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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

SESSIONAL PAPER NO. 4  
(First Session, 1966)

A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE LIBRARY

DISPOSITION

Accepted as Read.....  
Amended.....See Text  
Rejected.....See Text  
Deferred.....See Text  
Not considered.

## A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE LIBRARY

During September and October, the newly-appointed Director of Public Library Services for the Northwest Territories visited Baffin Island and the main places in the Mackenzie. She then went to the Yukon where a new and vigorous public library has had conspicuous success. It was at once clear that the Yukon experience and methods cannot transfer to the N.W.T. because of differences in the two territories -- mostly geographical.

She thinks of the Territorial Library with 100,000 books after several years building up. A travelling library service will be set up to distribute this collection throughout the Territories by whatever means of transport is available.

It is proposed to build up as soon as possible the public collections at Inuvik, Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Frobisher Bay. Some of these books will remain permanently in those regional centres. In addition, books will be exchanged regularly under the travelling libraries scheme.

The regional centres will not be able to rely on unpaid volunteers. The investment and the responsibility to serve the public continuously demand a paid part-time person at each regional centre. Volunteers interested in library work can help.

A local library in each small community is envisioned. Where there is a community association of appropriate character to take responsibility, it will be possible to establish a book collection that will include some books on permanent loan, especially reference books. Volunteers can carry on the work.

Individuals in the more isolated communities where no community association has been formed will be offered a mail extension service.

Book purchasing, processing and reference services will be centralized at Hay River. Probably Frobisher Bay, Inuvik and perhaps Baker Lake or Rankin Inlet will in due course become sub-distribution centres.

Concurrent with the building-up of the book collections, it is proposed as feasible to acquire related materials such as pamphlets, periodicals, films and music.

In the first part of 1966, the Director of Public Library Services will start purchasing books and store them in Edmonton until the building in Hay River is completed. Late in 1966, it is intended to send out displays to each of the existing main libraries.

Also, periodical subscriptions will be started to each of the main libraries.

In 1967, exchanges to the major libraries will commence and to those other communities where a library is already in existence. As soon as possible thereafter, library services will be offered to those communities where there is an incorporated society and a start made on building up the permanent collections at the main libraries. Concurrent with the above, the extension service by mail will be offered.

Co-operation is the essence of good library service on any level, but the smaller the communities and the more extensive the area, the greater the degree of co-operation required.

The Commissioner has asked the Director of Public Library Services to receive suggestions and requests from all N.W.T. persons and organizations -- to meet the needs and wishes of the people insofar as possible and consistent with building up a good library service.

It is a principle of the Public Library Services that they are for all people.

Legislation to form the framework of the Public Library Services for the N.W.T. is desirable. There is such legislation in the provinces and some first-class precedents and advice are available for guidance in the preparation of legislation. An ordinance is in preparation and is expected to be ready for the July Session.

Your Commissioner observes that a public library is not a frill upon the education fabric, nor is it a dispensable amenity. It is an absolute necessity if the Northwest Territories is to have citizens who (a) are informed concerning the world and what people all over it have done and are doing, (b) are intellectually stimulated toward the development of their individual capacities, (c) can take part effectively in the democratic processes, (d) live by principles and law rather than expedients and narrow determinations, (e) can acquire skills marketable in today's economy.

A successful library also gives pleasure.