. Unfortunately, "onerous" professional commitments forced him to resign his library appointment in November, 1915. He was replaced by W.G. Morrison at an annual salary of sixty dollars. The library's income in 1915, which may be considered a typical year, derived mainly from the Government ($100), the municipality ($100), and an additional five dollars from fines and profits on the sale of a printed library catalogue. The largest expenditure went on books (almost ninety-nine dollars), then the Librarian's salary (sixty dollars), followed by the reading room (forty dollars). The remainder covered the costs of producing the catalogue and its supplements, unspecified "incidentals," and a membership (two dollars) in the O.L.A.

Morrison did not complete his term and was replaced by Miss E. Griffin in October, 1916 for the balance of the year. She also occupied the triple position for a salary of sixty dollars per annum, a situation that seems unusual in a period when equal pay was hardly an issue. Miss Griffin's appointment was renewed in the following February, 1917. This was the year she attended the O.L.A. annual conference, the first representative of Lakefield to do so. A space problem became acute during 1916 which necessitated selling back-numbers of the library's magazine collection and giving backfiles of newspapers to Red Cross collectors to assist the war effort. During 1917, the Librarian from the Peterborough Public Library offered the benefit of his experience, gained in a somewhat larger institution, to assist and advise on improvements to Lakefield's library service.

At the beginning of 1918, when the population was around the 1,000 mark, it could be said that the library had
become an indispensable part of the village's life. Since its first year as a free library, its collection had grown from under 500 to well over 2,000 volumes, with an annual circulation that had increased more than threefold. Expenditures had risen from eleven cents to twenty cents per capita. Everything seemed to favour more progress, but on the morning of December 27, 1918 disaster struck when the town hall that housed the library was completely destroyed by fire. The library's official report for the end of that year now showed a figure of only 200 volumes in the library, but at least a small part of the collection had been saved. Within a month the library was back in business, operating from a rented store. Its report for 1919 shows that the library had been increased during the year to almost 700 volumes, with an annual circulation reaching close to 5,000 volumes. Obviously, substantial support had contributed to the library's rapid recovery, highlighted by a per capita expenditure that year of forty-four cents, a figure nineteen cents higher than the previous year, and well above the recommended thirty-five cents. When the town hall was rebuilt in 1921, the library moved from its rented premises into the new building. The per capita expenditure during 1920 was an impressive seventy-four cents. The book collection had grown to more than 1,200 volumes, and the total circulation for the year was in excess of 6,400 volumes.

We do not have a description of the actual appearance of the Lakefield Public Library, but it was probably very much like the example provided by the Canadian Magazine in 1909. The room contained "carefully chosen periodicals" laid out on long tables, its walls lined with "standard" literature. As for the clientele, the handful of "superior" individuals who pursued intellectual topics were usually
candidates for the Board where they very soon attempted to improve the literary tastes of the village. They were complemented by "better class" working men of British stock who had been in the country for at least twenty years. They read popular magazines avidly and would rather miss meals than the opportunity to read Punch. If such individuals had frequented the Lakefield Public Library, they would, no doubt, have come from the local businesses and small industries in the village, and from the surrounding farms. The description of the librarian as "respectable old gentlemen" hardly fits those who held that office in Lakefield, although they may have shared his erudite, deliberate manner, and eccentric appearance.\textsuperscript{61} A distinguishing feature of the Lakefield Public Library was its complete independence from the benefactions of Andrew Carnegie.

To put the Lakefield experience into the context of the library movement as a whole, it should be noted that, while this village library was struggling in 1919 to regain its footing as part of the cultural and educational life of the village, the Toronto Public Library, serving a population of 500,000, was about to spend a grant from the city of $100,000 to build two more branch libraries. The Board had, furthermore, a policy of providing its buildings with spacious grounds, well-tended lawns, flower beds, shrubs, and even botanical gardens, all of which was in the care of a professional gardener and his staff.\textsuperscript{62}
NOTES AND REFERENCES


6 Ibid., p. 18.

7 Ibid., p. 21.


10 Ibid., pp. 24-25.


16 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
17 Ibid., pp. 55-56.
18 Ibid., p. 57.
19 Ibid., p. 58.


26 Ibid., Sections 26 and 27.


30 Ibid., p. 79.


47 Hamilton Daily Spectator, November 13, 1886.

48 Hamilton Daily Spectator, November 17, 1886.


50 Hamilton Daily Spectator, November 17, 1886.

51 Ibid.

53. Campbell, A Mountain and a City, p. 174. For a brief outline of the work of the Hamilton Association see Hamilton Association for the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art, 1857-1932. 75th Anniversary Meeting, April 29, 1832.


57. From early Hamilton directories and scrapbooks in the archives of the Hamilton Public Library. A biographical study of Lancefield and a history of the Hamilton Public Library, both by Katharine Greenfield, are in preparation.


60. Hamilton Daily Spectator, February 7, 1902.

61. Hamilton Daily Spectator, February 8, 1902.


63. From scrapbooks, the Hamilton Public Library, Archives.

64. Peterborough Review, August 30, 1886.

65. Daily Evening Review (Peterborough), September 1 and 2, 1886.


68. Lakefield Public Library, Board Minutes.

69. Lakefield Public Library, Archives.
Lakefield Public Library, Board Minutes.

Ibid.


Ibid.

"Circular to Public Libraries, November 15, 1899," Archives of Ontario, Records of the Education Department, RG 2, P-2, V, no. 33.

Lakefield Public Library, Board Minutes. The dreadful fact of the fire was added as a postscript to the minutes of December 16, 1918.


Lakefield Public Library, Board Minutes.


It will be recalled that technical education for adults had been the original purpose of mechanics' institutes which was reflected in the book collections of the earlier establishments. In time, the Government came to realize that increased financial assistance and a more liberal policy towards their libraries would be necessary if the institutes were to remain viable as centres for adult education and also function as public libraries. The policy change that was effected in 1873 allowed the expenditure of a portion of the Government grant on literature of a more general kind which include poetry, history, biography, travel, and philosophy, the notable omission being fiction, still highly suspect and considered in some quarters as unwholesome. This controversy raged for some years, but in 1880 the need for some recreational reading was recognized by the Minister when he allowed part of the grant to be used to purchase "approved" fiction.

It should be borne in mind that the foregoing refers to the expenditure of Government grants; traditionally, the institutes had been purchasing general literature and fiction for many years, but from sources of income other than that provided by the Government (memberships, donations, entertainments, and municipal aid). As a result of this broad collecting policy, there tended to be a marked uniformity in the collections, but if this makes them
intrinsically uninteresting, the methods of selecting and acquiring reading matter, the attitudes engendered by the nature of the collections, and the manner in which their contents were presented to the public are of great interest.

Book selection was an early concern of the O.L.A. At its first annual conference in 1901 the formation of a committee was recommended to prepare booklists that would serve as guides for public libraries. The list began as an annual publication, but in 1903 a quarterly publication was proposed, providing sufficient support came from public libraries. This suggestion was discussed at the annual conference in 1904, but it was thought that the financial implications of this innovation would be "insuperable."

Fortunately, the difficulties were eventually overcome, and by 1908, the new quarterly bulletin was a reality. Although it was considered to be a vast improvement over its predecessor, it was found to be "defective" in several respects. Its shortcomings included a lack of a systematic approach in compiling the lists, carelessness in editing and proofreading, duplications due to ignorance of the contents of previous lists, the absence of any classification system, the exclusion of important books and subject categories, and annotations that were either absent or inadequate. Although these deficiencies seemed formidable, they were all correctable, and it was believed that the new format would be of much greater value to libraries than the former annual list.

The quarterly bulletin, edited by E.A. Hardy, was soon considered an important selection tool. One of its principal features was an emphasis on British publications, and especially those actually produced in Canada. A typical
issue contained several hundred titles grouped roughly according to the Dewey Decimal system of classification. Also included were bibliographies of special topics such as Canadian poetry, Canadian fiction, and agriculture. In issues after 1910, supplementary matter of general interest to the library world was added. Only two issues actually appeared in 1908, followed by one in 1909, three in 1910, and finally four from 1911 onwards. As evidence of its growing usefulness, copies were requested from the U.S.A., Great Britain, and continental Europe. In addition to public libraries, copies were also distributed to high schools, continuation schools (a form of high school), and collegiate institutes.

The early lists included some juvenile literature, but it was not long before a publication dedicated to books suitable for children's sections and departments was recommended. At the annual conference in 1905 a committee for this purpose was proposed, accompanied by a request that the Education Department publish the work. At the sixth annual conference, in the following year, it was announced that a list of one thousand titles suitable for young readers had been prepared and would be issued very shortly by the Education Department. This prompted a lively debate on the importance of the "proper historical and patriotic tone" in children's reading matter, coupled with the "advisability" of including British periodical literature in public libraries, presumably, to reinforce the British connection.

In preparing the lists, committee members examined bibliographies of books published in Great Britain and the U.S.A., then made a selection based on an actual examination of each book. Publishers and prices were included in the
list so that library boards could submit selections from them to their local booksellers who would be invited to tender for the business. The culmination of these efforts to provide public libraries with guidance in collection-building was the appearance of the Ontario Library Review and Book Selection Guide in July, 1916, which combined the functions of a selection guide and professional periodical. The distribution was extremely broad and included every member of the Legislature, all public librarians and trustees, librarians in certain educational institutions, and a number of individuals known to be interested in the "library cause." The journal is, of course, familiar to most librarians today.

At the local level, the chances of making judicious selections were better if a trained librarian was involved in the process, but in a small library where penury precluded professional assistance, the entire process was in the hands of a committee of the library board. Continuity in the membership was believed to be important to the success of this committee, if a consistent acquisitions policy was to be pursued. A sound knowledge of the library's collections and growth needs were also prerequisites for committee members, and the suggested use of circulation records as an aid to collection development strikes us now as a proposal that was ahead of its time. Stress was laid on the need for frequent additions to the library, as these stimulated public interest, but the selections were always to be made by the committee. Selecting from collections sent on approval was not considered a good practice, as they often included works that unscrupulous suppliers wished to foist upon unwary library boards because they were selling poorly.
An examination of selection and purchasing methods shows a wide variety of practices. Although there were many voices against it, selecting from books sent on approval was fairly common. There was at least one board member (unnamed) who took advantage of his position to sell to his library (presumably at a profit) remainders and secondhand books he had picked up quite cheaply. It is also alleged that books were sometimes chosen by weight, size, and the nature of the illustrations.\textsuperscript{16} The Sarnia Public Library, after some bad experiences with an approval system, transferred its business to a local bookseller who gave discounts on the publishers' prices. It also purchased from the secondhand catalogues put out by Mudie's circulating library in England. The ideal approach included the perusal of book reviews, principally those produced by the American Library Association, the O.L.A., and major journals like the \textit{New York Times}; regular inspections of the library's shelves; keeping records of requests; ordering on a monthly basis; purchasing from "bargain" lists, and only rebinding valuable works.\textsuperscript{17}

Two basic methods were used by the Stratford Public Library. Works of fiction and juvenile titles were chosen directly from the catalogues of Cedric Chivers, England, an important attraction being his durable library bindings. Everything else was selected from Canadian, British, and American publishers' lists which were first submitted for discount-pricing to "library-supply houses." These would have been wholesalers (jobbers), or else agency-publishers, the last group consisting of Canadian publishers who supported indigenous publishing by handling British and American imprints on a profit-sharing basis. Once the pricing had been accomplished, the book committee made its final selections with the assistance of book reviews.\textsuperscript{18}
The Brockville Public Library used a similar approach, although it sometimes made purchases from publishers' representatives who appeared at intervals with samples of their publications. Normally, selections were made by Board members from publishers' catalogues, the business usually going to William Briggs of the Methodist Book and Publishing House (eventually the Ryerson Press). This was an establishment that belied its name, for it engaged in a broad range of publishing, bookselling, and agency activities.19

Book selection and purchasing methods at St. Catharines Public Library illustrate practically the entire range of practices found in the province's public libraries. Also demonstrated is the looseness in terminology that described the different sources of supply; the library selected and purchased its reading matter from "dealers," "publishing firms," "agents," and through "direct imports," but with most of the business going to publishing houses in Toronto to whom lists were sent, supplemented by the occasional purchase of remainders.20 At the end of the discussion, one delegate expressed regret that so many libraries purchased through the "on approval" method. It was concluded that most were against it because neither jobbers nor publishers were in a position to understand the nature of particular library collections.21

D.M. Grant, from the Sarnia Public Library, wrote to the Inspector of Public Libraries explaining how small libraries could buy more effectively by following the example of his library. Remarking with some cynicism that in its early days his library had, through ignorance, been "nicely bled," Grant described how the Board had found a
dealer willing to supply books at cost plus three percent, which included freight and his profit. This meant that a fictional work retailing for one dollar and fifty cents was acquired for a total sum of less than ninety-five cents. The Sarnia Public Library Board was also able to procure from another source secondhand fiction, well-bound, for forty-five cents a volume, all of which represented substantial savings for the library.22

Practical hints on book selection were provided by W.J. Sykes, of the Ottawa Public Library, at the 1914 annual conference of the O.L.A. He divided the process into two parts: selecting the best current literature, then choosing "the best books of all time." He recommended the avoidance of buying on approval, from publishers' samples, and from publishers' agents. For new books, he recommended the examination of selection guides like those prepared by the O.L.A., together with the more commercial reviewing literature, the best of which included the Nation, the Chicago Dial, the New York Times, the Times Literary Supplement, the Westminster Gazette, the Atheneum, and the Spectator. Choosing the "best books of all time" was not quite as straightforward, but it still relied on the best guides to the literature. Sykes' selection included the four-volume Nelson's Standard Books, Sonnenschein's The Best Books, and the A.L.A. Catalog and supplements. He also used the last-named publication in conjunction with the Fiction Catalog, published by the H.W. Wilson Company, and E.A. Baker's A Guide to the Best Fiction in English to produce a list of about two thousand novels that he thought would suit his Ottawa readers.23 This was published in 1914 and was actually intended as a guide for public libraries across the country.24
At the conclusion of the paper, a delegate from Waterloo defended the practice of buying on approval, remarking that his Board took the view that "seeing is believing and that sight is belief," although the implied infallibility of his Board was met with some skepticism. A principal criticism of Sykes' paper, which was otherwise well-received, was his neglect of selection tools for Canadian books. In response, Sykes was evasive, remarking enigmatically that the subject of Canadian reviews was "dangerous ground," and then confessed his ignorance. Ending on a more positive note, he thought that the best course of action was for the Association to develop its own bibliographical tools for Canadian publications. 25

The first bibliography dedicated to Canadian fiction appeared in 1904. It was commenced by Lawrence Burpee, a civil servant who served as Librarian of the Ottawa Public Library from 1905 to 1912, and completed by Professor L.E. Horning of Victoria College, Toronto. 26 The work was produced at a time when the field of Canadian systematic bibliography had yet to mature. Reviewing the state of the art in 1905, Burpee speculated with remarkable foresight that the flowering of Canadian bibliography would depend largely upon factors that included the development of the library movement. He also believed that scholar-librarians of the calibre of Charles Gould of McGill University, H.H. Langton of the University of Toronto, and James Bain of the Toronto Public Library would also be important influences. 27

Certainly, in the early years of the Toronto Public Library, James Bain had been a prime mover in developing its Canadiana collection which would become the basis for important bibliographical work in future years. 28 The library community was quite aware of the importance of a
national literature, and recognized that the public library had a duty to foster it. The subject was discussed at a number of O.L.A. conferences, which did much to encourage the acquisition and circulation of Canadian publications. A natural adjunct was the development of bibliographies which, apart from their practical uses, celebrate a nation's literary heritage and publicize it beyond its geographical boundaries. For such reasons, bibliographic activity increased, resulting in the creation of a number of significant bibliographies and catalogues during the succeeding decades.

Book selection in the year 1916 was the subject of a survey by the Inspector of Public Libraries. Ignoring libraries situated in the largest centres (Toronto, Hamilton, London, and Ottawa), as these were atypical, he looked at the remainder to see how well they had done, and then rated them accordingly. Only two were considered "first class," the majority falling within the middle ranges where the distinctions are narrow ("good," "fair," and "fairly good"). Consequently, if these categories are taken together, they account for roughly seventy-six percent of the libraries surveyed. Slightly above six percent received a "poor" rating, but perhaps the most alarming discovery was that almost seventeen percent had bought no books at all during the survey year. Nevertheless, the results were considered to be improvements over 1915.

A companion piece, delivered by W.O. Carson, discussed book purchasing, providing as a bonus some interesting insights on the book trade of the early 1900s. He began by discounting the Canadian publisher as an important part of the book trade, defending this attitude on the grounds that the majority of imprints bearing the names of Canadian
publishers belonged to books that had been imported from the U.S. or Britain. Carson identified three principal sources of supply: wholesalers, retailers, and secondhand dealers. It is not clear where local booksellers belonged in this scheme of things, but Carson thought that the book trade had very few "real booksellers," although he acknowledged the presence of bookstores in cities and towns. Wholesalers might simply represent a single American or British publisher, sell the publications of a limited number of publishers (some of which might bear his imprint), or sell his own publications and carry a range of books from all the principal publishers.33

Pricing and discounting was a complicated business at best, mainly because there were no binding agreements, and British and American publishers did not stipulate the size of the discounts when their publications were sold to Canadian public libraries. Net-pricing was introduced to combat the serious problem of underselling,34 and although it naturally reduced the flexibility enjoyed by Canadian suppliers, it did not preclude discounts to public libraries. As Carson pointed out, before the net book came along, it had been possible for Canadian libraries to obtain discounts as high as sixty percent, but even after the new system became prevalent, libraries could still look forward to generous treatment.

On "general literature" (trade books), a class that contained many titles with expired copyrights, the average discount public libraries could expect was thirty percent, which was also the minimum discount to be expected on new fiction. Cheap reprints, because of the narrow profit margin, carried extremely short discounts. On children's literature, discounts ranged all the way from twenty percent.
to as much as forty percent, the best juvenile fiction usually receiving the same amount as adult fiction. If scientific and educational books were subject to any discounts at all, and sometimes they were not, these were always extremely short. Carson considered the discounts given by general wholesalers to be as good as any available from other sources of supply.\

Although there was obviously plenty of guidance available in the matter of book selection, the Inspector, in his 1916 report, delivered a mild rebuke to the "average public library" for being unmethodical in this basic aspect of its work. Noting that there were libraries that did not have qualified librarians or the necessary bibliographic tools, he hoped that his branch of the Education Department would soon be in a position to offer advice on purchasing in areas other than current publications, adequately covered in the revamped *Ontario Library Review and Book Selection Guide*. To reinforce his point, the Inspector reminded librarians and trustees that the grants had never been reduced on grounds of inferior book selection, although he was certain that he would have no trouble getting such a regulation passed.\

Carson expressed grave concern at the lack of suitable sources for supplying books to small libraries. Making careful selections from approved bibliographic aids was one thing; trying to find a supplier was quite another. The Inspector was able to cite numerous examples to show that wholesalers and publishers, who were principally located in Toronto, did not carry stocks that were sufficiently varied or full. Part of the problem for the small library was, unfortunately, the irregularity of its business and the concomitantly small expenditures which tended to encourage
less than efficient and economical service. In attempting to pinpoint the deficiencies in stocks held by Toronto's book trade, Carson noticed a serious shortage in the natural sciences, useful arts, religion, sociology, history, and travel literature. What is not surprising is his discovery that, in addition to plenty of books on the war (obviously still a best-selling topic), he found huge quantities of new and reprinted fiction available.37

In Carson's opinion, the book trade did not seem to understand the problems of the public library, and did not provide adequate service to small libraries. The solution proffered was the creation of a bookroom, operated by the Education Department, to provide for small libraries the services he considered to be beyond the capacity of the book trade. It would be run on a "break-even" basis and contain a "representative" stock of "approved" books, available under terms that would be highly conducive. Furthermore, it should provide the opportunity to promote certain classes of books (Canadian and British writers, for example) from time to time.

The initial investment would be about $40,000 for an operation that would serve 5,000 school libraries, in addition to the province's public libraries. Twelve and one-half percent would be added to the initial cost of each title to cover overheads. Eventually, the only expense to the Education Department would be rent, light, and heat. Carson was convinced that the book trade would welcome the establishment of such a facility, believing that publishers and wholesalers would be happy to furnish it with large quantities of books in preference to selling single copies to individual libraries. He further believed that the trade must eventually benefit from the anticipated increase in

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sales, but did not explain how this might happen.\textsuperscript{38}

Carson seems to have forgotten his library history, for his proposed bookroom bears a remarkable resemblance to the Educational Depository, instituted by Egerton Ryerson in the 1850s to supply his public library system. Unfortunately, apart from intrinsic problems that contributed to the total system's demise, the principle of the Depository was strongly opposed by members of the book trade who saw it as a threat to their livelihoods, their resistance contributing to the Depository's eventual closure.\textsuperscript{39} There must have been sufficient individuals in the library field who remembered the Educational Depository and recognized the dangers inherent in the scheme Carson proposed, for it was never realized.

Almost from its inception, the public library had been viewed by some as an unnecessary tax burden.\textsuperscript{40} It was an attitude that tended to persist and sprang, to a large extent, from an objection to the provision of fiction. Although public libraries were very much a part of Ontario life in the 1900s, there were many who viewed them as nothing more than expensive fads. Similar objections had been raised against Ontario's nascent school system in the mid-nineteenth century, and now it was the turn of the public library movement to prove that libraries were not intended to "supply sentimental school girls and sentimental married women with vapid novels."\textsuperscript{41} Unfortunately, the presence of fiction in public libraries continued to be controversial, and to read it was considered by some to be nothing more than a form of amusement. Consequently, the view was taken that the general public was being taxed to provide simple entertainment. Should this principle be generally adopted, it was clear to the objectors that
municipal councils would then have an obligation to provide free tickets to concerts and the theatre.\textsuperscript{42}

The literature on the fiction controversy is vast.\textsuperscript{43} Canadian librarians were quite aware of this serious question, and agonized over it in much the same way as their colleagues did in Britain and the United States. In Ontario, concern over the harmful effects of fiction, especially if read to excess, reached back as far as the era of the mechanics' institutes.\textsuperscript{44} People from many walks of life had opinions about this form of literature, ranging from the strictly conservative, which advocated a complete ban, to the liberal, which allowed all types of fiction except that termed "sensational," epitomized by dime novels, "penny dreadfuls," and similar cheap, popular literature.

Librarians had long accepted the public's predisposition towards fiction, but distinguishing the "good" from the "bad" was no easy matter. It was especially difficult when account was taken of the broad range of literature that separated authors of stature, like Scott and Dickens, from writers of the sensational school. By the late nineteenth century, the enormous demand for popular literature had become a cause of consternation to the guardians of morals and taste. It was said to be an "age of literary madness," when it was much more acceptable among "so-called literary persons" to be "without a coat or shoes than to be without the latest ephemeral novel."\textsuperscript{45} Numerous circulating libraries did a profitable business in bestsellers which could be borrowed for only two cents a day.\textsuperscript{46} For those who preferred to purchase their light reading, popular novels could be acquired for between ten and thirty cents each,\textsuperscript{47} which naturally put public libraries at a decided disadvantage.
Published catalogues of collections reveal the presence of popular and sensation novels which may have been a response to the competition from circulating libraries, but was more likely due to the difficulty of categorizing fiction satisfactorily. The 1904 catalogue of the Barrie Public Library included works by Mrs. M.E. Braddon, Annie S. Swan, Mary J. Holmes, and Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth. Mrs. Braddon, Mary Jane Holmes, May Agnes Fleming, and Mrs. Augusta Evans, were listed in the catalogue (circa. 1884-85) of the Brantford Free Library. Mary J. Holmes and Annie S. Swan were to be found in the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library catalogue for 1903-04. Surprisingly, the fiction list (1914) prepared by W.J. Sykes also included Mrs. Braddon. Not surprising is the absence of the afore-named writers in the 1910 bulletin published by the Fort William Public Library.\(^{48}\) This library was under the vigilant eye of Mary J.L. Black who had very definite views about romantic novels. She did not think that "wholesome" love stories would do harm to girls, but their numbers should nevertheless be limited; to be excluded completely from the library was the modern love story which had a "sensuous atmosphere."\(^{49}\)

The Toronto Public Library stocked novels by Annie S. Swan and multiple copies of some forty works by Mrs. Braddon, according to the 1889 catalogue.\(^{50}\) The quantities for the latter author are surprisingly large, but although she was unquestionably a sensation novelist, besides being extremely popular, she was perceived to be a talented writer.\(^{51}\) Mrs. Southworth, Mary J. Holmes, Mrs. Braddon, and Mrs. August J. Evans were among a number of controversial writers who were the subject of a public library survey undertaken by the American Library Association in 1882.
Also on the list of suspect writers was the notorious G.W.M. Reynolds.\textsuperscript{52}

For some, cheap fiction meant bad fiction. The\emph{ Canadian Magazine} recommended a particular novel to "every Canadian public library looking for a fresh supply of cheap fiction with which to continue to weaken the minds of their [sic] customers," adding cynically, that cheap fiction kept the printer busy and was an easy way for public libraries to expend Government grants.\textsuperscript{53} The Minister of Education was concerned about the increase in the circulation of popular fiction, which he attributed to "sensational methods of advertising." One result was a decline in the popularity of books of "solid merit." He admitted that fiction was an integral part, though not all, of literature, but was convinced that reading even the best of it to the exclusion of everything else would produce an asymmetrical mind. Furthermore, to follow the dictates of the literary journals by reading only fashionable novels was a complete waste of time and money.\textsuperscript{54}

Walter Nursey took a similar stand some years later. If fiction ever became the major portion of library collections, he believed that the result would be "intellectual dissipation." Good, clean fiction, leavened with humour, was advocated.\textsuperscript{55} The public library in Kingston would admit nothing but fiction to its shelves, which evoked the following response from the Inspector: "Let us pray for Kingston." The St. Catharines Public Library Board advanced the argument that, because the public supported the library through taxation, it should be allowed to read all the fiction it desired. This view was unacceptable to the Inspector, who pointed out that a single library board hardly represented the wishes of the province's entire
reading public to whom the fruits of taxation belonged collectively.56

Defenders of fiction were to be found mainly among librarians and trustees. E.A. Hardy considered the "recreative function" of public libraries sufficient reason to admit fiction to the public library. Fiction was the "natural expression of life in its multitude of phases," and as a popular vehicle of expression, could be compared to the drama in the age of Elizabeth I. Fiction popularized the library and created a "favourable spirit" in the community, necessary to ensure the survival of the institution and provide it with the opportunity to emphasize its primary function as an educational establishment.57

George Locke, successor to James Bain as Chief Librarian of the Toronto Public Library, stated that fiction was preferred by the majority of his readers, but was of the opinion that the general public misinterpreted and misapplied the term "fiction." He emphasized that it did not mean "light and trashy stuff," but recent novels by reputable authors: Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, Eliot, and all the English classics. Locke reminded the anti-fiction lobby that to banish this class of literature from the public library would also mean the removal of Dickens, Scott, and every other writer of substance. As for a suitable substitute for fiction, detractors were usually unable to suggest one.58

If the public was reading too much inferior fiction, Norman Gurd placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of library boards for allowing its acquisition in the first place. It was a matter of careful selection and supervision, he thought, for fiction of the right calibre
actually had an educational value. History, for example, could be made much more palatable to the average reader through the historical novel. But looking at it realistically, it eventually came down to a choice between reading fiction or reading nothing. Those with a predilection for fiction would continue to read it, regardless of any well-meaning warnings.

Gurd resorted to the argument advanced by the St. Catharines Public Library, that public ownership made the library board the servant of the people whose wishes were to be respected. If boards ensured that novels of anti-British sentiment and those of doubtful moral tone were excluded from their libraries, and admitted only the works of acceptable writers, they would be fulfilling satisfactorily an important part of their mandate. Such purging and screening could be expected to produce fiction collections that were morally harmless and intellectually beneficial. 59

Hardy took the practical view that it would be extremely difficult for the public library to develop if it did not have the support of the community. It would only "find favour with the people" if it catered to their need for books that were enjoyable as well as intellectually profitable. He also thought that there were enough selection tools available to avoid purchasing inferior fiction, and it would not be necessary to reduce the circulation of fiction if it was of the right sort. He suggested laying more stress on increasing circulation in other subject areas, 60 but did not say how this might be accomplished.

T.W.H. Leavitt referred to the problem unequivocally as the "fiction evil," and proposed a solution. The demand, in
his view, sprang from the "intellectual incapacity" of the average reader. He was astute enough to appreciate that any attempt to prevent the purchase of fiction would be pointless, as readers would go elsewhere for it. His solution was to increase the reader's intellectual capacity through a programme of re-education, Departmental regulation (an unlikely proposition), and forming the tastes of children. 61

Walter Nursey commented on a feeling among librarians that fiction should be graded in some fashion, with the top-rank authors separated and classified as non-fiction. He was unable to accept this suggestion, declaring that there could be only two categories, fiction and non-fiction; the proposed system would introduce the thin end of the wedge, followed by attempts to place writers of ephemeral novels among authors of acclaim. No one, in his opinion, would have the ability to prepare a list that would be generally acceptable. His answer to the fiction problem was to eliminate "overripe problem stories," and encourage the reading of travel books, biographies, historical and scientific works, removing the "dry-as-dust" label from these subjects in the process. 62

Nursey eventually modified his views on the grading of authors, for in his 1912 report he announced his intention to recommend the division of fiction into two classes: "standard" and "ordinary." Those in the first class would be treated as works of non-fiction for the purpose of apportioning grants. The suggestion received approval for, later in the same report, Nursey stated that works of fiction by "certain dead authors" would now be regarded as non-fiction. He thought that this innovation should assist small libraries and generally encourage the circulation of a
better class of literature. Perhaps it was this sort of innovation that Leavitt had had in mind when he proposed increasing the intellectual capacity of readers through Departmental regulation. A more drastic proposal entailed the creation of a Canadian Reviewing Bureau, designed to measure all new works of fiction against a set of predetermined standards. Any work that failed to meet the criteria would be banned. It was further suggested that the work could be undertaken by the Dominion Archivist’s department, where novels and any other publication thought to be problematic would be reviewed. Fortunately, such a preposterous idea was not pursued.

A number of librarians operated on what might be termed the "ground-bait" theory, the premise being that readers could be weaned from fiction to more substantial reading matter, usually by subterfuge. Speaking of reading for girls, for example, Adeline Cartwright, from the Toronto Public Library, said that it "took the greatest zeal, the truest interest, the most fervent missionary spirit," to resist girls' demands for sensational and sentimental novels set in the home or a boarding school, as this type of reading inevitably led to the kind of novels written by Mary J. Holmes and Bertha M. Clay. The solution was to offer them works like Little Women and Anne of Green Gables in the belief that they would eventually lead to Jane Austen, Scott, and Dickens.

Sometimes the case was stated a little more directly, and aimed at people who wanted many of the material comforts life had to offer, but never read books, and did not use the library. As these were people who could not understand the enthusiasm for books in others, the library had a special mission to "convert" them. The library also had a mission
to elevate the taste of those who confined their reading to "slushy" sentimental fiction. The solution, again, lay in the quality of the library board; if it was engaged in little more than "passing accounts and discussing the condition of the chimney flues," it was leaving a great deal of important matters unattended. 66

At one point in the 1880s, the Superintendent of the mechanics' institutes had attempted to put the fiction question into perspective. He had begun by admitting that there were people who were convinced that the large quantities of fiction that circulated in institute and free libraries reduced the value of these institutions. Answering the charge that fiction reading emasculated both "mind and character," he though that this applied only to the "ephemeral trash" that inundated the country in the form of dime novels. At pains to point out that he was not about to offer an apology for those who read fiction, nor defend their doubtful tastes, the Superintendent had then stated that not every book classified as fiction was a novel. 67 Such perceptions about fiction were to produce tenuous, even bizarre, distinctions when the Education Department eventually attempted to introduce a uniform classification system for public libraries.

As the public library system developed, an efficient and uniform classification system became imperative. The Education Department had published a catalogue in 1895 which included a classification scheme that followed the subject headings used in the libraries of the mechanics' institutes. A synopsis was reissued in 1902, showing only European and American novels classified as fiction, with short stories, detective novels, and fairy tales under the rubric of "miscellaneous books." 68
Surprisingly, the matter of library classification was discussed in the Legislature as early as 1897. A Colonel Matheson criticized the system of library classification adopted for the catalogues that emanated from the Education Department, noting that historical romances were classified under history, not fiction, making it difficult to obtain accurate figures for the consumption of novels. The Superintendent of Public Libraries was also accused of making a profit from sample books sent to him by publishers, so it was left to the Minister of Education to defend his employee as best he could. Minister Ross' response, directed at the Leader of the Opposition, James Whitney, was such that it woke up the House which had "grown somewhat somnolent under the droning of supply bill criticism." 69

Minister Ross took up the matter of the classification system again, several days later. He pointed out that while the works of authors like Conan Doyle had always been classified as fiction, it had long been the custom to classify the creations of authors like Jules Verne and R.M. Ballantyne under voyages and adventure. There had been no change in the system for many years. As for the alleged dishonesty of the Superintendent, Ross read an official declaration refuting the statement that Dr. May had a monetary interest in the Book Supply Company, even though his son happened to be the manager. 70

The practice of keeping as much fiction out of that particular category frustrated to some extent the introduction of a common classification scheme throughout the province's public libraries. It was encouraged by the dubious status of fiction and the effect of its presence upon the apportionment of Government grants, but was
strongly condemned by a committee of the O.L.A. as misleading. T.W.H. Leavitt considered the practice to be not only misleading, but also dishonest, and castigated the book trade for invoicing fiction in the guise of history, general literature, and miscellaneous works. To some extent his criticism that short stories and fairy tales were usually listed with miscellaneous books was hardly fair, for that was exactly how those fiction forms appeared in the classification scheme reissued in 1902. It was noted earlier that the Inspector had recommended an increase in the proportion of the grant that could be spent on fiction, raising it from twenty to forty-five percent. This was, no doubt, an inducement to conform to the principle of one, inclusive category for fiction which would be more honest and possibly reduce the amount of fiction in public libraries, especially in the smaller institutions.

Although public libraries responded positively to the Education Department's campaign for a stricter classification of fiction, this did not remove the need for a suitable classification scheme that could be applied province-wide. The O.L.A. grappled with the question over several annual conferences. A motion was brought to the 1904 annual meeting recommending the adoption of the Dewey Decimal Classification, but it was not until 1908 that the proposal received general approbation. The implementation of a satisfactory classification scheme was not going to settle the fiction question, so the debate was destined to continue for quite some time. One of the more rational voices to be heard belonged to a British librarian, who had addressed the Library Association in 1889 on this sensitive issue. In his opinion, there was no need to become hysterical over the public's preference for fiction, but if novels every constituted as much as four-fifths of a
library's circulation, then that library was "missing its real work and reflecting discredit on the working of the Public Libraries Acts." 75

A recent analysis of the origins and role of the British public library deals rather harshly with the emphasis placed upon the provision of fiction. Paul Sykes argues that satisfying the constant demand for fiction was the largest single factor responsible for "the unspectacular history of the public library" and its "unimpressive place in modern society." 76 However true this may be now, Ontario's public librarians of the early twentieth century were generally quite happy to supply recreational reading. When doubts descended, comfort could always be taken from the presence of that other important function: the provision of educational reading matter, which received reinforcement as public libraries continued to operate under the aegis of the Education Department. 77

The recreational role of the public library became more important as the twentieth century progressed, for the competition from cheap, popular books and periodicals increased, much of this literature flowing in vast quantities from the United States. 78 In addition, such innovations as the pianola, the phonograph, and the motion picture created further competition which was particularly acute because the promoters employed "a high-pressure salesmanship campaign of the most modern type," and spent large sums of money to popularize these "mechanical contrivances." It was not that there was real opposition to such new forms of popular entertainment, which were seen to have "distinct cultural value"; it was only if they appeared likely to usurp the position of the book in Canadian society, would they become a matter for concern. 79
The recreational and educational functions of the public library remained its essential features until quite recent times, for now it is generally promoted as the cultural centre of the community. This new focus was reflected in a change of jurisdiction in the 1970s, when public library service in Ontario became the responsibility of the Libraries and Community Information Branch of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, which was eventually renamed the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, and is now called the Ministry of Culture and Communications. 80
NOTES AND REFERENCES


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4 Circular accompanying the annual list for 1902, Archives of Ontario, Records of the Education Department, RG 2, P-2, Box no. 71.

5 The Ontario Library Association: an Historical Sketch, p. 129.


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13 List of Books Published Between April 1, 1902 and March 30, 1903 Recommended for Public Libraries by the Committee of the Ontario Library Association (Toronto, Cameron, 1903), Archives of Ontario, Records of the Education Department, RG 2, P-2, Box no. 71.


21 Ibid., p. 69, p. 61.


24 Copy in the possession of the author.


28 Thomas E. Champion, "A Great Librarian; the Late James Bain," Canadian Magazine, XXXI(July, 1908), p. 225. A good example of an important bibliographical tool based on Toronto's collections is: A Bibliography of Canadiana; Being


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From copies of catalogues in the possession of the author.


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55Ibid., p. 394.


60Hardy, The Public Library, p. 63.


69Toronto Globe, March 19, 1897.

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The debate over the origins and development of the public library, which reached a high point in the 1970s, is admirably summarized and criticized in a paper by Robert V. Williams entitled: "The Public Library as the Dependent Variable: Historically Oriented Theories and Hypotheses of Public Library Development," Journal of Library History, XVI(Spring, 1981), pp. 229-341.


I am grateful to Eric Bow, Special Projects Consultant, Libraries and Community Information Branch, Ministry of Culture and Communications, for this information.
Origins of the Public Library: The modern free public library in Ontario is the offspring of an institution originally intended for educational purposes. This was the mechanics' institute. The association public library was a later phenomenon that came to share the responsibility for library service with the free library. It had its origins in the early subscription or "social" libraries that became more commonly known as library associations. These were sometimes combined with mechanics' institutes, a convenient device for attracting Government grants.

The Provincial Government consistently maintained the position that publicly supported libraries were integral parts of the educational system. For this reason it provided financial support and encouragement, took a keen interest in their progress, and was never slow to exercise control whenever the opportunity arose. Directors of mechanics' institutes, and later, public librarians and library promoters, generally agreed with the Government's perception, but tensions arose when it had to be reconciled with the recreational demands of the reading public. The Government was eventually forced to agree that the taxpayer was entitled to some consideration in the formation of library collections, providing, of course, the material was not morally harmful. Gradually, the recreational function became more widely accepted, if only to avoid alienating those segments of the reading public who were not interested in being further educated.
By the 1880s Ontario possessed a substantial reading public. Its origins are to be found in the eighteenth century when the province was in its formative stages. The more literate settlers among the thousands who came from the United States after the War of Independence no doubt brought a few of their favourite books with them. The province's administrators acquired small collections of books and periodicals, partly to assist in the work of governing and to provide at least some educational and recreational reading. Modest libraries were also to be found among the clergy. At first, books were usually imported from England. Newspapers and periodicals, many of which were also imported, kept the colonists informed on current affairs. Massive emigration from the British Isles took place in the nineteenth century, but there is no evidence to show that these immigrants brought much in the way of reading matter with them. The ability to carry only the bare necessities of life on cramped transport ships suggests that they did not.

Although settling the land and the means of survival were major preoccupations of the inhabitants, the need for educational facilities was not neglected. In some quarters it was considered to be a patriotic duty to educate the young. Early education was of an informal and voluntary nature. It was undertaken in the home, and by a number of private and public enterprises that attempted to reach all classes of the population. Clergymen, for example, were known to teach the elements of reading and writing to their congregations and even provided small circulating libraries for them.
From the outset, the inculcation of Christian moral values was considered an essential component of the educational process. This principle became enshrined in the school system that developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. Those who governed the province also had an interest in it as a regulating factor in public order. Furthermore, moral education was inherent in the philosophy of Ontario’s mechanics’ institute movement and was inherited by the public library. An implicit corollary was the reinforcement of the values of the dominant culture (British, Protestant, monarchist).

Later, this principle was to be seen at work in the public library as it undertook, through guided reading, the "Canadianization" of immigrants. The indoctrination was directed principally at those of "foreign" extraction, which meant those whose origins were not Anglo-Saxon or French. There was much anxiety over the possibility that a massive infusion of "foreigners" would upset the status quo in Canadian society. This fear is reflected in the 1905 statute that required all library board members to be British subjects. The overall aim was to create an obedient and law-abiding population, weaned away from crime and vice.

Missionary societies and the churches had similar interests, and valued literacy as an important tool in their proselytizing endeavours. On a more pragmatic level, a literate population could be expected to make a greater contribution to the economic and social welfare of a new society. By the second half of the nineteenth century, when oligarchical governance had given way to more liberal forms, literacy was further viewed as a means of greater participation in the democratic process.
Even though democratic institutions became part of the fabric of Canadian society, many Canadians were uncomfortable with the term "democracy." They usually associated it with the American form which, in their opinion, needed the moderating influences of religion, sound Christian morals, and a benevolent monarchy. The term "democracy" gained currency during the First World War, a conflict perceived as a struggle for a democratic way of life. The form of government that eventually evolved in Ontario was a parliamentary democracy.

Growth of the Reading Public: Early travellers relied upon the lakes and rivers, as roads were either non-existent or treacherous and unreliable. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, pedlars from the American colonies were using the waterways to bring a variety of goods into the province. These included broadsides and chapbooks aimed at children and probably adults, too. There is no clear picture of adult reading tastes at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but chapbooks were certainly popular with the young. Fairy stories, folk tales, nursery rhymes, fables, and games, especially standard favourites like Dick Whittington, Robin Hood, and Jack and the Beanstalk, constituted these collections.

The appearance of subscription libraries after 1800 suggests that the demand for books and periodicals was increasing. A significant Sunday school movement developed as the various religious denominations established themselves. Many of these schools had libraries that were patronized by adults as well as children. Commercial circulating libraries were also soon in evidence, and a number were connected with bookselling establishments which formed part of a nascent book trade. At this time, books
could be acquired from Boston, Philadelphia, and New York in very cheap, often pirated editions. In fact, Ontario's reading public came to rely upon pirated English copyright works as its staple reading matter.

William Lyon Mackenzie epitomized the bookseller of the 1830s. His premises were in Toronto where purchases could be made from a large, eclectic book stock that included works by Smollett, Fielding, Hannah More, Scott, Disraeli, Maria Edgeworth, and Washington Irving. For the scholar, he also carried volumes of history, biography, philosophy, theology, classics, architecture, and astronomy.

Communications: As the population steadily increased and the province opened up, communications began to improve. Although by the 1850s Ontario was beyond its initial pioneer stage, the larger portion was still rural with much of it undeveloped. The inhabitants were mainly English-speaking, and about fourteen percent lived in urban communities. The largest and most important was Toronto (30,000), followed by Hamilton (14,000). Kingston (11,000) came next, then Ottawa and London with about 14,000 inhabitants each. Settlement at this time was mainly in the southern part of the province, extending over 500 miles from Windsor in the extreme south-west to the Ottawa River in the north-east. Northward settlement from Lake Ontario was uneven and amounted to not more than 50 miles at the furthest point of penetration.

Long before mid-century, vessels of every sort were a common sight on Ontario's waterways and were considered important means of transportation. There were about 6,000 miles of post-roads by the 1840s, but many areas remained inaccessible to wheeled transportation. The quality of
these roads varied enormously, usability being to a large extent determined by the season and weather conditions. Railway development began in the 1850s and proved a boon to the manufacturing centres that were developing in numerous communities across the province. Most industries were quite modest in size and the presence, or absence, of a railway link could make the difference between economic success and failure. Ontario’s railways eventually linked up with transportation systems in the United States, which included access to such important waterways as the Erie Canal. The most direct route, however, was still across Lake Ontario.

The Book Trade and the Dissemination of Literature: By the second half of the nineteenth century, the province’s book trade which centred on Toronto was in a healthy condition. Catalogues for the period show a wide range of English-language books frequently selling at very low prices. Children were provided with primers, spelling books, alphabet cards, and toy books. Typical of the writers they enjoyed over the years were Charlotte Tucker (A.L.O.E.), W.H.G. Kingston, Mayne Reid, and Captain Marryat. Classics like Alice in Wonderland, The Water Babies, and Tom Brown’s Schooldays also became familiar to the children of Ontario.

Dime novels were read in the province, much to the consternation of those who considered themselves guardians of morals and taste. They were considered to be dangerous to adults and children alike. A growing demand for popular literature was symptomatic of a problem that would persist. Derogatively termed “yellow-covered literature,” most types of “light” reading were deplored. While mechanics’ institute libraries were careful to avoid such material, combatting it through the improvement of reading tastes and
habits would become an important mission for the public librarian.

The book trade made adequate provision for adults who required a more substantial type of reading matter. All the standard English authors were available besides an abundance of textbooks, cookery books, dictionaries, and numerous other reference works. The more daring booksellers offered G.W.M. Reynolds' *The Mysteries of London*, but most certainly to a very limited readership. Numerous newspapers and magazines were also widely read. There were a number of indigenous productions, but the magazines generally were short-lived. Newspapers, on the other hand, were frequently considered to be the general public's staple diet.

Among the numerous importations, *Peabody's Parlour Journal* epitomized American popular magazines, while *Blackwood's Magazine*, the *Edinburgh Review*, and the *Quarterly Review* were representative of British journals that were widely read. Retail outlets for books and periodicals included bookstores, newspaper offices, general stores, and businesses devoted to a variety of products having only a tenuous connection with reading matter: wallpaper and stationery for example.

Note has already been made of pirated American editions of English copyright works that were read avidly in the province. They were particularly attractive because importing from Britain was an expensive business. An attempt was made through the Imperial Copyright Act of 1842 to prevent the importation of these illegal reprints, but despite efforts to ban them, they continued to enter the province in significant numbers. An amendment to the principal act in 1847 lifted the ban and reprints could
again be officially imported on payment of a duty. Known as the Foreign Reprints Act, it was 1850 before Ontario actually adopted it.

Missionary societies were very active in the province and distributed countless thousands of Bibles, Testaments, and tracts. The Religious Tract Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge were especially prominent in the work of proselytization. Their degree of success in spreading the Gospel is difficult to assess, but the presence of missionary publications in such vast quantities must have made some contribution to the spread of the reading habit.

Mechanics' Institutes - Early Period: The first mechanics' institute was organized in Toronto as early as 1830, followed by Kingston. The location of Kingston involved it directly in the War of 1812, but it came through the conflict intact. The community only just survived a cholera epidemic in 1832. The town already had a few small lending libraries when it established a mechanics' institute in 1834. The need for it may be gleaned from a petition presented to the Lieutenant-Governor in 1835 requesting a grant. The document notes the existence of a library of several hundred volumes, a reading room, and small natural history collection. The desire to improve the "mental condition of the working classes" and a general concern for the moral welfare of the people were its principal aims which set the tone for future mechanics' institutes and their successors, public libraries.

The growth of the institutes was slow at first, although a few received financial assistance from the Government. There were between twenty and twenty-five in
existence when fresh impetus was provided through legislation enacted in 1851. This provided for the incorporation of mechanics' institutes and library associations, which, as noted earlier, were sometimes combined. The institutes grew steadily in numbers after this date. Their proliferation was encouraged by a share in a huge grant that had been approved by the Legislature in the same year. It was intended for the development and upkeep of a variety of public institutions which included medical schools, literary societies and the like. Municipalities also were encouraged to give their financial support as further inducements to the formation of mechanics' institutes.

School-based Public Libraries: At about this time, the Reverend Egerton Ryerson, a Methodist minister appointed as Chief Superintendent of Education, was putting the finishing touches to his newly-created primary school system. It was the first step towards the realization of his principal ambition of free and universal education. School-based public libraries were also to be developed as important auxiliaries to the work undertaken in the schools. His religious convictions and moral upbringing made him sensitive to the dangers he believed were inherent in a class of literature vaguely termed "pernicious." This was a concern shared by many of his peers. Ryerson was, however, specific in his condemnation of dime novels, and was not happy with some of the reading matter provided in mechanics' institutes, though all of it was fairly innocuous even by the standards of the nineteenth century. On a broader plain, he wished to provide the population with the opportunity for self-improvement through access to a more Christian and moral class of literature. Within the schools, improved reading tastes were fostered by the use of
graded readers, books which progressed from nursery rhymes to extracts of numerous standard works and classics.

The school library collections were to be supplied from a central book depository, stocked with books chosen by Ryerson and his colleagues and supplied at extremely low prices. This was to embroil Ryerson in an ongoing "war" with the book trade which considered the Educational Depository to be monopolistic and detrimental to the livelihood of the bookselling fraternity. When the library system eventually failed, it was phased out.

The bulk of the catalogue for the Educational Depository consisted of biographical works, moral tales, stories of "domestic life", essay collections, Bible stories, fables, travel books, a number of miscellanies, works by Maria Edgeworth, Hannah More, Harriet Martineau, and the publications of the S.P.C.K. When the library system had been in place for several years, the Chief Superintendent began to experience pressure from taxpayers who desired a more recreational type of literature. He succumbed and permitted the novels of Scott, Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, Disraeli, Eliot, Trollope, and several other prominent writers to be added to the catalogue. Made in 1867, this was a concession that undoubtedly prolonged the life of the system. One curious inclusion is a series from Blackwood's Magazine which consists of tales with such "sensational" titles as "The Murderer's Last Night," "The First and Last Kiss," and "The Haunted and the Haunters." The titles alone should have created sufficient concern for Ryerson to exclude them.

School-based public libraries achieved only moderate success. Predictably, there was a great deal of initial
enthusiasm which gave the system a good start, followed by a period when all the administrative details were resolved. The system reached its peak in the 1860s, then began to decline and was finally abandoned in the 1870s. Part of the blame belongs to the Educational Depository which supplied the libraries with almost uniform titles from a highly selective catalogue. No account was taken of individuals' needs or the peculiar characteristics of so many different communities. Furthermore, when the notion of school libraries accessible to the general public was revived many years later, the experience there suggests that adults may have felt uncomfortable choosing and returning books in an elementary school setting.

From roughly 1875 to 1880 the libraries were virtually dormant if not actually defunct. Local appropriations for purchases from the Depository were very small in this period, so the libraries received little in the way of new infusions. By contrast, in 1854 when the system was new, municipalities had contributed almost $26,000. It also seems that the libraries had become almost entirely patronized by children. The grants were withdrawn in 1880 followed by the closing of the Educational Depository in 1881.

Of special note is the timing of this project. Although the first collection went out in 1853, the system was in the planning stage at the point when, it will be recalled, mechanics' institutes were being freshly encouraged. This put them into a competitive mode which lasted until 1858 when the institutes experienced their first serious setback. The institutes were investigated by the Government in that year and were found wanting. Their libraries had been developed at the expense of technical
instruction, so the grants were immediately suspended. This caused a great deal of suffering, and many failed or were forced to reduce drastically their operations. Consequently, until the grants were resumed in 1868 a large part of the burden for public library service fell upon Ryerson's public libraries. This was the period of their greatest success, and it cannot be a coincidence that their decline took place in the period when the mechanics' institutes were again in the ascendance.

Mechanics' Institutes - Post-Confederation: It may have been possible for mechanics' institute libraries and school-based public libraries to continue their co-existence, but the latter clearly lacked the means to survive. Besides, mechanics' institutes were generally more popular. For example, a number of them copied the practices of their English counterparts by introducing social entertainments that included musical and literary evenings. These were sometimes useful sources of additional income. As well, games rooms, conversations rooms, and even the provision of gymnastic equipment were considered legitimate additions to institute facilities. The Government's view was ambivalent. Broadening the scope of activities obviously had some value but was probably to the detriment of instruction. Nevertheless, it meant that mechanics' institutes had many advantages over libraries that were based in schools and offered little if anything beyond basic library service.

With the resumption of grants, a new era began. It was triggered in part by a new spirit of enterprise provoked by Confederation which in 1867 signalled the creation of the Dominion of Canada. The Government, however, had a more pragmatic reason for resuscitating languishing institutes:
it believed that there was renewed interest in evening classes. In fact, the grants were intended for that purpose alone at first. But the need for technical works to support instruction was recognized, so permission to expend part of the grant on this class of literature was incorporated as an amendment to the Agriculture and Arts Act.

The purchase of general literature was also permitted, but no specific classes of books are mentioned. No reason is given for this concession. Institutes had always bought general literature from funds generated by membership fees, entertainments, and donations. But the freeing of part of the grant for this purpose proved to be the "thin end of the wedge" for institute directors soon returned to the business of building up their libraries and reading rooms. Optimism for the future was evident in the large number of institutes that incorporated between 1870 and 1880.

A further boost was given in 1871 when the grants from the Legislature were doubled to $400. Instead of matching dollar for dollar, now only fifty cents for each dollar had to be raised at the local level. These concessions were clearly intended as further incentives to provide technical and vocational instruction. But two years later, permission was given to expend part of the grant on travel books, volumes of poetry, biographical works, and treatises in the fields of history and philosophy. This was justified on the grounds that a foremost function of mechanics' institutes should be the provision of "wholesome literature" for the entire population. It was in this period that attention was given to the presence of female readers; collections and facilities were tailored to meet their needs. Care was taken to ensure that reading rooms (sometimes designated specifically for ladies) were stocked with the more popular
ladies’ periodicals of the day.

The continuing need for technical and vocational education was undoubtedly a significant factor in the Government’s decision to continue its support of the mechanics’ institutes even though the number in operation fluctuated from year to year and some suffered declines in their memberships. Their eclectic collections, social and cultural functions, together with the fact that they had no formidable rivals (except circulating libraries), ensured them a place in the community. They were, therefore, the obvious choice to assume the mantle of library service in the years ahead.

Changes in Society: Southern Ontario was well beyond the pioneer stage by the 1870s. Northern Ontario, on the other hand, was still largely undeveloped territory. The primary school system had reached a reasonable level of maturity, although it had many years of modification and refinement ahead of it. Compulsory attendance, for example, was still a problem that needed attention. Opportunities for higher education had improved, but access was far from universal. Continuing education through the use of libraries was seen as one way to compensate for this particular deficiency.

Railway networks now covered much of the southern part of the province, making this form of transportation attractive and commonplace. Road travel still left much to be desired. Advertisements in the newspapers and periodicals of the 1870s reflect a growing consumer society which demanded the latest fashions and technological gadgets. Urban growth was noticeable with numerous prosperous communities supported by a variety of business
enterprises scattered across the province.

Canadian society generally experienced radical change in the decades between 1880 and 1920. Most people's lives were affected and altered in a variety of ways. The principal transforming agents were industrialism, urbanization, and innovations in science and technology. Grave concern was expressed in some quarters at a society that was becoming more materialistic and hedonistic, threatening traditional values and cherished beliefs. In this period of rapid change, some reacted strongly to industrialism and the social evils it engendered, clinging to the myth of an idyllic, rural society. An agrarian way of life had strong appeal, especially among those of the older generation. The more realistic, however, realized that the expansion of industry and commerce represented the future for Ontario, enabling it to maintain its prominence as the richest and most powerful province in the country.

Industrialization was usually associated with the cities and the towns, but its effects were felt in rural Ontario as the countryside was steadily but irrevocably depopulated. Except for the urban conurbations to be found in the south-western part of the province and the "ribbon" development that adjoins the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway, much of the Ontario landscape is still very rural in appearance. Numerous small cities, towns, and villages remain surrounded by large tracts of farmland and forest. Many communities, especially in the more northerly parts of the province, never grew very large, and a not insignificant number continue to exist in comparative isolation. There is much beauty in the Ontario landscape, but it is an environment that created serious problems in early attempts to extend provincial library services.

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Increasing urbanization created a fresh crop of problems. From the 1890s, municipal reform became a much publicized issue. The Municipal World called for a renewal of "civic patriotism" which involved the election of competent officials, improved municipal legislation, the suppression of crime and vice, with attention to cleanliness, health, and better sanitation. Municipal standards and public taste were to be elevated. There were no direct references to public libraries, but in any attempts made at upgrading municipal institutions, they could hardly have been avoided. Sustained financial support for public libraries from municipal coffers was a matter continually pressed by the Education Department. In the main, the presence of distinctive buildings that enhanced the province's communities depended upon the largesse of Andrew Carnegie and a handful of local benefactors.

Churches and a voluntary organizations like the National Council of Women of Canada (N.C.W.C.) reacted to the inequities and injustices that were concomitant with the growth of industrial capitalism. Over the years, the Council concerned itself with such issues as poverty, the distribution of wealth, the family, housing, smoking, drinking, care of the aged and the infirm, and immigration. It also attempted to censor literature, plays, and advertising considered to be morally harmful. The Council enjoyed a measure of success but did not achieve all of its goals and ambitions. Nevertheless, the N.C.W.C. is still in existence today.

Another manifestation of the need for drastic reforms in society was the social gospel movement, which, as Richard Allen points out, projected Christianity as a social
religion. It had commitments beyond the church and the chapel, and was to concern itself with the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of the people. Like other reform movements, it is very difficult to be completely certain of the measure of its impact. Allen summarizes its story as "one of consequence for some of the deepest issues of self and society, as well as a vital part of a crucial period of transition in Canadian history."

While reform was left mainly to voluntary effort, the Government showed its interest in society's ills by creating the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital that reported in 1889. The hearings began in 1887 and gathered evidence on every aspect of the human condition as it related to industry. Factory laws, master and servant legislation, child labour, female labour, hours, wages, housing, immigration, factory sanitation, and morality in the work-place were all taken into consideration. The findings were substantial, but the results were disappointing as the Government was slow to take action. The Commission did serve, however, to bring to the notice of the general public the abuses and exploitation that were rampant within the industrial complex.

Mission of the Public Library: Evangelism had been implanted early in the province's history by fundamentalist Methodists and Baptists. They sometimes joined forces with Presbyterians in their efforts towards social and moral reform. Prohibition was among their chief goals, although they were prepared to settle initially for temperance. Libraries were considered allies in this work as reformers believed them to be attractive alternatives to the tavern and the saloon. It is not surprising, therefore, that librarians began to see themselves as "missionaries."
This sense of mission sprang from a myth of public library service. It was important to librarians as a means of self-justification, especially when funding battles were being fought or the movement generally was being promoted. The essence of the myth presented the public library as an agent of fundamental change in society. It could combat crime and vice, improve moral standards, wean people away from materialism, and generally produce model citizens who were happier and wiser.

The public library had some claim to the notion that it could also improve literary taste, although the gains were largely among young readers who were obviously more malleable than adults. It was a matter of persuading the public to enter the library so that their reformation could begin. The process was generally couched in terms of "training." In order to attract patrons it was important to change the view of those who saw the public library as simply the purveyor of ephemeral fiction; this required the reinforcement of its educational role and its function as an information bureau.

In the 1900s, what may be described as the "social force" argument for the support of public libraries began to be voiced. Basically, it reiterated the notion of the public library as a force for good. It provided literature and guidance that enabled the average citizen to improve the quality of life. A new era was anticipated with the conclusion of the First World War and it was here that the public library would be expected to become a particularly strong social force. It was presented as a part of a greater social movement that included the churches and organizations like the Red Cross, the Rotary Club, and the
Daughters of the Empire. All were expected to have a part to play in post-war reconstruction. As early as 1915 it was presumed that enormous social problems would have to be faced after the armistice, and it would require an informed public to solve them. This was an ideal mission for the public library. Meanwhile, those members of the public who loved the material comforts of a modern society, but felt nothing for books, would have to be re-educated. This was truly a missionary endeavour.

In the end, it entailed a little more than the provision of library resources that would help create a more informed public facing unfamiliar problems in the post-war years. Suggesting that the public library could make a significant contribution to the "onward march of civilization" was just as unrealistic as the hope expressed some years earlier by the Inspector of Public Libraries. He sincerely believed that the public library would be the "mother" of the new Canadian Utopia, and that an ideal state would emerge from its "womb."

The goals and objectives of the library movement were enshrined in the term "mission," a concept that was reassessed and modified as circumstances dictated. The first mechanics' institutes adopted the aims of their British counterparts. The primary intention was not to teach trades but the scientific principles that were applicable to them. The first official declaration of the mission of the mechanics' institutes in Ontario appeared in the 1857 statute that provided for the incorporation of the Board of Arts and Manufactures as a governing body. The statute refers to the development of "mechanical talent" and improved access to facilities for the study of "models and apparatus."

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In 1868 another direction was indicated. Adult instruction especially on “practical subjects” was to be given to compensate those who left school at a very early age, and in the 1860s they were many. In the following decade it was recognized that as the system of primary school education improved the need to continue general education would diminish.

Meanwhile, institutes were expected to show the working-class population how the knowledge acquired in the primary school might be applied in a practical fashion to everyday life. Unfortunately, this directive was couched in extremely vague terms. It will be remembered that the 1870s was also the period when the public library function was officially recognized; the provision of “wholesome” literature, available to the entire population, was to share first place with technical instruction.

The advance of industrialization in the 1880s increased the demand for skilled labour. Mechanics’ institutes were again admonished to provide practical instruction that would produce the necessary skills. The need for continuing education to accommodate early school-leavers was not, however, to be overlooked. And as the decade drew to a close, an expanded, long-term mission was proposed. As before, adults whose schooling had been curtailed were to be provided with the opportunity to develop intellectually. Young people would be similarly assisted, emphasizing technical subjects relevant to their particular employments. But the principal aim was to lure them from the streets, taverns, and other “low amusements” through the dissemination of literature that was both instructive and entertaining.
It was only a short step from using terminology like "mission" to even more obvious ecclesiastical terms. In an article published in the Canadian Magazine in 1917 the author reminded librarians, authors, editors, and publishers that they were banded together in the same "great ministry" to the "minds and souls" of men, women, and children. Moreover, it was a "sacred" ministry, and passing on the records of civilization to posterity was a "solemn trust." Such strong rhetoric could hardly have failed to imbue librarians with a strong sense of mission. Neither is it surprising that public libraries were considered "temples" and librarians sometimes called "high priests." And bearing in mind that the library profession would become female-dominated, it was perhaps prophetic that women were considered to be the best qualified to undertake the public library "ministry."

The Inspector of Public Libraries stated in 1908 that the time had come for the public library to be considered the People's University (also described as a "home missionary society"). During the First World War, the concept of the public library as a "poor man's university" was put in democratic terms when equality of opportunity was emphasized. Lack of opportunity and economic constraints were among the factors that denied numerous individuals access to higher education. At the turn of the century, for example, it had been estimated that only five percent of the population acquired a high school education. The public library would eliminate the gap between actual and potential educational attainment.

Ontario's Cultural Characteristics: Defining Ontario from a cultural standpoint is an extremely hazardous
exercise. Introducing a discussion of Ontario's political culture between 1914 and 1934, Peter Oliver describes the problems experienced by writers and historians in their attempts to come to grips with the "essence" of Ontario and give it cultural definition. Oliver was writing in 1975, and expected matters to improve in the future. The corpus of publication on Ontario has grown since that time, but little has changed. Despite the province's centrality in Canadian history, in industry and commerce, in the political process, together with its power and prosperity, there seems to be no single view of Ontario as a cultural entity. There is nothing, for example, so clearly defined as Quebec's French culture. And in the period covered by this discussion the impact of immigrant cultures that were not Anglo-Saxon or French in origin was negligible.

Oliver rehearses the arguments that have been advanced for this state of affairs, none of them conclusive. Even though the province has a great deal of natural beauty that makes it picturesque, there are no overwhelmingly distinctive physical features that would provide a focus. Unique characteristics have been obliterated by such phenomena as industrialization and urbanization. Because Ontario has always considered itself to be the centre of Canadian life it does not need to be explained or defined. All contain elements of truth, but the process of Americanization which alarmed so many Canadians cannot be overstressed. American culture was impressed on the Canadian mind through books, periodicals, and newspapers, obscuring still further a clear image of Ontario.

Certainly by the twentieth century, some of the trappings of American society could be found in communities across Ontario. The Canadian Magazine observed in the early
1900s that the average Canadian was completely American. This was, of course an exaggeration, but it noted the very American look of the streets in the average community with its complement of drug and candy stores, shoe-shine stands, and other importations from the United States. Despite all of this, Ontarians considered themselves to be very British, so perhaps Ontario's identity is to be found in the melding of these two cultures. If we may judge the Canadian character from the pronouncements of educators, library promoters, librarians at Ontario Library Association (O.L.A.) conferences, and the professional journals, we find a composite individual who is honest and well-motivated; conservative yet progressive; strong in moral conviction, sometimes naive, and not a little puritanical.

Oliver remarks on the central and crucial fact of "regional patterns of development" in Canada which are quite distinctive. Ontario grew within such a framework and developed certain recognizable characteristics: its Britishness, for example. The province does have a "geography" and a long and significant history. Taking all of this together, it is therefore possible to study the province as a cultural entity even though there are aspects that remain elusive.

The American and British settlers who came in large numbers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought many of their own institutions with them. Their cultural values, too, were gradually integrated into the new society that was taking shape. The importance and magnitude of British influences have already been noted, and the connection with the mother country remained strong.
Literary societies, debating clubs, and scientific associations became part of pioneer society. By the 1900s, historical societies, professional associations, and similar special interest groups further enhanced the intellectual and cultural life of the province. The appearance of cultural journals like the Week (1883) demonstrated an increasing awareness of the need to encourage literature and the arts.

The reading habit was encouraged, but some writers recommended that it be leavened with physical exercise. This showed that Canadians had a practical turn of mind and did not wish to be regarded purely as "bookworms." Newspapers continued to be a popular form of reading matter, but it was a matter for debate whether they were improving in quality or worsening. A cultural observer in the Week (1888) noticed a greater interest in art, music, and social and political affairs. The view was pressed, however, that fashionable pastimes like play-going, dancing, and dinner parties were "drugs not nutriment" as conversations at these gatherings tended to be frivolous and trivial.

The 1890s saw an increasing demand for good quality books and periodicals which the Canadian Magazine took to be a sign of cultural growth. Overlooked or ignored was the fact that the mass of people preferred to read the tabloids and borrow ephemeral novels from the circulating libraries. They also liked to read popular magazines published in London and New York. It was possible, moreover, to purchase cheap editions of American dime novels, some of which were pirated in Canada.

In 1897, an article by J.G. Bourinot in the Scottish Review attempted to measure cultural growth by examining
literary endeavour. It was pointed out that the previous thirty years had witnessed a fair volume of output which included a number of historical works, essays, some reasonably good poetry, and a few novels of note. But greater literary development had been hampered by materialism and "practical habits." This was a reference to the inordinate amount of newspaper reading that was prevalent which Bourinot regarded as a symptom of "the haste and pressure of this life of ours in a country of practical needs."

At the turn of the century Ontario's population stood at approximately 2.1 million. By 1911 (the year of the next census), it had increased to slightly over 2.5 million. During this period, eighty percent of imported newspapers, magazines, and weekly literary papers came from the United States. Another eighteen percent were British in origin, with the rest coming from Hong Kong, France, and Australia. As the twentieth century progressed, more Canadians were travelling abroad and becoming increasingly cosmopolitan. Nevertheless, the population generally remained predominantly Protestant and British in its outlook.

The Canadian Bookman for January, 1919 discussed the apparent lack of "bookishness" among Canadians. There were certainly arguments to show that young people were little interested in books. They had no intellectual curiosity, and had allowed themselves to be seduced by the material wealth that surrounded them. Books played too small a part in the lives of many Canadians, and there were rival attractions in the form of the phonograph and the motion picture. In the eyes of some, books and business were mutually exclusive terms.
American books, magazines, and newspapers had been a part of Ontario's society almost since the province's birth as Upper Canada. But the popular story paper (progenitor of the short story magazine) and its relative, the dime novel, had always been constant sources of worry to those who concerned themselves with the moral and cultural welfare of the people. British culture had received some protection, as imported American literature was counterbalanced to a certain degree by the presence of British periodical literature and pirated English copyright works. But by the 1920s literally millions of copies of cheap books and magazines that purveyed crime and passion were flooding the country. Many no doubt came from the New York firm of Street and Smith, a publishing house that specialized in mass-market literature. This reading matter was considered dangerous for two reasons: reading it was likely to lead to crime and eventually insanity; Canadian culture and nationalism were endangered by the insidious inculcation of republican ideas and values. Here, again, was another worthy mission for the public librarian.

Progress of the Library Movement: Several factors affected the progress of the library movement. Not the least of these was the Provincial Government. The Education Department assumed responsibility for the institutes in 1880, taking over from the Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works. Through a variety of controlling devices it was able to exert considerable influence on directions and priorities. When John Hallam published his views on the establishment of free libraries in a bid to acquire such an institution for Toronto, he believed that part of their success would depend upon freedom from the bureaucracy of a government department. He would be disappointed as free libraries came automatically within the jurisdiction of the
Education Department. They were considered educational institutions, and when they were formed from converted mechanics' institutes they continued to receive grants from the Legislature. As a consequence, the Education Department exercised certain rights over them.

The degree to which financing was adequate and reliable proved to be the crucial factor in the success or failure of every type of public library. It was a matter of continuing concern to library boards, particularly as the Education Department tended to change the financial ground rules from time to time. This could happen without much warning and not always with clear reasoning. Up to 1895 financing was such that the library system grew and flourished. Then the Government moved to a system that involved the distribution of a fixed sum. As the number of libraries increased, a pro rata reduction became necessary which amounted to payments on average of only sixty or seventy percent of entitlements. This naturally had an adverse effect on growth.

The problem was further compounded when the Education Department decided to interpret dollar for dollar as fifty cents for every dollar raised locally. This really caused the smaller libraries to suffer and many of them fell by the wayside. Matters improved after 1909 when new legislation increased access to funding by offering new incentives. Further improvements came in 1919 when the tax base was raised for free libraries. The shift in 1920 from a library rate based on property to a per capita system again benefited free libraries, but the vagaries of the granting system could only have added to the insecurity of association public library boards. For example, the Education Department was not adverse to imposing financial penalties on any library board that contravened the
regulations.

At the local level, municipalities exerted similar power. The local library board depended to some extent upon its municipal council for financial support whether the library was free or not. Boards also needed the encouragement of their municipal councils to ensure the institution a secure place in the cultural life of the community. This was very important as the library was in competition with other community services.

The library could not always be sure that it would get its due from either the library rate or special grants, and boards sometimes hoped for both. It could take considerable persuasion, especially if the municipality was financially embarrassed. The fact was well known that local appropriations tended to increase and decrease in tandem with Government grants. It was therefore incumbent on each board to ensure that it complied with all the regulations of the Education Department to qualify for the maximum grant.

The regulatory powers of the Education Department were enormous as it was allowed considerable latitude in the interpretation of statutes. In this respect, it had a further advantage, as library boards were not always able to interpret the legislation correctly. Annual inspections provided the Department with the opportunity to make suggestions for improvements and ensure that library collections contained nothing that could be considered objectionable.

None of this is intended to give the impression that the Education Department was a bureaucratic tyrant. Rather, its general approach was paternalistic, while recognizing
the necessity of dialogue with organizations like the O.L.A. The Inspector of Public Libraries was normally the intermediary, attending the annual conferences and regional workshops (library institutes) on a regular basis. But it was not unusual for delegations from the O.L.A. to meet with the Minister directly, especially if crucial matters like changes in the legislation were involved.

The formation of the O.L.A. in 1900 sprang from the need to organize and channel efforts directed at promoting the public library movement throughout the province. It received much of its initial inspiration from the example of American librarians, taking the American Library Association as its model. It also drew upon the British experience, a debt it was not slow to acknowledge. The Board of Arts and Manufacturers, established in 1857, and its successor, the Association of Mechanics' Institutes of Ontario (1866-1886) represented earlier attempts at organized effort. They were composed of members from the mechanics' institutes and were expected to concentrate their efforts on technical education. Although neither organization proved to be very successful, they did try to bond the institutes together and give them a sense of common purpose. They fostered the notion of co-operation and gave what attention they could to developing institute libraries. The latter is exemplified by the Association's success in persuading the Government to allow a portion of the grant to be spent on works of fiction. Thus, these organizations laid some of the groundwork for the library movement of the future.

**Growth of the Library Profession:** The influence of the O.L.A. upon library development was considerable, but it must not be assumed that it was a cohesive, single-minded body, unwavering in its pursuit of clearly defined goals.
It was created at a time when Canada was without a recognizable library profession. In fact, as late as 1912 there was uneasiness with the term "profession" in library circles. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, addressing the American Library Association conferences in Ottawa, told the delegates that he only used it because it was current. He admitted that, as far as North American librarianship was concerned, this designation could be challenged, as all the elements of a true profession were not present.

Quoting a dictionary definition, Putnam believed that the principal element missing was "professed attainments in special knowledge, as distinguished from mere skill"; it could be found incidentally in individuals but was not a condition for the practice of librarianship. In his opinion, the basic aim of librarianship was a very simple one: "to bring a book to a reader, to lead a reader to a book." In Ontario, the distinction between "special knowledge" and "skill" would remain blurred for some time to come.

Many of those engaged in the library field could not decide whether librarianship was a business or a vocation. Those belonging to the class that viewed itself as missionaries or priests, and libraries as temples, had to reconcile that view with the increasing pressure to modernize and put their institutions on a business-like footing. For some, librarianship remained "a queer intangible thing," a view compounded by the difficulty of distinguishing "librarians" from "library assistants." In the numerous small libraries, however, the distinction hardly existed.
Before 1920, there seems to have been no serious attempts made to develop a philosophy of librarianship, or create for it a sound theoretical base that would identify it as a profession. In their absence, goals and objectives aimed at a rational, province-wide system, and the declared mission of cultural and moral uplift may have been considered reasonable substitutes.

In his annual report for 1916, W.O. Carson, Inspector of Public Libraries, recognized the need for a philosophy of librarianship which was an occupation "entitled to scientific rank" by virtue of its inheritance of "accumulated experience, ideas, and methods." He took the practical view that the tax-paying public was entitled to the highest standards of service attainable. As it transpired, a truly professional ethos would not evolve until practice gave way to a greater emphasis on theory imparted under more formal and academic conditions. This transition became evident during the 1920s, and in 1927 the University of Toronto assumed responsibility for library education.

There was some resistance to the trend, however. Mary S. Saxe, of the Westmount Public Library, Montreal, espoused what might be termed a "paste pot" philosophy which she borrowed from John Cotton Dana, the eminent American librarian. The first principle of library training was to learn techniques "from the paste pot to the catalogue." On another occasion she reinforced this view by relating a story about a young aspiring librarian who failed miserably in her first library appointment. "The fact that she was trained in theory had gone to her head, and it took her several years to forget it." Meanwhile, those in the field continued to refer to themselves as "library workers."
The summer school in Toronto offered "shelf-listing and accession work," "administration and secretarial work," and "simple routine," as practical topics. Classification and cataloguing were also taught, but only at an elementary level. Reference work and book selection formed the more intellectual segments of the course, but again, the syllabus suggests that these matters were not explored in any depth. One series of lectures was devoted to the "evolution of modern prose literature." This was intended to assist library staff members in coping with the sensitive issue of fiction. One half of the course was devoted to lectures, the other to practice.

Distinguishing between professional and technical functions was also problematic. There was also uncertainty about course content in library training. Suggestions included such topics as "library history and science" and another vaguely entitled "literary work." Because American libraries had greater experience in the administration of public libraries, it was natural to look south for guidance. (The Inspector of Public Libraries, on one occasion, expressed the view that Ontario paid too much attention to American library science). Nevertheless, American library journals circulated in Ontario, although, it was believed, not as freely as they should. They were invaluable to those who had not received formal training.

Library institutes helped fill the gap in library education, and many such workshops were held across the province from 1907 onwards. A number of librarians, trustees, and teachers attended library conferences in the United States and also hosted American librarians in Canada. These delegates frequently included leaders and prime movers
in American librarianship and their views were treated with
great respect. Consequently, American principles and
practices permeated librarianship in Ontario.

Topics discussed at the O.L.A. conferences have a
strong practical flavour, and reflect the basic themes of
library development between 1900 and 1920. Fundamental
issues included access to library services for all,
supported by a sound and reliable system of financing; the
fostering of a climate more amenable to self-determination;
raising the profile of the public library and establishing
it as a vital cultural force in the community. More
specifically, legislation, buildings, equipment, publicity,
cataloguing, classification, circulation systems,
bookbinding, book selection, reference work, and children's
services all received their share of attention over the
years. The provision of smoking rooms, chess and similar
table games typify suggestions for attracting more readers
to the library.

The programmes were leavened by lectures on such
diverse topics as "the foreigner," "rural life," "the making
of a book," and "the clergy and the library." Discussions
of broader philosophical aims are hard to find unless such
matters as book selection, reference work, and the
relationship of the library to the community can be
characterized in this way. A vague philosophy, however,
may be perceived in discussions that centred on the
library's mission as an agent of democracy, a topic of
special significance during the First World War and in the
years of reconstruction.

In the Association's first years, library leadership
was largely in the hands of men like James Bain, Chief
Librarian of the Toronto Public Library, his successor George Locke, and E.A. Hardy, high school teacher, public library trustee, and long time Secretary to the Association. Hardy exemplified the hard-working trustee, an official he described as the backbone of the public library system. Trustees took responsibility for a number of functions that would eventually become part of the professional librarian's duties, notably book selection.

The term "librarian" tended to be used rather loosely, but it certainly belonged to dynamic individuals like Mary Black, of the Fort William Public Library, who before 1920 was voicing her forward-looking views on library development. Lillian H. Smith, responsible for children services at the Toronto Public Library, and Patricia Spereman, a children's librarian and a field consultant for the Education Department, are further examples of librarians who helped shape the future of library development in Ontario.

**Patterns of Library Development:** Communities that possess successful public libraries have histories that display a number of common characteristics. In choosing sites for their first dwellings, pioneers were careful to ensure that they were reasonably accessible. At first, this meant proximity to waterways and trails. Later, access to rail facilities became crucial, for communities that were bypassed usually found their economic growth stunted. Proximity to a larger urban centre proved to be another advantage. All of these settlements were small at first, but as they grew, they encouraged a variety of cottage industries in the form of grist and lumber mills, tanneries, and foundries.
The larger towns soon included firms that turned out consumer products ranging from pianos to cigars. Economic prosperity fostered civic pride, and the public library was looked upon as an important cultural landmark. It was a clear indication that the community had "arrived." Prosperous municipalities tended to be successful in attracting Carnegie grants, even those with public libraries that were quite modest in size. But not every community remained economically sound, and there are a few cases where the public library remains as a legacy of more prosperous times.

Similar patterns are discernible in northern Ontario. Although even now there are not many large cities and towns in that region, their origins and subsequent prosperity were due to locations that favoured communications, together with the presence of abundant natural resources. Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Kenora, and New Liskeard are notable in this respect. In southern Ontario, the first free libraries appeared in the southwest which is characterized by large and affluent urban conurbations built on the foundations of some of the earliest settlements in the province. Free libraries grew steadily in numbers over the forty-year period, but the progress of the association public libraries was less predictable. From year to year, libraries were subtracted and added to the Education Department's official list as their fortunes waxed and waned.

The Carnegie benefactions gave a significant boost to the movement, and many of these distinctive buildings remain as landmarks of public library progress. The hope was that every public library would eventually become free. But together with travelling libraries and the library resources
of farmers' and women's institutes, association public libraries remained the mainstay of library service for small communities, especially those in isolated areas.

Ontario remained ahead of the other Canadian provinces with a library system that earned it the title of "premier province." This remained true as late as the 1930s when a Commission of Enquiry studied library conditions across the entire Dominion. With the exception of Ontario, the Commission was struck by the lack of development and progress throughout the provinces. British Columbia possessed a library system, but the Commissioners thought it was not very satisfactory. The province was praised, though, for being "library-conscious" in its attempts to correct matters through experimentation and innovation. Quite naturally, each province had problems peculiarly its own.

The prairies are vast, and at this time possessed few significant concentrations of population. Where libraries existed they were not always effective. For example, the Commissioners considered "mixed racial stocks" to be a particular problem in Saskatchewan; multicultural libraries are very recent innovations. Conditions were not much different in the Maritimes. Attention was drawn to the conservatism of the Maritimer who was not likely to be an experimenter. Consequently, public libraries were not very much in evidence, while those that existed were providing less than satisfactory service.

Ontario's neighbour, Quebec, had special problems. The Commissioners noted the significant influence of the clergy in matters relating to the moral and spiritual welfare of the province's large Catholic population. This fact alone...
had much to do with the absence of public libraries comparable to those found in Ontario. Apart from a number of institutional and subscription libraries, there were a great many parish libraries, but these were in the charge of the clergy and mostly dormant. The Commissioner awarded the accolade of exemplary library service to Ontario, referring to it as the province of "leadership and opportunity."

Collections Development: In February 1919, the Ontario Library Review compared the modern public library to the institution of former days. It had abandoned its custodial role and now encouraged patrons to explore the library's resources. To this end, acquisitions policies had become more liberal and innovative. Reference services had been developed so that the collections could be exploited to the limit. The introduction of modern administrative methods had increased access to the library. All segments of the population were encouraged to use the library, especially young children who had been denied access in earlier days. The new breed of librarian was "guide, philosopher, and friend" to every patron, regardless of age, race, creed, or standing in the community.

These were extremely high ideals, and it is unfortunate that there is really no reliable measure of the degree to which librarians were able to live up to them. But if librarians found that they could believe in them, then at least their resolve to succeed must have been strengthened as they strove to realize their goals. Obviously intended as a morale booster, there was good reason for publishing the comparison in Ontario's public library journal which reached the major part of the community it served. Such encouragement was invaluable to the small struggling library.
It was observed in chapter eight that, at any given point in time, a comparison of the contents of public library collections would reveal a striking uniformity. This is hardly surprising as librarians were equipped with approximately the same moral and cultural standards, were influenced by the same bibliographical aids, were guided by boards who held similar views on book selection, and in a number of cases had attended the same library school.

George H. Locke, after lecturing on the rise of the modern novel, asked each student in the Toronto library school to provide a list of fifty books suitable for a small community. The *Ontario Library Review* (November, 1918) listed the titles that had been cited six times or more. They range through Jane Austen, Wilke Collins, Dickens, Defoe, Eliot, Galsworthy, Hawthorne, Kipling, Scott, Thackeray, and Wells. In looking at this extremely conservative list, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Locke's students knew full well the answers that would be expected of them, although this may be an unfair judgement.

A catalogue from the Peterborough Library Association and Mechanics' Institute and one from the school-based public library in Vaughan Township, both produced in the 1850s, bear some comparison. At this time, both communities could be characterized as agricultural, although the life of Peterborough was more diverse than that of Vaughan Township. Consequently, both collections have a strong base in works relating to farming methods, animal husbandry, mechanics, hydraulics, carpentry, and a variety of other topics that would inform a largely agricultural community.
On the recreational side, standard works of English literature, classical history, natural history, philosophy, and biography appear in both collections. Vaughan, however, had Scott's poetical works but not the Waverley novels. The Peterborough library subscribed to a number of standard periodicals among which were the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, and the *Penny Magazine*. The Vaughan library possessed a small number of dictionaries and encyclopedias to support the main collection. Despite collection similarities, their selection processes were radically different. Vaughan Township was restricted to works available from the Educational Depository; the Peterborough Library Association could select from any source it wished.

The eclectic nature of the 22,000 entries in the Toronto Public Library's catalogue for 1889 suggests the ideal in urban literary taste for late nineteenth-century Ontario. More specifically, it reflects the needs of the cosmopolitan population the library was expected to service. Among major writers there seem to be few omissions, although Zola and De Maupassant are conspicuous by their absence. Their brand of realism was no doubt considered too rich for Toronto's genteel middle-class reader. These omissions indicate clearly that censorship was part of the book selection process, despite the impression that Toronto's library epitomized liberal thinking and catholic taste.

The works of Aristotle, Browning, Scott, Shakespeare, Shelley, Dickens, Hawthorne, Melville, Meredith, Thackeray, Goethe, and Mark Twain, are only a sampling from the corpus of literary and scholarly endeavour that was available to the Toronto reader at this time. Within the natural sciences, for example, there are several volumes on
evolution which was still a controversial topic. In the section headed "mental, social and medical sciences," there are works on topics as varied as logic, temperance, slavery, and phrenology. Religion, technology, domestic economy, decorative and fine arts, music, language and literature, history, politics, and biography also have their places in the catalogue. Depending on financial resources, miniature versions of this collection could be found in public libraries around the province.

A form of censorship is inherent in the 1914 guide to fiction produced by W.J. Sykes, of the Ottawa Public Library, which would have been used by most book selectors. British and Commonwealth novels had been given greater emphasis, and more Canadian works of fiction added. Fiction produced by American writers had received a marked de-emphasis, defended on the grounds that it recognized differing "local or national conditions," although it is not absolutely clear what that means.

At the O.L.A. convention of 1913, George Locke, Toronto Public Library, Mary Black, Fort William Public Library, and Mrs. W.J. Hanna, Sarnia Public Library, gave their opinions on the best books for boys, girls, and toddlers. In the main they are books that have been favourites throughout much of the twentieth century, and a number are immortal: Tom Brown's Schooldays, Ivanhoe, Robinson Crusoe, Swiss Family Robinson, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Tom Sawyer, Little Women, Alice in Wonderland, Jane Eyre and many more. For the smallest children some less familiar titles were recommended although prominent are Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit and picture books illustrated by Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane.
As new writers came into vogue they were frequently added to collections unless they belonged to the genre we now describe as formula fiction. The subjectivity of labelling resulted in some rather bizarre exclusions and inclusions. This is made clear from the A.L.A. survey mentioned in chapter eight. Mrs. Braddon could be accepted while a fairly "safe" writer like W.H.G. Kingston would be banned. A consistent approach was taken with the works of G.W.M. Reynolds, however, which were assiduously avoided by everyone. By some, doubtful literature was variously labelled "pernicious," "enervating," "immoral," "sensational," and just plain "trash"; others simply dismissed it as innocuous but worthless.

Because commentators were quite circumspect about this literature it is very difficult to identify it and verify the validity of the concern. Some believed quite simply that too much novel reading was harmful. Individuals like Hannah More were convinced that in excess it led to mental atrophy, although she did not condemn the practice outright. As her view was considered important, it was published in the Journal of Education for Upper Canada (September, 1853) at a time when reading and libraries were receiving some attention.

Horatio Alger is among the "doubtfuls" identified by the A.L.A. survey. Together with the Elsie Dinsmore series, by Martha Finley (Farquharson), Alger's novels were also considered unsuitable for Ontario's libraries. The Ontario Library Review (November, 1919) addressed this matter from its "question box." Success achieved through chance did not promote the proper ideals and standards. Luck played a prominent part in the Alger Books, while the moral issue was never made clear. The Elsie books were condemned on similar
grounds, besides being branded as "mediocre." The plots were, moreover, considered superficial with little accomplished by Elsie that could be considered positive. Little Women and Heidi were recommended as substitutes.

The Reverend J. Paterson Smyth, Rector of St. George's Anglican Church, Montreal, made perhaps more explicit references to objectionable material in novels. In an article published in the Canadian Magazine (September, 1909) he identified fiction that dealt openly with sex as the type to be avoided; the sort of novels "no nice girl would allow her mother to read." It is noticeable in the literature of the fiction controversy that the Anglicans were much more tolerant than "low church" denominations. The Methodists had always encouraged the reading habit, but principally to enable their congregations to study the Bible.

If librarians had difficulty establishing the respectability of popular authors, they were clear that dime novels, "three-cent dreadfuls," and story papers were most certainly unsuitable for their libraries. Apart from the distinctive format, titles like The Mad Mariner: or, Dishonored and Disowned, Erminie: or the Gypsy Queen's Vow, Silver Sam of Deadwood, Poor-House Pete, the Postal Clerk Detective, and Death Notch, the Destroyer blatantly signalled their appeal to the thrill-seeker and the undiscerning. American in origin, they received the critical attention of a number of leading nineteenth-century periodicals, concerned about their influence on especially the young. They bear strong resemblances to the western fiction and Harlequin romances of today.

Detective fiction is harder to classify as it varies so greatly, some of it being above mere formula fiction.
Imports from Britain would most certainly have included publications typified by the Sexton Blake stories. Not that Ontario's libraries ever received much pressure to supply ephemeral literature. Librarians, in fact, had an obligation not only to keep it out of their libraries, but to make every effort to induce the public to read acceptable alternatives.

The Library in the Community: If examined alone, the impact of the free library on the movement generally is difficult to assess. The agitation for free libraries really began as an independent movement. It centred on the efforts of John Hallam and his associates to acquire a library for Toronto, a venture in which they were successful. The Free Libraries Act (1882) includes a clause for converting mechanics' institutes into free libraries. Clearly the expectation was that the institutes would be phased out, leaving the field entirely to the free libraries. As it happened municipalities were slow to take up the option and mechanics' institutes continued to grow and flourish.

The amendments to the legislation that followed show that the Government was still very much preoccupied with technical and vocational education. For example, free libraries were encouraged in 1889 to offer evening classes, and a number in fact did so until about 1902. At the same time, art schools were permitted to amalgamate with public libraries if they so wished. The Government clearly considered free libraries in the same light as mechanics institutes: they were part of the educational system. When mechanics' institutes were renamed and were joined by new association public libraries in the mainstream of library development, the difference between them and free libraries
became matters of degree rather than kind.

The Public Libraries Act of 1895 set the course that would lead to a province-wide system. The free library was for the community that could afford it. The public libraries that were simply reformed mechanics' institutes could convert to a free status or continue as before, relying on membership fees and grants. The association public library was intended for the small community without an institute or a sufficient tax base to support a free library.

Although it may not have been perceived by everyone as an essential institution, the public library (whether it was free or an association) survived. Interest groups promoted it aggressively, and the public was encouraged to view books as powerful, even mystical, objects that were capable of changing for the better the lives of those that read them. Some did read for self-improvement, but many more read for entertainment, giving the fiction collection central importance.

The place of the public library in the community was frequently under review, and promoters were never slow to identify roles suited to it. The attempt to provide for technical education is a prime example. During the First World War the public library became an information centre and frequently a rallying point for patriotic effort, all of which helped establish its standing and reputation.

The public library's role in social reform is much less clear. Certainly organizations like the National Council of Women of Canada took a keen interest in public libraries, recognizing in them the potential for good and evil. But as
it was generally believed that reading the "classics" had the propensity for cultural, moral, and even spiritual uplift, it seems likely that the public library was counted among the agencies dedicated to improving the condition of, principally, the working classes.

Practically nothing is known about the average citizen's opinion of the public library in Ontario or the degree of importance he or she attached to it. The library's interaction with the community tended to be passive even though its administrators considered themselves to be aggressive and missionary in spirit. The influences the public library exercised on the community were subtle and the results not readily apparent. Never the centre of great controversies, although objections were sometimes made to taxation for its support, the public library was taken largely for granted as one of several community services. As a consequence, the general public was never moved to write about it. Patrons probably neither knew nor cared about the institution's goals and aspirations, simply taking from it what they needed as individuals.

All of this means that the overall image of the public library and its general impact have to be reconstructed from sources created largely by interest groups. This naturally produces an imbalance. Fortunately, some counterbalancing is possible from the evidence of patronage, indicated partly by statistical data, and from the very fact of the institution's survival which suggests at least some measure of success. Statistical evidence was employed extensively throughout the period to show the degree of success public libraries were enjoying.
The Government was always prepared to support institutions that contributed to the common good which it demonstrated through its system of grants. Without this support even the free libraries, despite their income from the library rate, would have experienced a reduction in their effectiveness. Many of the association public libraries would simply have perished. Had that happened, Ontario’s boast of being the "premier province" in library service could hardly have been sustained.

The human element in Ontario’s library movement is difficult to assess. For English Canada, library history is a comparatively new discipline, and not much in the way of substantive biographical research has so far been undertaken. "Characters" are also lacking in Ontario’s library history, particularly if colourful individuals that compare with, say, Melvil Dewey are sought. The closest would be Edwin Austin Hardy, the prime mover in the O.L.A., but although dynamic, he was unassuming and modest rather than flamboyant. Reading the professional literature and the discussions that took place at O.L.A. conferences, it is sometimes possible to detect the personalities that lie behind the sentiments, but until more work on the human side of library history has been accomplished, it will remain difficult to give flesh and blood to those shadowy figures who shaped the library movement in Ontario.

Temple of Democracy: By 1920, a recognizable public library system existed in the province, monitored and supported by the Education Department and the O.L.A. Much of the population had access to libraries that varied in size and quality, but provision for rural communities, especially those in remote areas, remained less than adequate. The more progressive libraries were completely
free, but association public libraries still outnumbered them. At the local level, libraries large and small strove to provide their communities with educational and recreational reading, and, at first, the Toronto Public Library was the model all wished to emulate. But as it gradually outstripped the rest in size and importance, the impossibility of this dream was no doubt brought home with some force.

Much stress was laid on the public library as a classless institution. An editorial in the *Ontario Library Review* (November, 1918) described it as the "most democratic of all public institutions." It was more universal than the church where denominational differences caused divisions. The school system only catered to certain age groups and was also split by religious differences; the Catholics, for example, had a separate school system in Ontario. A Mrs. Dorrington, addressing the O.L.A. in 1918, summed it up (apparently without any sense of hyperbole) when she declared that "all are equal in the grave and the public library," a sentiment for which she received loud applause.

The notion of the public library as a "temple of democracy" manifested itself in several ways. As part of the educational system, mechanics' institutes and their successors, public libraries, were expected to provide suitable reading matter for every inhabitant that could read, thus contributing to the formation of a literate and informed population, essential to an effective democracy.

Legislation enacted over the decades assisted the democratization of literature, and when the O.L.A. was eventually formed, its membership pursued this goal with a strong sense of mission. More specifically, the democratic
role of the public library could be seen in the gradual move towards making all libraries free, in promoting open access, in providing for young readers, and in the adoption of more liberal book selection policies, although the fiction question continued to be a contentious issue.

The extension of library service throughout the entire province remained the primary goal of library promoters in this period, while an important motivating force was one that echoed the principal aim of the American Library Association: "the best reading for the largest number at the least cost," which, if nothing else, was truly a democratic principle.
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