AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE OFFICES: 50 EAST HURON STREET, CHICAGO 11

ADDRESS OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND
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CONGRESS CONSIDERS LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION

I am grateful for this opportunity to meet with an organization that is doing so much on behalf of causes that I have long been proud to serve. I refer particularly to the broad fields of health and education. Few groups are more important than the American Library Association in meeting these national challenges.

These are times when every institution concerned with maintaining a free and informed citizenry is playing a critical part in our Nation's destiny. Public libraries, as a mainstay of our communications structure, are indispensable in this era of science and technology, of far-flung interests abroad, of international tensions and complex domestic problems. These are times when every thinking person needs the information, the background that only reading can give, and the kind of stimulation and diversion that literature alone affords.

Let me say at the outset that the library's role in meeting the intellectual challenge of today is not, in my opinion, a passive one. It is a dynamic role that calls for action on the part of librarians, trustees, and the friends of libraries. It is a role that demands a strong organization, in which all members are highly sensitive to social needs, their own goals, and the roads that are open to those goals. The needs that face us -- and I think again of our many interests in common -- urge an attack with all our resources.

For many years I have been concerned with those needs, both as a Representative to Congress from the Second District of Rhode Island, and as Chairman of the Subcommittee in the House of Representatives which is responsible for appropriations to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Libraries share many of the Department's interests in the fields of health and education, particularly those of the Public Health Service in aging, juvenile delinquency, and blindness. Other common interests are the program of scientific translation and the National Library of Medicine, which became a part of the Service in 1956.

Since ancient times, libraries have served the civilized community as storehouses of information. The importance of this function alone is attested by the fact that an ability to accumulate knowledge and transmit it down the generations is an essential difference between man and the lower animals. Increasingly, however, libraries have assumed additional functions -- have taken a more active role in the community. The library today is not only a medium of communication; it is an integral part of our educational structure. One of its principal functions is to teach.

We think immediately of school libraries and their importance in general and professional education. But I have in mind a broader concept. The educational institution -- the school or college -- must not only teach; it must point the student down the road of knowledge. With school behind us, our education has only begun. Here, then, is perhaps the main role of the library -- to help us gain the education we need on our way through life. In this, the school library is joined by the public and special libraries -- those of industry, societies, government. Together, these facilitate our self-development, our intelligent participation in public affairs, and our pursuit of special interests.

The broader role of the library, in the eyes of a mere observer, calls for more intensive development of special resources for communication, such as films and recordings. The addition of musical and audio-visual dimensions to literature can provide a rounded approach to the library's educational mission. To be sure, there are many difficulties. But only through such expanded programs can libraries, it seems to me, realize their full potential for education and creative experience.

This is most obvious with respect to special groups I have mentioned. Recordings for the blind, for example -- an extremely valuable service -- certainly bring the library into the forefront of educational institutions. The same might be said of records and prints used in seminars on music and art for the elderly. Or the showing of films in conjunction with courses under way in local schools, as an aid to the guidance of youth. It is these active ventures into education that I, in my work for these groups, find most gratifying in the progressive library of today.

I should like to make a special point about the efforts of the ALA toward the control of juvenile delinquency. This is a problem that has come often to my attention as a legislator. We have worked out, I believe, some good measures, such as the collaborative activity proposed in the current appropriation bills for the Children's Bureau and the National Institute of Mental Health. This is an effort to provide coordination and leadership through two agencies with interest, experience and resources in the fields of child welfare, child behavior, and child psychology. But legislation, however sound, can never solve this problem alone. It is a problem for the total community: the school, the church, the family -- all of our social institutions. The library is very important here, primarily as a preventive, for it can offer books and programs to help our young adults understand themselves and adjust to life.

Many of you have given real thought to the problem of juvenile delinquency, and some of you, I know, are very active in this field. Libraries can reach children early and maintain contact as they grow and develop. Good progress has been made in bringing libraries to low-income areas; and in some cities, librarians trained for service to young people work cooperatively with welfare agencies. Given adequate funds and staffs, libraries can offer individual help, particularly to those who cannot read well. I believe the services to young people should be extended and promoted through adult groups, collaborative projects with juvenile courts, and mass media such as radio and television. To learn the best role of libraries in this problem, studies might well be done in collaboration with research and welfare agencies.

A realistic view of the library as an educational institution must take into account the question of funds. Legislation for the support of educational and research programs should generally be interpreted to include libraries as educational and research facilities. In the current research construction program of the Public Health Service, for example, the National Advisory Council that recommends grants to the Surgeon General holds that libraries are definitely research facilities. Few projects to date have included library construction because the funds have been insufficient to meet the need for laboratories, but the Council at its October meeting will consider whether research library construction can be expanded.

One of the Nation's most pressing medical and social problems is blindness. There are about 350,000 blind persons in this country, and the number is increasing despite public and private efforts over many years. The Public Health Service's National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness is attacking the problem from the medical standpoint. On the social side, I have introduced a bill to establish a temporary Presidential commission to study and report on problems related to blindness and the needs of the blind. A prime objective is to help create a national atmosphere more favorable to the blind person and his role in society. This will call for studies of existing conditions, including rehabilitation programs, the education of blind children, and social services and research. One consideration will be how to provide books and recordings, including problems of procurement and distribution.

I am confident that standards and legislation will be developed through which the best library services now available for the blind will be augmented and extended. It gives me great satisfaction to work toward that end.

Among the most important library services are those extended to the older citizen. The magnitude of the aging problem demands that major resources such as libraries, so valuable in guidance, recreation, and many special activities, be encouraged in every way possible to do more in this field. Since 1900, people over fifty have increased in our population from 13 percent to more than 22 percent. By 1970, nearly 25 percent of the American people will be over fifty, and 10 percent will be over 65. Social institutions should prepare for the impact of this growth. In an effort to help libraries in this regard, I will urge that they be cited in current bills before Congress.

Probably the legislation most directly significant to the ALA is the Library Services Act. As you know, the Congress has never appropriated the full $7.5 million authorized for this Office of Education program. But much progress has been made under the Act, such as the extension of library services to 11 million people in rural American areas. I understand that 50 States and Territories are now participating, and that the matching requirements have stimulated State and local governments to put 45 percent more money in libraries than they did before the program began.

Because this is one of the appropriations my subcommittee handles, I am proud of my own part in these achievements. The President's budget called for only $3 million last year. We in Congress raised this to $6 million -- twice the budgeted amount. This year, the President's budget was $5 million. We in the House voted an additional million making it $6 million, the same amount as last year. The Senate on last Wednesday voted for $7.5

million. If a reasonable compromise is agreed to, the tremendous task of providing library services for 25 million more rural people in this country who do not now have access to public library service will be able to proceed. Having followed the program closely in Rhode Island, I am determined to see similar benefits extended throughout the greater United States.

I should like now to discuss some broad problems in which libraries are involved -- problems impeding social and scientific progress, particularly in the field of medical research. One of these is the problem confronting the scientist when he searches the literature before undertaking an experiment. Although he may work in a highly specialized area, the information he needs will be widely scattered. Annually throughout the world, about 180,000 research reports appear in some 5,000 journals, and an estimated 10,000 books are published on medical and scientific subjects. The libraries can do little, of course, to control this volume of publication, although I am sure they would like to. There is, however, a major library responsibility for documentation -- the vast field of lending order to this mountain of words.

I do not presume to understand the problem in detail -- the many good proposals for solving it, the new equipment available, the programs under way. I do know that researchers in all fields, including the biological, physical and social sciences, depend largely on libraries for the storage and retrieval of information. Those who write it and those who print it share the responsibility, but cannot come to grips with the problem because they are independent workers. The one unified element -- the library -- well organized and influential, should take the lead.

If some major library organization, such as the ALA or Library of Congress, were to adopt a plan acceptable to scientists and editors, cooperation would be assured through the desire of authors to be included in the system. For instance, authors would submit abstracts through editors to a central point for indexing, storage, and electronic retrieval. But this is just a thought; many of you are way ahead of me. I only mean to stress that the library -- not the individual author, editor or reader -- is the place to begin. It is the logical point of vantage for instituting a system that would streamline the search for data, now a task of such proportions as to threaten the value of reports themselves -- even to threaten the continuity of knowledge.

Another major need -- one in which libraries could play a larger part -- is the distribution of educational material on science and health. People are eager for literature on these subjects -- current, factual, plain materials that answer their questions and expand their understanding. Federal, State and local health departments, voluntary health agencies, and many other groups publish pamphlets and other materials on all the major health problems. Unfortunately, public libraries are often excluded from the distribution lists through doubt that the materials would be promoted or displayed. And the libraries have been unable to afford stocks of give-aways, the best approach to meeting the need. I believe, however, that cooperative arrangements could be worked out in which public libraries would play a key role in health education.

In making these various suggestions, I have failed to specify how they might best be adopted. Who should set the ball rolling? Certainly, librarians and ALA officials can do much in their own right, and it is

they who must follow through once the services are instituted. But their authority and influence are limited. I appeal to the trustees and friends of libraries. They should take the initiative more often, lending their names and efforts to increasing support for their public libraries. Without the active participation of trustees and friends, the library can be little more than a storehouse. With their active aid, the library can be a dynamic agency working side by side with educational, research and welfare groups. It is largely through trustees and friends that an ancient and honorable institution -- a latent force for social betterment -- can realize its potential in the modern world.

To my mind, the most important ancillary function that a library can perform (a function so intangible that legislators can only talk about it) is to further the spirit of learning in this country. Basic to the improvement of domestic and foreign relations, to supremacy in science and technology, to the attainment of major national goals, must be a climate of public opinion more favorable to science, education and scholarship in general. Our need for this is felt keenly when one talks to scientists and educators, to people abroad. We need a national shift toward deeper appreciation of all that the library represents in our culture -- knowledge, art, and their advancement through communication.

Librarians, through the selection of reading matter, group activities, and individual guidance, can help immeasurably to further the understanding of science and of the need for research. They can help acquaint young people with names and events in science, shaping their image of the scientist and a research career. They can call attention to opportunities in the sciences -- courses of study, scholarships, positions. And above all, they can capture and stimulate that interest in the humanities which affects so strongly our sense of values, and thus our attitude toward the learned professions and their contribution.

To summarize, I would urge librarians to continue developing their programs along educational lines. You have an important mission in helping young people -- the misguided and the gifted -- older people, and many special groups. Health education is a particularly appropriate field. I urge you, collectively and individually, to further the sciences through advances in documentation and efforts to improve the national climate for scientific endeavor. And I call especially upon the trustees and friends of libraries to work on behalf of their institutions in such matters as support and the expansion of library functions.

For my part, I will do all I can to help the libraries of the Nation extend their basic and special services to every citizen.