

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION
ON
THE COLOMBO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

P. KANDIAH

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COLOMBO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL.



REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

ON

COLOMBO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

BY

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5th MAY, 1958.

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION
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THE COLOMBO MUNICIPAL PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Mr. P. Kandiah, M.P., B.A. (Hons.) London, M.A. (Cantab.), was appointed by Mr. B. A. Jayasinghe, Special Commissioner for the Colombo Municipal Council and Municipal Commissioner, Colombo, to report on the Public Library of the Colombo Municipal Council. The Commission was appointed on February 19, 1958. The terms of reference are as follows:—

To report on the working of the Colombo Public Library and to make recommendations for—

- (1) the selection, indenting and purchasing of books and periodicals and their preservation;
 - (2) the proper classification, cataloguing and display of books and periodicals;
 - (3) an adequate and satisfactory system of use of the lending and reference sections;
 - (4) the organization of a modern system of maintenance of stocks of books and periodicals and equipment and furniture;
 - (5) the maintenance of a proper system of accounts;
 - (6) adequate staffing; and
 - (7) such incidental measures and schemes of organization and administration as will improve the working of the Library so that it may serve as fully as is possible the purpose for which it is intended.
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THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER FOR THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, COLOMBO,
AND MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER, COLOMBO.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for the courtesy shown me in appointing me as a Special Commission to report on the Public Library organization in Colombo and for the assistance you have rendered me in my work.

2. My report is submitted herewith.

3. I wish to thank the officers of the Public Library and the members of the public for the assistance afforded me in my work.

4. I must express my obligation and thankfulness to the Secretary to the Commission, Miss K. M. K. L. Perera. To Mr. F. G. E. Collette, who has assisted the Commission as Stenographer, I am deeply thankful for the patience, efficiency and good humour with which he has helped me in my entire work.

Yours faithfully,

P. KANDIAH.

The Town-Hall, •
Colombo,
15 May, 1958.

Dear Sir,

The scope of the Report you have asked me to make is, in one sense, rather limited. You have asked me to study the present condition and organization of the Public Library and to make recommendations for its reorganization on a more adequate and rational basis, so that it may serve, as fully as is possible, the purpose for which it is intended. I do so in Parts 1 and 2 of the Report. A careful study of the problems presented by the terms of reference has prompted me first to deal with the present Public Library, and thereafter to go further and study the lines along which an adequate Public Library service for the City of Colombo may be developed in due course. Both aspects are covered by the terms of reference.

I have reached the conclusion that, utilizing the space available in the present premises, (allowing for some rearrangement in the use of the various rooms) and without further recruitment to the staff (except perhaps in regard to two or three additions), the Library can, if properly organized, be helped to extend the scope of its usefulness to the public many times more than is the case at present. The only change I suggest is an immediate but modest increase in the funds allocated for purchase of books and periodicals. I go further and state that such reorganization is a matter of immediate urgency. Indeed, without reorganization of the present Library no further extension is possible or can be recommended. I regret to report that the present Library is so poorly organized, without any regard whatsoever to the needs of the service or to the more routine principles of librarianship, that to extend its stocks of literature or to enlarge its scope would be to widen the boundaries of ignorance, neglect, and indifference.

My first desire therefore is to suggest ways of putting the Library, as it is today, on a proper basis. All recommendations I make in this regard are contained in Part 1; and are elementary knowledge to those trained in the methods of modern librarianship. All these recommendations are short-term, and could be carried out in the space of about nine months. I have deliberately refrained from dealing with the larger questions of the scope and purpose of Public Library service or of its development in a democratic society like ours, as these questions, however interesting, are not directly related to the terms of reference.

It would not need to be emphasized that this is the first step. A series of further steps need to be taken to extend the usefulness of the Library by expanding a single institution into a number of institutions, all administered from one centre. The measures necessary for such a Public Library system are dealt with in Part 2 of this Report. These measures would come up for implementation gradually over a period of the next five years, so that at the end of this period, we may hope to have laid the basis for a City-wide Library service on which further expansion would be possible, with the more generous sanction of funds.

Two other related points for consideration arise. The first is concerned with the provision of facilities for professional training in librarianship. This is a subject of interest not merely to the Public Library system in the City, though, in this Report, I am concerned only with the Public Library. I cannot be indifferent to the need for professionally trained librarians to serve in the Municipal, Town and Urban Council libraries generally, in the various Departments of Government and in the many schools of the Island. It appeared to me wise therefore to deal with the entire subject of professional training, even if only briefly. The second refers to the organization of a National Library. A National Library serves, in my opinion, a purpose other than, and bigger than, a City Public Library system, and therefore, it has to be organized and developed separately. If only to warn against any attempt to identify the one with the other, I have thought it useful to deal, briefly, with the National Library. Both these points constitute Part 3 of this Report.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

There is no doubt that the Public Library is in an extremely sorry condition. The general impression created in the mind of a visitor or a reader in the Library is an altogether unhappy one.

The supply of books and periodicals is appallingly inadequate. Their arrangement and display, the making available to the public of the Library's very limited resources are in a state of indescribable disorder and neglect. Many accepted principles of Library organization remain totally ignored. The catalogues are incomplete and are in two different forms.

Except for the books in the shelves of the lending library—and these, I learnt, have seldom been dusted and therefore appeared with an overlay of dirt which must be injurious to their preservation—and in a few of the book shelves in the reference library, the rest of the books appeared to be piled anyhow, anywhere. In fact the dominant impression I gained is this scant regard shown to books which were found lying about everywhere: on the floor, in soiled bookcases, on working tables, etc. It is surprising that such a large number of books is found strewn about, thus temporarily withdrawn from use, with no entry in regard to such withdrawal anywhere. I do not think I have seen any other Library where books are scattered and thrown about in such disorderly fashion; the damage to books must be heavy indeed.

The comfort and needs of the readers appear to have been completely overlooked. A reference library and reading room is housed in a part of the building on the ground floor which is small and extremely warm. The cooler portions of the building on the ground floor are reserved for the lending library book stacks. On the first floor the bulk of the space is reserved for the Library staff, each member of which is provided with a space far too lavish and far too inconvenient to be used as a work room. Two rooms—and these are about the best—are reserved to stack bundles of old periodicals which are heaped about unattended for weeks and months. Two other rooms have been used to shelve books which looked dirty and old and about the past history of which no one in the Library was able to provide any information. They are apparently books withdrawn from use, but I could not find any record of such withdrawal in the Library.

The readers of periodicals are confined to a central corridor which is rather stuffy, one room and a verandah space. Altogether the use to which the first floor has been put—and we must remember that the Library is working in a cramped building—is, from a Librarian's point of view, improper, wasteful and irrational. About 50% of the available space in the building appeared to be wasted—that is, not put to proper use. Dust and dirt seem to be as plentiful on the first floor as on the ground floor. The furniture has been arranged with little regard to the reader's comfort or to economy of space. All the rooms, for whatever purpose they are used, are dirty and have an uninviting appearance. The appearance presented by books, desks and chairs and other property is one of uniform shabbiness.

From the type of service provided by the Library in both the lending and reference sections, from the type of personnel to whom is assigned the work of providing the readers the required service and from the manner in which books and periodicals are kept, it became clear to me that the aims and purposes of a Public Library have been lost sight of.

The indifference with which this condition is looked upon by the personnel working in the Library appeared to be the most unhappy feature in the institution. It was clear to me that these officers, partly because of the total lack of training in librarianship and partly because of the superficial attitude generally taken in this country to the provision of such services, have not appreciated the valuable and specialized nature of the services a Public Library is meant to provide to an urban population. No attempt seems to have been made to inform them of and to introduce them to the qualities required of a Library official. These qualities are not confined exclusively to a knowledge of a subject. Fair competence, a sociable temper, a spirit of service and generosity are among the qualities that are required of a Librarian. I am satisfied, after interviewing several of them, that the employees are capable of displaying these qualities if they are helped to know the true values of librarianship as a profession. I fear these qualities are lacking because their very appearance is sought to be stifled by the manner in which the Library is administered at present. Perhaps this condition is not surprising as there is not a single trained Librarian in the Public Library, though there are five graduates holding positions of senior Library officials. It is my view that no Public Library of the scope of the present Library can function reasonably well unless its work is directed by a group of officials professionally trained in librarianship. Already in 1948, a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Sir Ivor Jennings noted this defect and recommended that "all senior staff should be trained librarians.....it is desirable that the first librarian should have a training in the United Kingdom".

I am convinced that this absence of trained librarians is a major cause of the inadequacy of this institution.

Professional ignorance and the resulting inefficiency have not merely resulted in indifference to the need to serve the public; they have also been the cause of many other administrative defects, to some of which I refer later on. The defects of the Library which I have noticed are so many and so unhappy that I have reached the conclusion that this Report would serve a better purpose if instead of dealing with a description of such defects, it placed greater emphasis on the ways and means that are immediately necessary to organize the Library on a rational basis and build a structure of library service that will in future fulfil its aims.

* There are other causes which have led to the present discontents. Among them are—

- (1) a lack of appreciation by the Municipal authorities of the vital need for an efficient organization and an adequate Public Library service for the City—a need which I believe can be supplied at a relatively inexpensive cost to the Council;
- (2) inadequacy of funds for the purchase of books and periodicals;
- (3) frequent interference by Council, its officers and executives with the internal organization and administration of the Library.

I believe a considerable amount of redefinition of attitude in all these matters is urgently necessary. Suggestions are made in regard to these matters in the course of the Report.

I must, however, emphasize that the decisive element in the proper functioning of the Library is the instruction and training of the Library personnel in the provision of the many services which it is obligatory on a Librarian to provide to every user of the Library, whether he be a scholar of profound learning or a mere casual inquirer. This decisive element is absent. I can do no better than

quote from McColvin's "The Chance to Read" (page 49):—

"Librarianship is not merely a process of collecting books; it is a process of relating books to the lives of the people who use the library—of selecting those which will serve their needs, of arranging them so that they can be used easily and fully, perhaps of discovering and defining the precise needs so that the precise material can be given, often of encouraging the further use of books and widening both the circle of readers and the interests of those within it. To achieve this task successfully a librarian needs a wide knowledge of books and of life, and a catholic understanding of and sympathy with people; he needs also to be a good business man able to make the most of limited resources, and a good administrator capable of managing a complex organization catering for a clientele drawn from all sorts and conditions of life, and a likable personality capable of securing support, often unwillingly given, for his work. Having listed such a formidable catalogue of virtues it need not be said that there are probably few completely successful librarians, but there are many who go far towards securing or deserving success. In plain words, librarianship has become a profession, which means that it needs specialized training and experience and that it involves dedication to the public service. It has become a profession because in the course of years an increasing number of men and women have acquired that specialized knowledge and evidenced that sense of responsibility, and have been so manifestly better able to provide better libraries that gradually—and may be not yet completely—people have realized that librarianship is a task for professional people, that it is not just something that anyone can do, as it had to be in the beginning and still is, alas, in some places."

CHAPTER II.

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS.

For convenience, I deal with the subjects indicated in the terms of reference under the following heads:—

- A. Books (including Periodicals)—Book-Stock, Book-selection, Classification, Cataloguing, Display, Preservation, Binding, etc.
- B. Service to Readers.
- C. Staff.
- D. Finance, Maintenance of Accounts, etc.
- E. The relations between Library and Municipal Council.

BOOKS—BOOK STOCK, BOOK SELECTION, CLASSIFICATION, CATALOGUING,
DISPLAY, PRESERVATION, BINDING, ETC.

Book Stock.

What is the number of volumes of books in the Public Library? I have sought an answer to this question from the Librarian. He does not know the correct answer. Comment is unnecessary on this state of affairs. For what it is

worth, the information that the Librarian supplied is stated below. According to one set of figures which the Librarian supplied, the position is as follows:—

Number of books on stock on 31st December, 1949.

Total	English Non-Fiction	English Fiction	Sinhalese Non-Fiction	Sinhalese Fiction	Tamil Non-Fiction	Tamil Fiction
33,319	23,411	9,908	—	—	—	—

Number of volumes added since 1st January, 1950.

Year	Total	English Non-Fiction	English Fiction	Sinhalese Non-Fiction	Sinhalese Fiction	Tamil Non-Fiction	Tamil Fiction
1950	1,961	1,236	725	—	—	—	—
1951	2,864	1,762	505	291	219	87	—
1952	5,240	3,453	1,151	447	80	29	80
1953	1,788	1,492	245	44	7	—	—
1954	2,111	1,813	237	40	21	—	—
1955	1,972	1,358	530	80	3	—	1
1956	752	135	2	403	202	—	—
1957	936	683	242	7	4	—	—

These figures are, according to the Librarian, obtained from the accessions registers. To the extent that these figures are accurate there should be 50,943 volumes in stock on 31st December, 1957, excluding Sinhalese and Tamil books acquired by the Library before 1st January, 1950.

There is a discrepancy, however. Jennings in his report in December, 1948, states, presumably on the information given him by the Librarian at the time, that the Library had only 20,414 volumes. This shows a difference of nearly 13,000 volumes between the stocks in December, 1948, and in December, 1949.

According to another set of figures which the Librarian said were collected from the invoices of the various years, the number of purchases for the Library after 1st January, 1950, is as follows:—

Year	English	Sinhalese	Tamil
1950	1,639	—	—
1951—1952	2,250	239	2
1952—1953	2,184	283	1
1953—1954	1,725	30	—
1954—1955	1,848	47	—
April, 1955—December, 1955	93	6	—
1956	273	—	—
1957	341	—	—

Thus, according to this version the total of 10,061 volumes were purchased during the period 1st January, 1950, to 31st December, 1957. If these figures are correct, the total number of volumes in stock on 31st December, 1957, is 44,380.

In a third answer to the question worded "What is the number of volumes in the Library as at 31st December, 1957, in Sinhalese, Tamil and English", the Librarian gave the following answer:—

"Approximately 30,000 volumes: English 27,000, Sinhalese 2,200, Tamil 850."

Thus I have been given 3 answers to the same question. The first answer gives the number as 50,943 volumes; the second answer the figure of 44,380, and the third answer the figure of approximately 30,000.

It is difficult to understand these answers! The only conclusion I can come to is that the Library book stock is at some figure between 30,000 and 50,000 volumes—an altogether unhelpful position. That a public institution using public funds can function in this disorder is very unfortunate.

In regard to the number of volumes withdrawn from the Library at various intervals the Librarian has provided the following information:—

Books withdrawn and lost up till 31st December, 1949—

English (non-fiction)	2,744	} ... 4,720
English (fiction)	1,976	
Books withdrawn from 1947 to 1957	2,737	
Total	7,457	

I asked the Librarian to let me see the Library register where the names of books withdrawn are recorded. The Librarian did not let me see these records but answered the question with the following words:—

“Except during the last few years, there are no records of withdrawals from the Library or of books missing or lost from the Library. So that it is not possible to state accurately the present stock position of books or of bound periodicals.”

In further answer to this question the Librarian stated:

“There is a record of books withdrawn and lost till 31st December, 1949. It is possible that there were more books withdrawn and lost till 31st December, 1949, than are recorded. Going only on the records there were about 28,500 volumes in stock on 31st December, 1949. Records have been kept of books withdrawn and lost from 1st January, 1950. There are no separate entries and files for books withdrawn and lost for the whole period till 31st December, 1949. Such entries have to be traced laboriously in the accession register. Entries were kept in books and files in regard to books lost and withdrawn from 1st January, 1950. But I am unable to state whether all these records are available.”

The conclusion I reached after a careful examination of the stock position is that in this matter we are in the world of the unknown.

Book Selection.

The Librarian stated that books and periodicals are selected by the Librarian from reviews, catalogues, and on suggestions from members of the public and by members of the Public Library Committee and are forwarded to the Library Committee for approval. This practice is usual in most public libraries—except that in addition to the Librarian himself every officer of the Library also co-operates in the job of book selection. In countries like Great Britain, help in the job of book selection is provided by bodies like Library Associations, learned and scientific societies, well-organized bibliographical services, etc. There appear to exist in Ceylon no such forms of help and no contact seems to be maintained between the Public Library here and Library Associations and learned societies abroad.

If in the presence of all these deficiencies an untrained Library staff is entrusted with the job of book selection it is quite likely that irregularities and inadequacies may frequently appear.

The duty of a Library is to provide the books the readers want. I have not been able to find in the Public Library facilities provided to members of the public

for making suggestions—the suggestions book is rarely available to the public. Public co-operation is essential in full for book selection as well, and I therefore recommend that suggestions books be placed in different parts of the Library and an inscription like the following be displayed prominently:—

“ If you recommend the purchase of any book or journal for the Library, please make your suggestions in the suggestions book which is kept for your use.”

Such an invitation to members of the public is without value if the books they recommend are not in fact bought by the Library with the least possible delay. If members of the public gain the impression that the books and periodicals they recommend remain unbought by the Library for many months they will tend to discard the use of the suggestions book. I asked the Librarian the following question:—

“ Roughly what is the period of time between a reader's request for the purchase of a book and your making the book available in the Library ? ”

The Librarian answered as follows:—

“ According to the present procedure it would be rarely before one year, but most probably longer than that ”

and he added:

“ It takes about 2 years before a book can be made available to the reader.”
If this is the position the public might as well be not invited to make any recommendations of their own.

From the figures given above it is clear that annual acquisitions are extremely small. No serious Library service is possible with such a meagre ration. The stock must be increased, and if the recommendations made below (in this and the next Part) are accepted, I expect the annual purchase to be about 5,000 volumes in 1958, rising annually, and reaching 10,000 to 13,000 volumes in the last year of the 5-year period from now. I estimate, on this basis, that there would be an addition of about 40,000 volumes at the end of a 5-year period in 1962. This is the minimum figure we should plan for during the next 5 years. It is also the optimum figure in a sense. We have to move gradually, as funds are always likely to be limited and as the Library staff cannot be expected to cope with a bigger number of acquisitions without adequate professional training. The rate of expansion after the 5-year period would, of course, have to be greater, for the duration of the next ten years or so.

Though the annual purchase hitherto has been small, I do not think that the selection of books has always been correct and that the limited funds have been used wisely. I am not satisfied that the present Library staff or the Librarian are capable of undertaking and performing satisfactorily the job of book selection. I noted, for example, that some very expensive science and medical text-books had been purchased, though their value to the general body of readers is bound to be very insignificant. In view of the need to increase the number of purchases, book selection becomes a very responsible job. The job needs to be done by a Library staff which is professionally trained. It must be noted that there are 5 graduates on the staff, and it may be presumed that they have specialized knowledge of different subjects with the range of literature in which they will be likely to be familiar. They must be encouraged to recommend books in their own subjects.

Special problems are presented in Colombo. A superficial survey must be periodically made of the types of readers who frequently use the Library. For example, it appears certain that students preparing for examinations form a fair proportion of the readers. They come to the Library to read serious literature in

their chosen subjects of study. Their need, in the circumstances prevailing today, is important, and must, as far as possible, be supplied. A fair percentage of new acquisitions annually may therefore have to consist of standard books, text-books, and other background material in the main examination subjects which readers seek to study. Sometimes, even duplicate copies of some of these standard books may be necessary. Similarly, there may be other groups of readers whose needs must be studied and supplied. There are various other ways in which a Librarian could seek to assess the public demand for literature and to supply it. As a first step it will be useful for the Public Library to maintain contact with the University and other libraries in the country.

In addition, a working rule that all books published in Ceylon in Sinhala and Tamil, save those that are school texts or are ephemeral, be acquired for the Library might be accepted as a satisfactory method. In regard to Tamil books, the supply is almost unlimited from publishers in South India, and the "Madras Hindu" has a comprehensive book review in its Sunday edition.

Many readers and associations have sent in memoranda or given evidence to complain about the inadequacy of books in Sinhala and Tamil. Mr. D. B. Dhanapala, Editor of the "Lankadipa", wrote in to say the following:—

"The greatest defect in the Library as at present constituted is that the Sinhalese section cannot in any sense of the word be called a part of the Public Library.....I believe that the Sinhalese section of the Library should contain almost every book of any significance published in Ceylon in modern times. And day by day a look-out should be kept on the most recent publications which should be ordered as soon as they are published. On the average every year round about a thousand books are printed and issued in Sinhalese. One copy of each of these books will not be sufficient because in the case of a number of these the demand may be for much more.....In any kind of reorganization, Sinhalese and Tamil sections should receive the greatest attention, because they have been the most neglected."

The same view has been emphasized by Mr. R. Siriwardena of the Editorial Staff of the "Ceylon Daily News". Complaints about inadequacy of Tamil books have been made, among others, by the President of the Colombo Thamilsangam, Mr. K. P. Ratnam, who added that he himself prepared a list of over 500 important Tamil books for purchase by the Library, though no book in this list has been purchased.

I fully agree with these observations; how true they are can be seen from the fact that the total number of volumes in the Library in Sinhala is less than 2,000, and in Tamil less than 400. As a first step, I recommend that the Librarian should immediately stock the Library with a basic minimum stock of 4,000 books each in Sinhala and Tamil. A list of such books can be made from the present collection at the University Library at Peradeniya; in regard to Tamil, the Colombo Thamilsangam has requested me to state that its fullest co-operation will be at all times available to the Librarian on request. I cannot see any progress without an immediate and large addition to the present stock of Sinhala and Tamil books. While not neglecting the purchase of increasing numbers of books in English, the emphasis must be on the purchase of books in Sinhala and Tamil.

I also think that it is urgent that an agreement must be reached with the Government Printer and the Information Officer for the free issue to the Public Library of copies of every official publication. It will be useful to ask for two copies of every publication to be supplied, one of which can be made available straightaway to the readers and the other can be retained and be bound, with related literature, in volumes. In the City, there is no library where a reader could obtain for reference Government official publications, sessional papers, administration reports, Hansards, etc. It is the Public Library's duty to supply

such literature to the readers. This literature must be complete. The supply of such official publications is all the more urgent because (a) the output of official publications is every year increasing, (b) such literature is often the only source of information on many matters of importance, and (c) more citizens are becoming interested in the study of such official literature. I would add here that the Library should, as far as possible, try and collect official publications for past years if they are not now available in the Library and make the official publications collection as complete as possible.

A similar agreement should also be reached with local branches or associations representing the U.N.O., and its specialized agencies like the E.C.A.F.E., the W.H.O., F.A.O., U.N.E.S.C.O., etc. I regard the acquisition of all official and semi-official publications by the Government and by international organizations as a matter of very far-reaching importance. I would urge that separate sections of the Library be built up to assemble such collections and that separate catalogues be provided of such literature. All these collections could conveniently form part of the Reference Library.

I find that the Reference literature in the form of encyclopædias, dictionaries, hand-books, guides, atlases, gazettes, directories, etc., is small. I suggest that this section of the Library be improved without delay. Lists of standard reference works in use in English Public libraries can be obtained easily from the Library Association in England. From such lists we can select items that are necessary for the Colombo Library. Similar lists can be made of Reference literature in Sinhala and Tamil. The Reference section of the present Library cannot seriously be called a Reference Library. It will be useful for an official of the Library to spend a month in the Library at the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya to get a working knowledge of the range of Reference literature and the scope of Reference library work.

An appreciation of the uses of a Reference Library can be gained from the following brief description which is found in McColvin's "The Chance to Read" (pages 37, 38, 39):—

"It is a place at which people can obtain information—about anything and almost everything. Some use it as a workshop in which to pursue their studies and their research with all their tools ready at hand. Most come to it seeking specific information. Therefore the salient part of this stock is information-giving material—dictionaries and encyclopædias both general and of special subjects, foreign dictionaries, directories, year books, atlases, guides, gazetteers, tables, formulae, government publications, law cases and statutes and compendia, text-books and standard works on all important fields of knowledge, sets of the works of leading authors, county and national histories, and so on. These will be supplemented by sets of periodicals, bibliographies, abstracts and indexes, files of cuttings, pamphlets, and photographs and illustrations. The stock is built up with that main purpose—to provide information when it is needed..... Nevertheless, in addition to this general provision, most reference libraries have one or more special collections, in limited fields wherein more intensive, more detailed coverage is attempted. One such specialization is usual—the 'local' collection, embracing as completely as possible every book, periodical, pamphlet, map, print, manuscript, or other items relating to the town or district, its history, topography, social and cultural life, natural history, notabilities, and so on—usually, too, one finds special collections dealing with important local industries—and such collections are often also available in the lending department. Sometimes, again, there are specializations due to the accident of bequests or the personal interests of librarians, not specifically related to that town more than to others but valuable both there and to the nation at large. Such special collections—of local and non-local subjects, for lending and for reference—will play an increasing part in the national scheme of library development."

The Reference Library should consist of—

- (a) Standard Reference books—mostly those referred to by McColvin.
- (b) Rare books on history, fine arts, etc.
- (c) Special Collections—e.g., history of Colombo.
- (d) Government publications.
- (e) Publications of International Associations, Agencies, etc.
- (f) Bound Periodicals.

New sections could be added in due course.

We should aim at building a collection of 50,000 volumes in the Reference Library in the course of the next eight years. Of course, the adequate number which can be reached only after a period of ten to 15 years for a Central Reference Library will be about 100,000 volumes.

Certain principles are commonly accepted as a guide to the policy of book acquisition for a Public Library. Though they may have to be slightly modified to suit conditions peculiar to Ceylon, they hold valid here. I quote from McColvin "The Chance to Read" (pages 35 and 36):—

"These readers, however, will display a variety of approach, from the escapist who finds escape in sugary coating to the most purposive. A great many of the users are students—young people studying for examinations. university students, research workers. Others are no less purposive in that they seek help in their work, may be to keep abreast of current developments, to learn of new methods and discoveries, perhaps to solve the problems that arise day by day, perhaps to become better qualified and more successful. Others read not for educational or vocational reasons but because they seek to understand better the world in which they live, its social and economic conditions and problems, its forms of government and systems of law. Probably a majority are concerned with the humanities, choosing to broaden their outlook and increase their enjoyment of life by recourse to the works of poets, essayists, historians, musicians, philosophers, and all who have ideas and the ability to express them. Many—and it is important to encourage this type of demand because it brings books to considerable numbers who have no desire for education, 'culture', or anything which they might regard as 'highbrow'—come for practical help in everyday matters—on how to cook, grow flowers, mend radio sets, make furniture, tend the sick, make toys, clothes, and a thousand other things, or seek material on their hobbies and pastimes, be these philately, chess, genealogy, or any of those pursuits which so fortunately 'matter' because they 'don't matter'. All these folk will find something in the library stock which will serve them—and not all the books will be in the English language; some, for students and foreign residents, will be in French, German, Spanish, Italian, and other languages."

From these observations and from a superficial survey of the needs of the reading public of Colombo certain guiding directions can be stated. Normal recreational reading is what most readers would ask for. A majority of books and periodicals, in Sinhala, Tamil and English, must therefore be provided for this purpose, as a first priority. Fiction, biography, travel, history, geography, popular science, would constitute such literature. A Public Library is also an extension of a city's educational structure. The performance of the educational function is usually an important aspect of a Public Library service. In Ceylon it is even more important than it is in educationally more developed countries. Students in large numbers might wish to carry on their educational work on their own, and prepare to obtain higher academic and educational qualifications. From all the evidence available to me, I am satisfied that a large number of students do use the Library for this purpose, and would use it in greater numbers if more facilities were available.

They must be encouraged by the Library officials to use and ask for more facilities. It must also be borne in mind that the City provides no other library where students can have access freely to such facilities. It is important therefore that adequate provision, as far as is possible, be made available to supply literature that students need. Such literature would be in the main standard text-books in various subjects, background material and serious periodical literature. Technical literature, books and periodicals of all types, is another essential item, as the number of readers in need of such service is increasing fast, as it must in a growing society. Commercial literature and periodicals, providing up-to-date commercial intelligence, market reports and similar information are also another essential item. These principles must, in general, guide the policy of book selection for the Library—though in practice the degree of emphasis will be decided by frequent surveys of the needs of the public which a Library should undertake as part of its service. I need hardly add that the provision of facilities in the manner I have indicated hardly exists in the Library today.

Classification and Cataloguing.

A complete catalogue of books and periodicals, properly classified, is the key to a library. I regret to say that no such catalogue exists in the library. I point out below some of the defects:—

- (a) The catalogues at present used do not appear to have entries for all the books in the Library. The Librarian has been unable to state the number of books in the Library which have remain uncatalogued—it is possible that the number runs into hundreds.
- (b) Books recently purchased also appear to remain uncatalogued for months.
- (c) Till 1949, the sheaf catalogue was in use. In 1949, the new card catalogue was introduced—a decidedly better system. The Librarian thinks that the sheaf catalogue does not contain entries for all books in the Library acquired till 1949; he cannot even provide any rough information on the matter. There are no records available in the Library from which these gaps can be filled.
- (d) There are now two sets of catalogues in use in the Library; one, the sheaf catalogue, listing books bought before 1949, and two, the card catalogue, listing books bought after 1949—and both catalogues are incomplete. Let us suppose that a reader wants to find out whether a book is available in the Library. He has first to consult two sets of catalogues, differently arranged and kept. It is difficult for a normal reader to get used to a particular catalogue; in this instance, he has to familiarise himself with two sets of catalogues, differently assembled and kept in different places. After having laboured through both catalogues, let us suppose that he finds no entry for the book he is looking for: even then, it would not mean that the book is not in the Library. It may be in, but may not have been catalogued. Now suppose he passes from the catalogue to the shelf where he expects the book to be, if the Library has it. If it is not in the shelves, even then it does not mean that the Library does not have that book. It may have it, and the book may have been lent out. So, after all this laborious search, the reader is still unable to know whether the Library has the book that he wants. He then approaches a Librarian for the information. Here, again, no Library employee is in a position to help him because, the employee is placed in the same position of helplessness, as he himself has no record to help him to trace the book:
- (e) There are no catalogue entries for periodicals and their back numbers.
- (f) There is no classification system for Sinhalese and Tamil books.
- (g) There are far too many needless entries in the catalogue.

(h) Many books which should have been taken on to the accession register and catalogued and classified, are thrown about in the periodicals room. For example, on a visit to the Library, I found the following books kept along with periodicals—unaccessioned, and uncatalogued; in other words, they have been thrown away for ephemeral use, and did not form part of the Library stock of literature.

(i) Culture and Human Fertility by Frank Lorimer. U.N.E.S.C.O. publication; pages 514 (1954).

(ii) Social Implications of Industrialization and Urbanization in Africa South of Sahara—By International African Institute. U.N.E.S.C.O. Publication; pages 743 (1956).

(i) No catalogue entries are made for official publications of Government or of international organizations. ✓

As in every other sphere of the work done in the Library, classification and cataloguing are both in an extremely sorry condition and I suggest that immediate steps be taken to set matters right in regard to the catalogue.

I make the following recommendations:—

- (1) A full stock-taking of the books and periodicals in the Library be undertaken without delay. The opportunity thus provided should be used (1) to catalogue all books and periodicals that have remained uncatalogued in the past; (2) to withdraw obsolete and unnecessary books; (3) to repair, bind or otherwise preserve books which need repair; (4) to write off all books missing or lost—and to make appropriate entries in the accession register; (5) to know the exact number of books in stock; and (6) to put right all mistakes, irregularities, etc., which have accumulated over years, and which have remained undetected. When this job is complete, I believe we will at long last be able to provide the Library with an up-to-date catalogue, and a full record of all the literature available in the Library. All irregularities which arose in the past and survive till now about the actual stock-position, unauthorized or unnecessary withdrawals of books, the number of books lost, misplaced or rendered unusable, will all be put an end to.
- (2) All entries in the sheaf catalogue be transferred to the card catalogue—when this is done, the sheaf catalogue can be discarded altogether.
- (3) All periodicals be catalogued in the proper way—to include periodicals bound for permanent use.
- (4) All official publications be catalogued under the main catalogue and under subjects; I would advise, however, that the subject catalogue of official publications be kept separate from the subject catalogue of other books.
- (5) The Dewey system of classification be adopted for classifying Sinhalese and Tamil books—the number following the decimal need not be used, and the letter “S” and “T” could precede the number. Entries for Sinhalese and Tamil books should, in my opinion, be in Sinhalese and Tamil respectively. The system of cataloguing Sinhalese and Tamil books in use at the University Library may be used in this Library.
- (6) Regarding catalogue entries, the present practice of maintaining (1) a main entry, (2) an author entry, (3) subject entry, in addition to various other entries when necessary, could easily be modified without injury to the system of cataloguing.

I suggest that the following two main entries are adequate:—

- (1) A main entry, under authors (or titles, when this is the only form possible)—to constitute what is known as a Dictionary Catalogue;
- (2) A subject entry—classified by subjects, according to the Dewey system; and when necessary, a title entry or a series entry. Cross-reference under editor, compiler or translator could be given in both main catalogue and subject catalogue on coloured cards.

Periodicals.

Periodicals and journals form a very significant section of the literature in a Public Library; their supply is, accordingly, accepted as a major service of a Library to its readers. Periodicals consist of—

- (a) daily newspapers,
- (b) non-daily publications of a light nature—e.g., “Times of India Illustrated,”
- (c) non-daily publications of a serious nature—e.g., “New Statesman and Nation,” and
- (d) technical and scientific journals.

I think that most of the periodicals in categories (c) and (d) should be bound and preserved.

I would estimate that for the present a minimum of 400 such different periodicals will be an adequate supply for the City Public Library service—in the 3 languages, Sinhala, Tamil and English.

It is important that extreme care be taken in the selection of the periodicals, so that the many legitimate interests of various types of readers can be met as adequately as is possible. There is a tendency, which is often difficult to get away from, to dump the periodicals room with copies of various ephemeral, periodically published propaganda sheets which are supplied free by publishers and propaganda agencies. I found in the library many such propaganda journals, almost exclusively published abroad. The well-meaning but untrained Librarian might accept this dumping on the ground that any reading matter is better than no reading matter, and on the ground that in any case the bigger the supply of periodicals the better for the Library. This is a view held in error and I oppose it. It will be best, therefore, if lists of periodicals are approved by the Library Committee before they are purchased or received as gifts—a precaution that will help to keep out inferior propaganda literature from the periodicals room.

The present position in regard to the supply of periodicals is unsatisfactory. In 1957, 252 periodicals were available in the Library. This number includes all Government publications like sessional papers, administration reports, Parliamentary Acts, Hansards, etc. It also includes all daily newspapers. Of this number, 111 were purchased and 141 were received as gifts. There were only 23 periodicals in Sinhala and Tamil (Sinhala 14 and Tamil 9). Only 39 journals are preserved as bound copies; 17 more are intended to be so preserved. In the case of the journals preserved as bound volumes, most of them have remained unbound since 1952. I am unable to see why journals received after that date have remained unbound up to date.

On a visit to the Library on 21st February, 1958, I found copies of the following journals scattered about and kept in a condition that is not fit for binding:—

- The Hibbert Journal
- The Central Bank of Ceylon Bulletin
- The Tropical Agriculturist
- The World Theatre
- Visvabharati Quarterly
- The Encounter
- The Economic Journal
- Sociological Review.

I feel that each of these journals deserves to be bound and kept for permanent use. I am surprised that no care was taken of these journals. Quite a number of publications of the United Nations Organization and its agencies were found in the Reading Room, also thrown about carelessly. They had not been catalogued.

I make the following recommendations in regard to periodicals:—

1. An early decision should be made by the Library Committee in regard to which of the 252 journals should be accepted and which should be rejected.
2. A similar decision must be made by the Library Committee on what new journals the Library should acquire, and which journals are to be bound and preserved.
3. An ampler supply of Sinhala and Tamil periodicals other than the daily newspapers should be made available.
4. All journals should be made easily available on the reading desks in the reading rooms, within 24 hours after receipt, except the dailies—this is not the case at present.
5. All journals except dailies should be supplied with covers.
6. All journals except dailies should be preserved for a year except those bound for permanent use.
7. Except English and American journals, which can be ordered through agents, all other journals should be ordered from the publishers or through Ceylon agents.
8. The periodicals room should contain all unbound copies of journals and the Reference Library could keep all bound volumes.
9. All journals bound for permanent use should be catalogued—each catalogue card should give complete information about the journal and the years for which they are available.
10. Of some important periodicals, the Library should acquire duplicate copies—one of which can be kept clean for binding. The Library Committee must decide, on the recommendation of the Librarian, which these periodicals should be.

Preservation of Books and Binding, etc.

Preservation of books is usually difficult in the tropics and greater attention should therefore be devoted to this. Books must be dusted periodically and examined to keep them free from insects. It will be a wise precaution if, as I have stated elsewhere, all new book-cases are of the same pattern and have glass doors. Most of the open book-cases now in use can be transferred to the Reference Library and the Reading Room and the closed bookcases can be used in the Lending Library. Some of the open bookcases can have glass doors fitted on.

The practice at present in regard to binding is to get a commercial binder to do the work. If it is true that a commercial binder will bind at a cheaper cost than the Municipal Press there can be no objection to this procedure, though I think that the binding section of the Municipal Press may be enlarged to take in all the Public Library binding. That, however, is a matter for the Municipal Council. It is important when books are bound that the binder should be instructed to mark the titles and the classification numbers in gold or in white on the spine of the books in order to facilitate easier identification on the shelves. The publication of the cheaper Sinhala and Tamil books, printed on cheap newsprint and bound in paper is a real problem for the Public Library. Often it is not worth binding these books. It might be cheaper in a large number of cases to buy duplicate copies of these books or even more than two copies and issue them without sending them to the binder. It is wise to observe the rule that when a book is available in two qualities of paper, the Library should acquire the copies printed on better paper and with better binding.

It will be necessary, in my view, to train two of the Library Attendants in the work of minor repair of books, whether the repair is in regard to torn pages or torn or mutilated covers. Some important pamphlets and other periodical literature can be sewn with cardboard covers by these attendants before they are sent into the Library. A fair deal of such minor repair work is done by the University Library at Peradeniya and it may be useful to send these attendants to receive a short period of training there. It has been a subject of complaint that a large number of books is kept in the rooms of the Librarian and his Assistants and are thus not made available for use by the readers. I think this practice must stop. No books except those dealing exclusively with librarianship need be kept in any room of any Library officer except during the period of processing them. Even those books on librarianship which are kept in the Library Office should be catalogued and classified in the main catalogue.

The book-cases do not carry inscriptions stating the subjects of the books that they contain. The reader is therefore at a loss. I suggest that each book-case should have a writing on top printed in bright colour stating the subjects of the books and the classification numbers, and that these bookcases be arranged in the Lending Library in the serial order according to which they are classified in the catalogue. Since the Dewey system is followed in classification, the book-cases may also be arranged according to the Dewey system. Fiction can be put away on one side under the title "Fiction".

One or more book-cases must be kept near the entrance to the Lending Library to display the latest additions and must carry the inscription "Latest Additions". I believe that a period of two months would be adequate for such a display. At the end of this period these books can be shelved in the book-cases according to their subject.

A list of new additions could also be published in the Sunday papers weekly for the information of the public.

CHAPTER III.

SERVICE TO READERS.

1. *Hours of work.*

Many readers have made representations that the Library is not open for sufficiently long hours and for a sufficiently adequate number of days in the year. If we bear in mind the fact that the Public Library is the only library in the City available to its residents, it will be easy to accept these representations as being very reasonable. Even if we had a book stock several times as many as the present number in the Library, and even if we provide for several Branch Libraries, the request that the Public Library be kept open for longer hours and more days would be a legitimate request. Its urgency is all the greater today when we seek to satisfy a mounting popular demand with an inadequate ration of reading literature. I am in full sympathy with this request and if I do not deal with it at greater length it is because it appeared to need no special pleading. I recommend that the Public Library (all sections) be kept open on all days in the year except during the 8 Public Library holidays and that the hours of work in all sections of the Library be from 8 a.m. to 8-30 p.m., every day, Sundays included. The Library staff will work in two shifts. The cadre of 43 employees which I have recommended elsewhere, providing for 2 additions to the present number, is sufficient in number to undertake the additional work. The two new officers whose recruitment I have recommended would in any event be necessary to carry out the reorganization I recommend. I do not therefore anticipate any increase in expenditure to follow my recommendation in regard to the hours of work.

2. *Accommodation.*

The present accommodation is as follows:—

Reference Library:	...	48 seats
Reading Room:	...	78 seats

This accommodation is very inadequate. Taking the available space into consideration, it is not necessary to keep the accommodation so limited. I suggest that we should increase the accommodation in the Reference Library to 75 seats and in the Reading Room to 125 seats. I have worked out and satisfied myself that this accommodation can be provided within the space now available in the building. A total number of 200 readers can be accommodated at any time. I would only urge that the new tables and chairs that would be acquired for the Library to provide for this increase of accommodation be more comfortable. They can be made on the specifications in use in any standard British Library.

3. *Furniture.*

It has been my experience that books are better preserved in the tropics if kept in closed book-cases, but most of the bookcases now in use in the Public Library are open book-cases. I would suggest that all new book-cases made for the Library should in future have glass doors and should be of a uniform pattern. The book-cases now in use in the University Library at Peradeniya have been fashioned after careful thought and it is best that the Public Library should base its book-cases on the University Library model. As these new book-cases are made they could be used in the Lending Library and the present open cases in the Lending Library can be released for use in the Reference Library. There would be no need for the use of closed book-cases in the Reference Library itself.

The chairs and study tables are, in my opinion, uncomfortable and uninviting. The chairs should certainly have cane bottoms, and in regard to the study tables they can be modelled on those in use in any average public Library in England, specifications of which are easily available.

4. *Canteen.*

Readers and Library staff have urged the necessity for a canteen in or near the Library premises. I am in sympathy with this plea and would urge that the services of a small restaurant be made available, provided it is housed in a building not connected with the Library.

5. *The Library Building.*

It is admittedly true that the present Library building is inadequate. It is also sited in an uncongenial area. It appears to be generally agreed that the Library will have to move to a more central site and find larger premises. Till that change is accomplished, it is in my view possible to use the present building more rationally and make available a better service than is the case at present. I suggest below how this can be done.

I learnt that a wing of the present building is used by the Librarian as his residence. I suggest that the Librarian be requested to find another residence and that the wing he presently occupies be used as the Library office. This will release the entire main block for the use of the Library. The office itself need have for the present only 3 rooms: one for the use of the Librarian, one for the use of the cataloguing staff and the third for the use of the Library office staff. Once the main building is released for use as the Library, I suggest that the entire first floor be used as a General Reading Room, which will also be the Periodicals Room. The ground floor can be used by both the Lending and the Reference Sections, the space available in the Reference Section being enlarged by adding to it the nearer section of the Lending Library. The present Lending Library can, in my opinion, house, if to it is added that portion of the ground floor which is now used as the office, twice the number of volumes that it now has.

6. *The Sections of the Library.*

For purposes of administration, the Library would need to be divided into 3 Sections:—

- (1) The Lending Library.
- (2) The Reference Library.
- (3) The General Reading Room, which is also the Periodicals Room.

The nominal division of the Library at present is also along these lines. When I refer to the different sections of the Library I think not merely of physical division of the Library into 3 sections. I think more of the service that readers will receive in each of these sections. Such service does not exist today in the Public Library. The officers who work in these different sections did not appear to have the knowledge, the time, or the training to give the service that, more than anything else, readers stand in need of. It is important, therefore, in my opinion, that the officers in charge of these sections should be provided with the opportunity to improve their knowledge and training and to increase their willingness to provide service to readers. Such officers are not to be counted as clerks or as administrative personnel. I believe that each of these Sections must be in charge of a graduate Librarian who must work with his assistants as if they were all members of one team, and all attempts to grade officers into a hierarchy must be deplored. The service that is expected of each of these officers is the service of an expert.

I recommend that each of these Sections be in charge of a graduate Librarian. I recommend that an Assistant Librarian be in charge exclusively of the Reference Room and that another Assistant Librarian be in charge of the Reading Room and the Lending Library. These Assistant Librarians must work in those Branches and not move themselves to the general Library office. Their work is largely of a type that brings them into contact with hundreds of readers every day and therefore it is important that their work tables must be in places where readers will have ready access to them.

7. *The Reference Library.*

In regard to the use of the Reference Library I would observe that the present practice of preventing readers from taking their own books inside is inconvenient and unnecessary. It will help readers, specially if they happen to be students preparing for some examination, if they are allowed to take their own books into the Reference Library for the purposes of consultation with such other Library books as they want to use in the Reference Library. I believe that every encouragement must be given to such readers to have a free and full use of the Reference Library. I would suggest therefore that readers be allowed to take in their books into the Reference Library. For the purpose of security of Library books, it would be sufficient if, when a reader enters the Library, an entry is made on a slip of paper by a Library Attendant giving the name of the reader and the number of books he is taking in. If a reader is seen to walk out of the Reference Library with a book or books in his possession, then those books can be checked against the entry card which he earlier gave in on admission.

I do not see any need for covered book-cases in the Reference Library or for the issue of all reference books to readers by a Library official on an issue ticket. The Reference Library would contain two sets of books: (1) rare and precious books, and (2) normal reference books. The former set can be kept, as at present, in locked book-cases and should be issued on request by a Library official after an entry is made of the issue. The second set can very easily be shelved in open book-cases, with access to them given to every reader without the assistance of a Library officer. Readers should be allowed, unaided, to take any reference books from any part of the shelves, and they should be asked to leave the books behind on their working tables. These books can be returned to their shelves, every half hour or so, by a Library official.

The Reference Library should have two employees working continuously: a Library Attendant at the entrance and a Library Assistant or an Assistant Librarian at the Reference counter. The latter official will, in addition to rendering the services required of a reference librarian to readers, exercised control and supervision of the reference reading rooms.

I need not add that the Reference Librarian should be a trained officer, preferably of a high educational standard. I give below the qualities required of such an officer:—

“ The staff play a much more important part in reference libraries than in the lending departments because a majority of users—other than the ‘ casuals ’ who come in to browse and pass a free hour—need assistance. They require information but have little or no knowledge of sources of information. The experienced assistant who knows his material can readily answer questions, whereas the average inquirer could not know how to begin looking. And if the question is difficult or out of the way considerable research may be needed, and only one who is trained in research methods may succeed at all. Moreover, a library such as ‘ ours ’ will not itself have the material necessary to answer many of the more specialized inquiries that will be made—and this applies to lesser and greater degree in larger and smaller libraries. But the experienced assistant will be aware of other possible sources whence the information can be sought.”
McColvin “ The Chance to Read.” p. 38.

The present practice of making two entries against every reference book lent to a reader—and this even when the reader is not expected to take a book outside the Library—is wasteful and unnecessary and should be discontinued. The less the number of entries Library officials make the better, as they will thus be able to find more time to render personal assistance direct to readers.

At present the stock of books in the Reference Library seems to have been assembled without any regard to any principles. A re-examination of the present stock of books in the Reference Library is urgent. We need to keep in the Reference Library only the following subjects of literature:—

- (1) normal reference literature;
- (2) rare and precious books;
- (3) special or rare collections;
- (4) books on the history of the City;
- (5) bound periodicals;
- (6) publications of the U.N.O. and other international agencies;
- (7) Ceylon official publications in bound form.

Of course the Library Committee or the Librarian can decide to add to this collection further special groups from time to time. These principles must be decided on and the books arranged in different groups and shelved separately. It is not necessary to add that all such books in the Reference Library should be classified and catalogued in the usual way. Perhaps it will be useful to keep in the Reference Library itself a separate card catalogue of books in the Reference Library, this catalogue being in addition to, and not in place of, the main catalogue.

It will be noticed that the most important suggestion I have made in this section of my Report is in regard to the need for a better Library service to readers. In the final analysis the provision of such service is a function within the immediate competence and responsibility of the Librarian. It requires of him qualities of tact, helpfulness, a sociable character and a feeling of comradeship with his colleagues, and its success must be assessed not on the amount of work he does by himself but on the extent and character of the service he is able to get his colleagues to give. All other suggestions I have made in this chapter are dependent on this one paramount virtue which every Library officer should be helped to acquire and exhibit.

CHAPTER IV.

STAFF.

The inadequacy, from more than one angle, of the staff has been and is the chief factor responsible for the sorry condition of the Public Library. The incompetence, ignorance and indifference to the work and the profession of librarianship of the Library employees revealed by my investigation has been to me a very unhappy experience.

No employee in the Library, not even the Librarian, is professionally trained. This means that there is no one in the Library who knows what modern librarianship is. The Librarian himself struck me as a gentleman, whatever his eagerness for his work, who is ignorant of the elementary principles both of library organization and of office routine. How a Library can function on the basis of such collective ignorance is something I do not understand.

I append below a list of the employees and a description of their duties. This allocation of duties which was given to me by the Librarian shows more than anything I can say the confusion, duplication and waste that characterises the work of the Library staff. These are defects which have resulted not merely in arrears of work piling up—and here I must state categorically that in my view the piling up of arrears of work has not been due to insufficient staff—but also in the total absence of Library service to readers. An untrained Librarian is an ignorant Librarian and is therefore no Librarian. I cannot make a kinder comment. On more than one occasion, during visits to the Library, I have made from the Library officers various inquiries regarding their work, and I regret to state that on no occasion did I receive a satisfactory answer. Idleness was indeed the main impression left on my mind. I reached the conclusion that at the top most of the officers did very little work, with the result that the Library's progress is retarded and the officers themselves become demoralized; idleness can only breed intrigue, gossip, pettiness and inefficiency—all of which seem to thrive in full in this small place with 41 employees, joined in a common dedication to the performance of a single service.

The list of duties shown in the schedule below shows that the main work of an officer higher up is to sit on the work of an officer lower down—a practice very foreign to Library service. For instance, I found that a leave application by a Library Assistant has to go through two officers of intermediate rank before it reaches the Librarian and return to the Library Assistant again through these intermediaries. In this particular case I found that in spite of the intervention of all these officers the employee concerned was not given a day's leave for which she had applied a week in advance.

In the list of duties given in the schedule below I have placed an asterisk against the duties which are either duplicated or which should not have been performed by the officers concerned or which take not more than a few minutes a day; thus what is left unmarked with the asterisk indicates the main jobs they in fact perform. The schedule is submitted as a separate document.

Though in terms of their qualifications and in view of the absence of professional training, their salaries compare favourably with people of similar academic qualifications in the public or mercantile service, I would consider the salaries inadequate if they were a trained staff. Partly for this reason and partly because of the fact that the salaries of Library officers in the Public Library have to be related to the salaries of Library officers in the Public Service, I have refrained from raising the question of a revision of salaries, a subject which is also outside the terms of reference. But I have sought to correct certain of the more patent inadequacies and to suggest methods of setting right certain obvious discrepancies.

Quite apart from professional training, I find that no opportunity of any sort has been provided to the members of the Library staff to study and learn the methods, and acquire the habits, required of a Library officer. Each officer is kept tied to his allotted work for several years on end, with the result that he is unaware of the nature of the work of the other sections of the Library. He remains totally ignorant of the scope of the service he has to perform and therefore to become competent in. Most officers remain cut away from the Library proper and remain in the office—where they cannot have much work to do. They lose contact with the public, and, since in a Library there is very little office work to do, it must be presumed that they idle most of the time. This is bad organization. The attitude appears to prevail in the Library that the staff are a body of executive officers of various grades. This view, I state categorically, is a wrong view. A Library staff are actually a body of learned men of different levels, trained to perform a service, like the profession of teachers, doctors, nurses, etc.

The staff is, in the majority, ill-equipped educationally. Officers higher up seem to be given less work (in volume) and officers lower down more work than they should be asked to undertake. For instance, Miss Abeysekara, a Library Attendant with the qualification of the 7th standard, has been given work some of which is so responsible that in the Ceylon University Library the Librarian himself did the work. The Deputy Librarian's functions show that she really has no serious work other than cataloguing and classification of books; and the Additional Deputy Librarian has been given work which should not take him more than one hour a day on an average. To the question "In an average working day of 5 hours devoted to cataloguing how many books would your senior Librarian catalogue", the Librarian gave an answer which I quote:

"On an average I do not think she will be doing more than 15 to 20 at the most. That also is with the aid of B.N.B. During the time of Mr. Blok he and I did 40 to 50 books a day without B.N.B. and aids.

Journals have not been bound after 1954 due to lack of co-operation, vacancies not being filled and so on. It is next to impossible to report a person who is bad and get anything done. I did what was possible with those persons with whom I could work."

This is an extremely small output. A trained Librarian should catalogue in the Public Library between 15 to 20 books per hour, working in a leisurely way.

I consider that all Library employees of rank of library Attendant and above should be provided with ample opportunity and helped to study methods of Library organization and service and where possible to sit for professional examinations in librarianship.

I have given careful thought to the question of the staff, their work and duties, salaries, facilities for training, and I believe that unless the staff is helped to become trained and to understand the nature of Public Library service and the administrative work of the Library is rationally organized, no real progress is possible. I make the following recommendations. In making these recommendations I have kept in mind the need to keep the present employees in the Library and to help them to become good Library officers.

(1) The approved cadre in the Library is 41. Of these there are 39 working and there are 2 vacancies. I suggest that 2 more officers be recruited, thus bringing up the approved cadre to 43, and the number of vacancies to 4. I also suggest that the 4 vacancies be filled by people who have passed the London Intermediate Examination, the H.S.C. Examination or the University First in Arts or Science Examination and that these officers be paid on the salary scale I recommend below. I recommend a new grade of Junior Librarian to which these 4 people should be recruited.

(2) I suggest that the Library employees be re-grouped in the following categories and that the existing divisions be discarded:—

(a) Graduate Officers:

This will include the 5 graduates on the staff at present, i.e., Librarian, Deputy, Additional Deputy and 2 Assistant Librarians.

(b) Junior Librarians:

This will include the 4 officers to be newly recruited and the 2 present senior Library Assistants.

(c) Library Assistants:

This will include—

- (i) the present Library Assistants;
- (ii) the present Reading Room Supervisors; and
- (iii) the present Library Attendants.

Those under (ii) and (iii) will be on a different salary scale but on the same maximum.

- (d) Typist
- (e) Clerk
- (f) Peons including Cloak Room Attendants
- (g) Labourers including garden labourers
- (h) Watcher

Categories (f), (g), and (h) (minor employees) would be appointments by the Council. I say nothing about their wages except that they should all be made permanent employees. Categories (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) would be appointments by the Local Government Service Commission.

The present category of Senior Library Assistant, Cloak Room Attendant, Library Attendant and Reading Room Supervisor should be discarded. Those who are at present employed as Library Attendants or as Reading Room Supervisors should be given suitable training for a period of the next 3 years after which their competence may be tested and if they satisfy the test they may be promoted to the grade of Library Assistant. Those who are unable to pass such fitness test may be kept on the present salary scale but with a higher maximum. I suggest that all appointments to the grade of Library Attendant should in future be from those who have the S.S.C. as the minimum qualification.

(3) *Salary Scales*: My own view is that a trained Librarian should be paid a better scale of salary than is the case in Ceylon today, but that is a matter which I have not been asked to deal with in this Report. The salary scales I recommend below are therefore related to the scales that obtain in the Public Service and it is my hope that very soon there will be a general revision of salaries paid to trained Library officials in the country.

Junior Librarian	...	Rs. 1,620—6 × 120—E.B.—10 × 120— 3,780.
Junior Librarian—New Entrants	Rs. 1,380—8 × 120—E.B.—10 × 120—	3,780
Library Assistants	...	Rs. 960—8 × 72—E.B.—9 × 120—2,688
Library Attendant and Reading Room Supervisor	...	Rs. 684—10 × 30—E.B.—6 × 60—1,404

(This last category will disappear after the present holders cease employment in that category).

(4) *Allocation of duties*:—The Library should consist of two sections: the Office and the Library. The staff may be divided as follows between the two sections:—

(1) *The Office:*

- (a) Librarian, assisted by the Deputy Librarian
- (b) 1 Library Assistant
- (c) 1 Clerk
- (d) 1 Typist cum Clerk.
- (e) 1 Peon

(2) *The Library:*

Functions: The purchasing, cataloguing, classification, binding of books and periodicals and all other work connected with the provision and display of reading material for use of readers.

- (a) The Librarian
- (b) Deputy Librarian for cataloguing and classification—
(Sinhalese speaking)
- (c) 1 Assistant Librarian for cataloguing and classification—
(Tamil speaking)
- (d) 1 Assistant Librarian for periodicals—purchase, binding
and cataloguing (in addition to being in charge of
Reading Room) plus the Lending Library
- (e) 2 Library Assistants
- (f) 1 Typist (qualified)
- (g) 1 Peon

(3) *Lending Library:*

- (a) 6 Library Assistants
- (b) 2 Peons

(4) *Reference Library:*

- (a) 1 Assistant Librarian
- (b) 4 Library Assistants
- (c) 2 Peons.

(5) *Reading Room:*

- (a) 2 Library Assistants.
- (b) 2 Peons

I recommend that as early as circumstances permit, perhaps even in 1958, the Librarian should be requested to proceed to the London University and follow the University course of diploma in Librarianship. Simultaneously, or in the following year, the person who is the Deputy Librarian or one of the Assistant Librarians should also be sent for professional training to London, or if that proves expensive, to the Delhi or the Madras Schools of Librarianship for training. In view of the programme of Library development I recommend for the period of the next 5 years, I consider it urgent that professional training be completed by at least two graduate officers, including the Librarian, before the end of 1960. I would add that visits to Libraries abroad are by themselves not a substitute for the rigorous discipline and routine which professional training implies. It is only a trained Librarian who can gain by such periodical visits to other Libraries. I also recommend that the services of a trained Librarian, either from Ceylon or abroad, be obtained immediately for a period of 9 months to reorganize the Library on the basis of the various recommendations contained in this Report. On the return of the two officers a third officer, and later a fourth officer, can be sent for training. But I hope that such training will by that time be available in Ceylon itself if the Government accepts the recommendations I make in Part 3 of this Report.

To provide for both (1) the provision of Library training facilities and (2) the greater efficiency of the Library, I recommend that all officers be moved from one Department of the Library to another once every nine months, so that at the end of a period of 3 years an officer will have acquired the minimum knowledge of the routine of all aspects of Library work.

CHAPTER V.

LIBRARY FINANCE, ACCOUNTING, INDENTING AND MAINTENANCE OF STOCKS.

The questions covered in this chapter have been the most unsatisfactory as they have been the most difficult, and I have given them my most anxious consideration.

I shall first point out some of the more unsatisfactory features.

(1) Below are given the actual total expenditure for each of the years 1945 to 1956, and the sums of money expended on the purchase of books for each of these years:—

1945		1946		1947		1948		1949		1950	
Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.
27,947	16	38,896	58	55,072	84	53,141	90	66,378	25	77,511	32
4,645	32	4,860	35	10,782	94	6,826	20	15,458	77	14,104	24
1951-52 (15 months)		1952-53		1953-54		1954-55		1955 (9 months)		1956	
Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.
125,178	94	131,553	22	129,282	50	147,473	82	93,512	85	224,189	41
22,017	22	33,457	06	38,848	87	29,004	53	241	84	17,235	58

It will be noticed, firstly, that while the total expenditure on the Library has increased from Rs. 27,000 to Rs. 224,000 in a period of ten years, the sum of money spent on books has fluctuated and remained at Rs. 17,000 in 1956. The number of books purchased in this period has not been large, either. On periodicals too the increase in the vote has not been big. Since the bulk of the increase in the expenditure has been on the payment of salaries, wages and allowances of the staff, it could have been presumed that the work and service have been increasing and improving over the last few years. Even that assumption is untenable because in fact the work has not so increased and further because much of the work that had to be done in regard to the provision of service, stock-taking, cataloguing, etc., has remained undone. Many of these aspects I have already referred to elsewhere in this report.

(2) The Library, I understand, is a non-centralized department of the Municipality at the moment. This means that the accounts in regard to the income and expenditure are, or should be, maintained by the Head of the Department, i.e., the Librarian; the Municipal Treasurer's job consists merely of making payment on vouchers certified for payment by the Librarian. The Treasurer's Department exercises no other check on the Public Library save that of seeing that the votes under different heads are not exceeded. This procedure is correct, in my view. The calamity, however, is that the Library has not maintained any systematic accounts of its income and expenditure. I have examined the account books of the Library and find that whatever else they contain, they do not contain full accounts of expenditure. As a result, the Librarian has not been able to tell me how much money he has spent every year. In order to supply me with this information he had to go to the Municipal Treasurer's Department and copy out the Department's figures for my use.

It is most unsatisfactory to find that such a light view is taken by the Head of a Department over funds the authority for the disposal of which is given to him.

(3) Since there has been no annual stock-taking—the Librarian himself stated that there has been no stock-taking since 1943—and since the entries on the accessions registers have been irregular, it is not possible to state whether the books actually purchased for the Library during the period of the last ten years are in fact in the Library. In answer to a question the Librarian stated: "I agree

that the accession register has been unsatisfactorily kept. It is partly due to frequencies of vacancies and delays in filling of posts but largely due to lack of disciplinary authority I have. Proper discipline has not been possible and the output is definitely below what it should be."

(4) The position regarding indenting for books and periodicals is another very unsatisfactory feature. I gather that indents are prepared and sent to the Municipal Treasurer. The Municipal Treasurer, after getting the sanction of the Finance Committee of the Council, is supposed to send these orders out and so inform the Librarian. When the books are received, the invoices are sent to the Municipal Treasurer who passes one copy of it on to the Librarian for the purpose of obtaining his authority. It does not appear to be always the case that before invoices are certified for payment by the Librarian the parcels are opened and the entries in the invoices checked against the books. Moreover, I understood from the Municipal Treasurer that payments on these invoices are made by the Municipality's bankers in London immediately on the receipt by them of the invoice direct from the agents in London; that is, long before the books are received in the Library and the invoices are certified for payment. I regard this as a vicious system that can lead to abuse.

(5) Once the books are received in the Library, the proper system should be to open the parcels straightaway, check the books received against the invoices, to accession them in the accessions registers, to catalogue and classify them and then to send the books down to the shelves. Since the monthly purchase of books in the Library has been relatively small over the last many years, I consider that all this work could have been done by two senior officers in the Library assisted by two Library Assistants, and if so done there need not have been delay of more than 4 to 5 weeks between the receipt of the books in the Library and sending them down to the shelves after processing the books in the manner I have indicated has been completed. This has not been the case. In the first place, parcels have remained unopened even after invoices have been certified for payment. Books opened and placed on the shelves have remained uncatalogued for long periods. They are accessioned in any order, not always in the order in which they have been received. There is an inordinate delay in classifying and cataloguing the books. In answer to the following question: "What is the delay you anticipate between the receipt of a particular book which a reader wanted or of the parcel which is supposed to contain that book in the Library and the making available of that book to the reader", the Librarian stated as follows:—

"If it was taken in the normal order it would have taken about one year because of the arrears of work. Now it is different because from about December the output of cataloguing has increased."

A final comment of the Librarian was altogether unhappy. He said—

"During the last few years the system of ordering books and their receipt has more or less broken down."

(6) I had expected that the most convenient form of maintaining records in the Library would be as follows:—

- (a) Maintenance of a single accounts ledger showing all items of income and expenditure down to the last cent.
- (b) Maintenance of a file for indents containing orders for books, such indents to be kept separately for books and for periodicals.
- (c) Maintenance of a file of invoices and related bills.
- (d) Maintenance of a file for correspondence regarding indents and invoices.

No such separate records have been kept, nor have there been complete records under any one of these heads. It is an impossible feat to get answers on questions relating to these heads from officers in the Library. I put this position to the Librarian in the following words:—

“Records are not being maintained in a proper way so that answers to questions which should not take more than a few minutes are not available except after very much longer scrutiny of the books ? ”

His answer was as follows:—

“ The position is correct but this is partly due to lack of discipline and partly due to the number of vacancies.”

I do not wish to comment on the lack of discipline but I am satisfied that this state of affairs is not primarily due to the existence of a number of vacancies.

I am satisfied that the position in regard to the various items under this section is extremely unsatisfactory.

Before I make my recommendations on this subject under the various sections, it will perhaps be best to state some general opinions on the question of Library finance. Firstly, because of the special type of service rendered by the Public Library, the authority to spend the moneys voted under the different heads for the Public Library must be placed on the Librarian who will be advised, where necessary, by the Public Library Committee. There are certain accepted rules of the Municipality in regard to the procedure of purchasing books and other material which the Librarian will be compelled to follow. Other than the compulsions of these regulations, the annual audit and the resolutions by the Municipal Council made after the discussion of both the Auditor's report and the Librarian's report (and the observations made in the Council at the appropriate time), the Librarian and his Assistants must, in my opinion, be completely free to exercise their authority in the spending of the moneys allocated to them in the budgetary estimates under the various heads. Any other system of control or supervision would, I strongly feel, be not in the interests of the Library. It is my view, therefore, that the regulations or rules of the Municipal Council which stand in the way of implementing this suggestion must be modified. I would refer to an interview we had with Mr. Redmond, Librarian, Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research, on this question. I quote his answer:—

“ The Public Library is not just another department of the Municipal Council and should not be regarded as such. I think that applies particularly to the case of acquiring books. The usual thing is that when somebody gets a list of books together which they think should be acquired, that has to go up for approval to higher levels of the Municipal Council and the ordering is actually done through the Municipal Council. The peculiarity of buying books is such that nowhere else do you purchase like that. If you buy some articles for use in the Town Hall, say 100 bars of soap, you do not buy one here and one there, you buy the whole lot together, probably in one firm. But you don't buy books that way. The entire process of book acquisition is quite different from any other type of purchase. Even in the largest organizations, such as large Universities or large Public Libraries, the approved practice is to allow the Librarian to do the purchasing subject only to Audit and sometimes he sends the invoice to the parent body for payment. We do that in our own Institute, the C.I.S.I.R. You can't have untrained people doing this; you must have trained people.”

Secondly, the sum of money allocated for the purchase of books and periodicals and for their binding is, in my view, very inadequate. I have viewed the reorganization of the Public Library in two stages. The first stage refers to the

organization of the present Library within the present scope of its functions. Stage two refers to extensions of the Library into a City Library Service. For stage one I regard that a minimum of Rs. 1 lakh should be spent for the purchase of books and periodicals and for binding alone. For stage two I would estimate a sum of Rs. 3 lakhs to be the annual expenditure on these items at the end of a 5-year period. I deal with this aspect later on. I would, therefore, urge that an immediate increase in the vote under the heads of expenditure on books, periodicals and binding be accepted and a vote of Rs. 1 lakh be allowed from as early a date as possible. A sum of money for these items less than Rs. 1 lakh would not, in my opinion, justify the expenditure on administration amounting to roughly about Rs. 90,000 (in 1956) annually which is the case at present. To repeat that point, if we are spending Rs. 90,000 odd annually on the payment of salaries and wages to a Library staff, I submit that we are not getting the value of this expenditure for the use of City residents unless we also spend a sum at least equal to that, i.e., about a lakh of rupees, on the purchase of books and periodicals. If it is the desire of the Municipal Council to keep their vote on books, etc., to the present figure, then the expenditure on staff should also, if we take a rational view, be reduced by half. I put this view in this way not because I want a reduction of the staff but because I am strongly in favour of an increase of expenditure on purchase of books and periodicals in order to expand the services of the Library. If the Municipal Council is prepared to spend Rs. 90,000 on payment to the staff, then I believe it is its duty to enable this staff to give the services that it can give to the residents of the City by increasing the allocation for books and periodicals.

Thirdly, in the course of the extremely valuable evidence he gave, Mr. Pieter Keuneman, M.P., suggested that the moneys deposited by readers of the Library should be used to buy books for the library, instead of keeping them blocked in a separate account. I fully support this suggestion. The deposits should be used; readers who seek to withdraw their deposits, who are so few, could be refunded from the general library vote.

Though I have not referred to the need immediately for new premises for the Library, the Municipal Council should bear in mind that the Library has to be moved out to larger and more roomy premises very early.

My recommendations in this Section are made under the following heads:—

1. Indenting
2. Stock Inventories
3. Maintenance of Accounts

Indenting.

All purchases of any material for the Library must be on an indent. Separate serial numbers can be used for books, periodicals and furniture and equipment. A copy of all these indents should be filed in separate indent files and when the materials have been received by the Library the date of receipt must be put on the indent itself. If these indents are filed in three separate groups, A for books, B for periodicals and C for furniture and equipment, then these numbers can be transferred to the three separate account ledgers which will be maintained separately for A books, B periodicals and C furniture and equipment. The entries in the account books will give the number of the indent, the date on which the articles were indented for, the date of receipt and the amount paid out on that indent. The entries on the account books must be made at the same time as the entries on the indents.

Indenting for books.

The present system must be done away with. Cards should be written out for every book which it is intended to be ordered. Indent lists should then be made from these cards once in a month, or twice or three times if the number is large, except in urgent cases where indents can be sent out for single books. These lists should be posted to the agents or book-sellers without delay. I disregard

the need to get prior approval for these lists from the Public Library Committee or from the Finance Committee of the Municipal Council (this subject is dealt with elsewhere). As soon as the lists have been sent out the order cards should be filed alphabetically in a separate general Order-Index Catalogue. A copy of the indent should be filed in the indent file. All correspondence in regard to these indents or to items contained in the indents should be filed in a separate file for "correspondence regarding indents". The present practice of filing such correspondence along with the indents themselves in the same file is a cumbersome practice and must be discarded. On receipt of the books, the parcels must be opened by a responsible officer, preferably the Librarian himself or the Deputy Librarian. The books should then be arranged in the shelves according to the order in the invoice. The invoice must be asked for in triplicate; one copy should be filed in the Library in the invoice file and two copies may be sent to the Municipal Treasurer for his use, one of these being certified by the Librarian for payment. The Municipal Treasurer can keep one copy for his office use and send the other to his bankers who should thereafter be asked to make the payment. The books in the invoice must also be checked and marked against the items in the indent, so that the indents will show at a glance which items have been received. The date of the receipt of a book must also be noted in the indent. Thereafter the order cards for the books received should be removed from the order index catalogue, each card being inserted in the appropriate book. The invoice should thereafter be certified for payment by the Librarian and sent to the Municipal Treasurer. The books should then be entered in the accessions register in the order of the invoice; at the same time the accession number should be entered on each book. I would here suggest that the present practice of writing the number in pencil be discontinued. I suggest the number should be stamped by a numbering machine.

The books are then taken over by the officer in charge of classification and cataloguing. After catalogue entries have been made on cards, the books are prepared (that is, processed) and then sent off to the shelves where they will lie for a month or two in the shelf for 'Latest Additions'. The catalogue cards are then typed. When the typing is complete they are filed in the catalogue card cabinet in the usual way. The period between the receipt of a book in the Library and its being placed on the shelf should not, under normal circumstances, be more than 2 weeks—though I anticipate a reasonable delay of a further two weeks before the catalogue cards are filed in the cabinet.

At present the majority of books is purchased through an agent in London. Some English books and all Sinhalese and Tamil books are purchased from local book-sellers. There can be no objection to the practice of using an agent's services for the purchase of books and periodicals from Europe and the U.S.A. I find that the commissions allowed by the present agents are reasonable and satisfactory. But books purchased from India and in Ceylon and from U.S.S.R. and China might have to be ordered direct from the book-sellers or publishers. I do not see anything objectionable in that practice, provided however that a minimum discount of 10% on the value of the books is allowed by the sellers. Often it will be possible to arrange better terms with bigger book-sellers in these countries. Since in the future it will be necessary to have a considerable quantity of literature in Sinhalese and Tamil it might be useful for the Librarian to reach some agreement with the larger book-sellers in Colombo and Madras or with the publishers themselves. It is possible sometimes to get slightly better terms from small book-sellers on some items, but the inconvenience caused by delay, which will be normal if you deal with a small book-seller, considerably off-sets the difference in terms. Moreover, in book buying, search for better discount should not always be a guiding rule because unlike other commodities, only single copies of books are purchased. The practice of writing to several book-sellers for quotations in regard to the price of a single book is really more expensive if the cost of postage and the labour involved is taken into account. No hard and fast rule should be imposed in these matters, but the Librarian should make sure of receiving at least the stipulated 10% discount; if however, patent irregularities arise then this practice can be questioned either by the Audit or by the Public Library Committee.

The system I recommend would involve the least delay and provide the highest economy of service, and these are after all the ends we must pursue in this matter.

The same practice should be followed in the purchase of periodicals. In this case, however, more periodicals might have to be ordered direct from the publishers. There will have to be a separate periodicals register. Entries for periodicals which are bound will have to be made on catalogue cards and inserted in the catalogue cabinet.

Withdrawals and Binding.

A separate register must be maintained for entries of books withdrawn from use. Each entry should provide the accession number, title, author, date of receipt, date of withdrawal and the reason for withdrawal. This will not be an annual but a permanent register. A decision will have to be taken by the Library Committee on how to dispose of the books withdrawn. They must not, as a matter of principle, be sold as second-hand copies. It is usual to destroy or burn them.

Quite often books have to be sent to the binder. A separate register must be kept for entries of such books, each entry stating the accession number, author, title of the book, date of receipt, date on which it was sent to the binder, the name of the binder, the cost of binding, if available, and date of receipt from binder.

Stock Inventory.

In regard to books and periodicals, the books accessions register and the periodicals accessions register will serve as inventories also. No separate inventories need be provided for. Separate stock inventories, however, will have to be provided for furniture and other Library equipment, each entry in these registers giving the name of the material, the place where it is kept, the date of acquisition and the cost.

Accounts.

I have already indicated that separate account books have to be kept under the following heads:—

1. Purchase of books
2. Purchase of periodicals
3. Purchase of furniture and equipment
4. Miscellaneous Expenditure
5. Salaries and related payments to staff.

As all items of such purchases are by indent and as copies of these indents will be filed separately it will be sufficient if the account books contain entries of the number of the indent, the date of the indent, the date of receipt of the item and the sum of money certified for payment by the Municipal Treasurer. If the books are kept in this manner it would be possible to calculate at a glance how much money has been spent up to a particular day in the financial year. There will be also no occasion for any irregularity in the finances of the Public Library. If there is any doubt or query in regard to any particular payment concerning a particular indent it can be checked without delay by examining the indent itself which will contain all particulars in regard to items contained in it. For instance, if a book is bought for the Library on indent No. A5 of 1955, a look at the indent will give the accessions number, and a look at the accessions register under this number will tell us that the book has been catalogued and classified under a particular subject. We can then see whether the book is catalogued under that subject and also whether the book is in the shelf or lent out. A test audit check is thus made easy and accurate.

Stock-taking.

I recommend that there should be stock-taking of books, periodicals, furniture and equipment once every year. This is very necessary at all times in a public institution and more necessary in an institution like the Public Library. Stock-taking need not take more than a week and could be done section by section without having to close the entire library. Stock-taking reveals, as it should, more things about the Library to its officers than the mere loss of books.

I need not add that all the recommendations I have made in this section have to be carried out by the Library office staff except the work of cataloguing, classifying, preparing and shelving of books.

I have been shown the confidential report of the Auditor-General of January 9, 1958, on the Public Library. Except in regard to section 3, I find that the observations of the Auditor-General are true, though they deal with only one aspect of Public Library organization. I have had occasion in the course of this Report to refer to many other unsatisfactory aspects of the administration. In regard to section 3 I am satisfied that the London Agents do allow a discount higher than the 10% that the Library is entitled to.

The suggestions I have made in this section cover the irregularities the Auditor-General has referred to and will, if adopted, make the recurrence of such irregularities impossible in the future. A recommendation has been made by the Auditor-General that a complete verification should be carried out early to ascertain the total number of missing books. I agree and I have already recommended in another part of this Report that there should be an immediate stock-taking in the Library and this, in my opinion, will reveal many other irregularities than a mere list of missing books. I cannot agree with the Librarian's view as expressed to the Auditor-General that responsibility for the loss of books cannot be isolated in a large library. Though the responsibility for every book lost cannot be assigned to an officer, the records can be so kept that as far as possible the loss of books are cut down and responsibility in a number of cases for such loss assigned to officers. It is not necessary for me to go into this question further.

Conclusions.

In this Part, I have given my thought exclusively to questions regarding reorganization of the work and service of the Public Library *within the limits* in which it functions today. I have done so for two reasons: first, because it is not at all organized and it needs to be immediately organized properly if it is to serve even the limited functions it seeks to perform. If the recommendations above are accepted, I believe the scope of its usefulness will be many times more than is the case at present. Secondly, because any further expansion of a City Public Library Service can become possible and can be justified only if it is based on the present Public Library as the central institution. In its present disorganization the Public Library is not capable of functioning as a central organization. I have not recommended any major innovations, save in regard to the sum of money allocated for the purchase of books and periodicals. But I would earnestly plead that a total sum of Rs. 1 lakh be provided for the purchase of books and periodicals for the Library, thus increasing the budgeted expenditure of the Public Library from Rs. 2 lakhs to Rs. 3 lakhs. It will be noticed that I have asked for only two more Junior Librarians to be appointed. These recommendations, as I have stated earlier, are short-term, obligatory and urgent.

My fear is that without the direction of the work by a professionally trained Librarian or Librarians the process of implementing these recommendations might become inordinately difficult or they may even be miscarried. It is because of this fear that I regard the following two recommendations as vitally urgent:—

- (1) The Librarian and at least one of his Assistants must be sent without delay for professional training to London or New Delhi.

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- (2) An advisor, who should be a professionally trained Librarian, be appointed for a period of 9 months to a year to implement these recommendations and to give the staff the necessary professional training and outlook for the performance of the service to which they have decided to devote their lives.

There are many other small matters of detail my attention to which has been drawn by several readers who sent in memoranda or interviewed me. I have not referred to them in this report as I feel they are matters which any trained Librarian could solve satisfactorily if he took greater interest in the needs of the reader.

As I have already stated, the present Public Library is a single institution and even when properly organized it will, unless the scope of its service is extended, remain inadequate. Once it is properly organized, as with all my earnestness I plead it must soon be, it will be possible and necessary to extend its services and provide round it as a nucleus a Public Library Service to the entire City. It is to this subject that I turn my attention in Part II of this Report.

CHAPTER VI.

X STATUS OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AS A DEPARTMENT OF THE MUNICIPALITY.

The Library is a department of the Municipal Council—but, it is important to appreciate that it should function on a relationship different from that of any other Department to the Council. It provides a special type of service—much of which is of a routine character, though much of it is, also, of a character not routine. The scope of the service is limited and well-defined, and very little unexpected or unforeseen development takes place or has to be provided for. The service itself needs to be performed almost entirely by professionally trained employees, and does not lend itself easily to, or call for, constant supervision or control by laymen.

The Municipal Council will, from time to time, assess the scope of library service, and in doing this, it will be assisted both by the Library Committee and by the Librarian. Again, acting on this advice, and guided by its own policy and finances, the Council will periodically decide to what extent it can provide the service it has assessed to be necessary. Once the extent and the broad outlines of this service are decided on, there is very little that the Council can usefully do on its own. Its function must thereafter be confined to assisting, or at any rate, not impeding, the work of the Librarian and the Library Committee, in the implementing of its decisions in regard to the Library service. The implementing itself is a function solely of the Librarian, assisted by the Library Committee. The extent and form of control exercised by Council on the Library must be dictated by these considerations set out above.

Before discussing this subject, a reference must be made to the Library Committee. This Committee is the Council's instrument by which the policy and organization of the Library are formed, guided and controlled. Moreover, the Committee advises the Council on all matters regarding the Library service. Some of its members are Members of the Municipal Council, others are individuals nominated from public citizens. Except in the larger questions of broad policy, the Committee, consisting of laymen, cannot be expected to advise the Librarian in the internal organization of the Library service—matters dealing with administration, methods, equipment, staff duties, training, book selection, etc. These subjects of what I have called internal organization are, by common consent, matters with which the Librarian should be competent and free to deal. This view does not mean that the Library Committee should not advise on matters of internal organization; on occasions, it should, and there may be several occasions when the Library can gain from such criticism and advice from the Committee. It is accepted, however, that such advice should not amount to interference with what a Librarian regards as necessary features of efficient organization and administration of the service.

The relationship between the Library Committee and the Librarian is of a peculiar character. It is also, to some extent, a question of personal relationship. It is a question, as McColvin says, of "mutual respect which is seldom wanting where it is deserved unless wrong traditions and unwise methods frustrate its growth". In practice, an occasion for distrust need never arise. If laymen in the Committee suggest something that militates against proper library service or interferes with efficiency, the Librarian can politely explain the defects issuing from the particular suggestion, or meet the point behind the suggestion by adopting a measure that will not reduce the efficiency of the service. Equally, if the Librarian holds a view that does not supply a demand which, on behalf of the public, a particular member of the Committee is advocating, the Librarian can be persuaded by patient argument to modify his view in the interests of the users of the Library. Under normal circumstances, there need not be any sort of 'deadlock'.

In Colombo, however, the more common feature is the lack of interest shown by the Library Committee in the Library. Mr. Redmond, himself for some time a member of this Committee, pointed out in his evidence that though the Committee meets very seldom it was difficult on these occasions to obtain a quorum.

Control by Council.

Once the major questions of library service have been decided on by Council, the Librarian must be entrusted, freely and fully, with the job of organizing the service, with the assistance and advice of the Library Committee. Any attempt by Council thereafter to intervene in any form would, in my opinion, amount to interference and injure the progress of the institution. The entire conduct and work of the Librarian can come up for discussion when the annual Library budget and the Librarian's Annual Report are discussed by Council and by the Finance Committee. The Librarian can also be called by Council to account for his actions if the audit examination discloses irregularities, or if, on rare occasions, the Library Committee reports to Council against the Librarian. These are, in my opinion, the main forms of control by Council of the Librarian.

I hold the view strongly that other than advice by the Library Committee, the Librarian must be entrusted with the full responsibility of implementing the decisions taken by Council on major matters of policy, and that on matters of internal organization, the Librarian must be free to come to his own decisions.

If, however, the Council directly intervened in Library administration and organization it will quite definitely injure the progress of the institution. I state this view categorically, because I feel that any other procedure will stifle the development of the Library, in the growth of which the Council has paramount interest. I do not see that this procedure has any undesirable consequences. I would add that this is the procedure followed by Public Libraries in England and elsewhere, and has proved, in practice, the most efficient and the most adequate.

The present practice of submitting lists of books, periodicals, or other material which are intended to be purchased for the Library, first to the Library Committee, then to the Finance Committee of the Council through the Municipal Commissioner is unnecessary, delaying, irksome, and of little value. In actual practice, these Committees' approval is formal, and can therefore be removed without tears. The responsibility for selection of books, etc., must lie with the Librarian, who can be called upon to explain his actions before the Library Committee or Finance Committee when it discusses the Library's annual budget or discusses the Librarian's Annual Report. According to the procedure I recommend, the Librarian should be free to order for books, etc., at any time, without prior approval of any other body, and lists of such items ordered should be circulated to members of the Library Committee for their information at the next meeting; any matters arising from these orders can be discussed at the next meeting of the Library Committee, and, given the spirit of understanding and responsibility, there need arise no serious difference of opinion. The lists need not be sent to or approved by the Finance

Committee. It is undoubtedly the Finance Committee's function, at the time of the Budget discussion, to allocate funds under various heads for the Public Library. But I cannot see how it can usefully tell the Librarian what books to buy or what not to buy. In this matter, the Finance Committee must be guided solely by what the Librarian thinks, as the Librarian alone has both the specialized knowledge of book selection and the means by which to know what books, etc., the public want.

This rule should apply to all other fields of Library administration. Allocation of duties to employees, arrangement of literature, etc., are all matters within the competence of the Librarian. No higher authority should interfere; though even here, the Library Committee could advise the Librarian. I state this view quite unambiguously, as I gathered from the Librarian, in the course of his evidence, that employees appeal to officers and Members of the Municipal Council against his decisions on allocation of duties, or on matters connected with office discipline or general library administration. This interference is wholly irksome and unjustified; and if allowed, may lead and has to some degree already led, to breakdown of discipline.

The Librarian is a responsible officer. He must be encouraged to take on greater responsibility for his work. Such encouragement and kindly supervision is a major function of the Library Committee. Only so, can he give of his best. Attempts to correct him, to influence him, to countermand his instructions, to limit his authority and initiative in fields which are exclusively his, end, in the final analysis, and especially if they are of frequent occurrence, in stagnation, in indifference, and in lack of efficiency.

I would not normally have wished to add to this recommendation, as it is based on accepted principles of public library organization. But in the Public Library, the present Librarian is not professionally trained, nor is any member of his staff. I deal with this aspect later on. For the moment, in view of the lack of professional training of the Librarian, and also in view of the fact that the Librarian has been found wanting, I would modify my recommendation and state that till the Librarian and one other officer are professionally trained, all orders for literature, equipment, etc., be made in consultation with, and with the approval of the Municipal Commissioner, though the Librarian will take ultimate responsibility for all purchases. I am opposed to a prior sanction being given to the orders for books and periodicals by either the Library Committee or the Finance Committee; this procedure, I repeat, is irksome, delaying, and not in the interests of efficient library service. Orders for furniture, etc., could, on the other hand, continue to be made after prior approval of the Library Committee.

It will be seen that I have indicated that the Library Committee could, and should perform a different and more useful function than is the case at the moment. By continuous advice to the Librarian and his staff it could, and I feel that it should, influence the development of the Library in the proper direction. But this influence must be in the form of advice and not in the form of orders or official direction. Between a Library Committee which appreciates its role in the way in which I have stated it and a Librarian, professionally trained and devoted to library service, there need not, and should not, be any major difference of view, though there may be a difference of opinion on minor matters which could be settled periodically by way of discussion.

The Library Committee should also be an intermediary body overseeing the organization and work of the Public Library service on behalf of the Municipal Council. It is therefore an official body. Except through this body, and in the course of the annual Budget discussions, I believe the Municipal Council itself should not be involved in the work of the administration of the Public Library.

If this view is accepted, it would become necessary to consider ways of reconstituting the Library Committee. In addition to 6 Members of the Municipal Council the Library Committee at present consists of about 15 public citizens appointed by the Council. Perhaps a smaller committee would do a better job. 11 would be an appropriate number with the Librarian as *ex officio* Secretary to the Committee. I think 3, or at the most 4, of the 11 should be Members of the Municipal Council and the others should be selected from among public citizens more or less on a functional basis. For example, one person to represent the schools, one to represent the commercial interests of the city, one to represent trade union organizations, one each to represent the special needs of the Sinhala and Tamil readers and one each to represent associations of writers in the Sinhala and Tamil languages. I state these views as suggestions. These views can, of course, be modified. A Library Committee of such a character might prove to be more useful than the present Library Committee because each member of this suggested committee is going to bring to the discussions some special point of view which it is in the interests of the Public Library to discuss and where necessary act upon.

It was suggested to me that it may be better to place the organization of the City Public Library service in the hands of an autonomous body, thus taking it out of the exclusive control of the Colombo Municipal Council. The reasons urged in this behalf are firstly, that the Municipal Council is unable to provide the necessary funds for the provision of a comprehensive library service for the city, and secondly, that the control of the administration and organization of the Library by the Municipal Council militates against the efficiency and freedom that a Library should possess. The suggestion was put that the authority to control the Library be vested in a corporation or board, and the example of the Delhi Public Library project was quoted to justify this suggestion. The Delhi Public Library project is a pilot project organized with the assistance of the U.N.E.S.C.O. It is controlled by an autonomous board, incorporated by law, consisting of 12 members. 9 members are nominated by various agencies and 3 are co-opted for special technical qualifications. The nominated members hold office for 2 years. The Chairman is nominated by the Minister of Education, and the Vice-Chairman by U.N.E.S.C.O. Of the other 7 nominated members, 2 represent the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, 2 the Delhi Municipal Committee, 1 the U.N.E.S.C.O., 1 the Delhi District Board and 1 the Chief Commissioner, Delhi. It was suggested that a similar autonomous board be incorporated in Colombo to take control of the Public Library service. This suggestion has several points in its favour. It is a compact body, fully autonomous and free from interference. I have given serious thought to this suggestion and have reached the conclusion that for various reasons it is best that the City Public Library service in Colombo should continue as now to be the concern exclusively of the Municipal Council. I have made suggestions in regard to the relations of the Municipal Council with the Public Library system and I believe if they are accepted it will be possible to remove unnecessary interference in the administration of the Library. I have also made suggestions in regard to the reconstitution of the Public Library Committee which, if accepted, should make the Committee function more efficiently and usefully. In Part 2 of this Report I have made further suggestions regarding the extension and the scope of the service. If these suggestions are accepted, a representative from the Ministry of Education and a representative from the Ministry of Health and possibly a representative from the Ministry of Local Government would have to be appointed to the Library Committee. A committee so reconstituted would, in my view, prove to be strong enough and intelligent enough both to provide for a better Library service and to protect the Library's administration from unnecessary interference by the authorities which provide its funds. I therefore believe that the present administrative and organizational structure should continue, subject to the modifications that will be called for if my suggestions are accepted.

Part 2.

CHAPTER VII.

CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE.

A City Public Library Service would consist in the organization of a number of Branch Libraries and subsidiary services, administered from one centre. I assume that the present Library would be the central unit. It must be remembered that the space available in the present building is very inadequate and the Municipal Council, perhaps with the aid of the Government, will have to plan a move into larger and more appropriate premises. We need to have in the course of the next 2 to 3 years at least six Branch Libraries in various parts of the City. Having regard to the population figures, the following 6 areas seem the most appropriate places:—

- (1) Kotahena, Kochchikade
- (2) Madampitiya, Mutwal
- (3) Grandpass, Maradana
- (4) Borella, Suduwella, Dematagoda
- (5) Bambalapitiya, Havelock Town, Wellawatte
- (6) The Fort

Any building in the centre of these areas will be suitable. I have indicated Fort as the 6th place despite the fact that it is not a residential area, because of the very large number of City residents who work in the Fort area and for whom therefore it would be more convenient to borrow books from a library near their place of work. Rooms in the Secretariat or near it would be an appropriate spot. Each of these Branch Libraries could be in charge of two library officers and could be open from noon till 9 p.m. Each of them will have an adequate number of periodicals, and, to begin with, about 5,000 volumes of books. These figures can be varied and the proper selection of books made as times goes on. They will be miniature libraries in every sense of the word, having small reference, lending and periodical sections.

Schools and Hospitals.

We are well aware that in the City most schools have poor or no libraries, and perhaps cannot afford them out of their own resources. There are also in the City a large number of public and private hospitals and nursing homes. Patients are dependent on gifts from friends for whatever light reading material they get while they are inmates of these institutions. Schools and hospitals in the City should, I think, be served properly with small libraries. At the moment there are no such libraries and it might be too much to expect the appearance of libraries in these places out of private resources. I suggest that each of these schools and hospitals be supplied with literature, books and periodicals, by the City Public Library Service. The advantage is that these institutions will get an adequate amount of reading material without having to pay for the entire cost of the purchase of books and periodicals and maintenance of such a service. These institutions can therefore function as small branch units of the City Public Library Service; with a proviso that an officer in each of these institutions paid and employed by the institutions themselves be required to do the work of a Librarian—this requirement will lighten the financial burden of the City Public Library who will not be called upon to pay the salaries of these officers. In schools teachers will act as Librarians and in hospitals nurses.

This is how I visualize the extension of the City Public Library Service.

All the reading material, books and periodicals, will be purchased by the Central Library, in the required number of copies. They will be accessioned by the Central Library and then distributed to the various Branches and the Branch Units according to their requirements. After keeping this literature for a period of 6 months to a year in these libraries, they will be recalled by the Central Library.

and despatched to another Branch Library. Thus the maximum use will be made of a limited number of volumes and readers who are members of Branch Libraries are able to get newer stocks every 6 months or a year. Maximum economy is possible under this system, which is common in all Public Library Services in every European country. When these books are sent to the Branch Libraries there would be sent along with them also catalogue cards for each book, so that each Branch Library will have a catalogue of books available there at any time. The Branch Library officers will have no work other than to lend books, provide periodical literature and perform what reference library service they can perform on their own or to direct the readers to the Central Public Library when they are unable to provide the required information. The pattern is a very simple one, easy to execute, all directed from one central place.

This extension to the Library Service would involve the purchase of a much larger stock of books and periodicals than is the case at present. I have estimated that the book purchases for the present Public Library must involve an expenditure of Rs. 1 lakh per year. If the Library Service is extended as suggested here,—and such an extension will have to be spread over a period of the next 5 years,—I would estimate that in the last year of the 5-year period the purchase of books and periodicals would cost between Rs. 3 and Rs. 4 lakhs. I do not expect the expenditure on the staff to increase proportionately; in fact the staff need not be more than 25 in addition to the present number. The question of the sources from which this money is to come is not an easy one to solve. Obviously part of it will have to be borne by the Colombo Municipal Council. A part, I suggest, can be borne by the Central Government and granted to the Public Library through the Ministry of Local Government, and if schools and hospitals have to be provided with a library service by the Public Library, the Ministers of Education and Health could be urged, on very reasonable grounds, to allocate each a lakh of rupees. Thus, the funds necessary for the organization of the Public Library Service, on the basis of the suggestions I have made, would come from 4 sources: (1) the Colombo Municipal Council, (2) the Ministry of Local Government, (3) the Ministry of Education, and (4) the Ministry of Health, each paying a part, but the total sum will be able to provide, in the course of the next 5 years, as adequate a Public Library Service as is possible under the circumstances. I would emphasize that the overhead charges for the provision of such a service,—expenses on the administration, salaries of personnel, rents of buildings and equipment,—will still remain at a proportionately low figure. What will increase is the allocation of money on the purchase of books and periodicals.

Children's Section.

I recommend that a Children's Section of the Library should be started early.

Children's libraries are an essential part of the library facilities which a City should provide for its citizens. The need for a public authority to provide this service is even greater in Ceylon than in more advanced countries because in comparatively few homes in this country do children grow up in an atmosphere where they are surrounded by books and where they naturally form the habit of reading. If the love of books is not implanted in childhood, it is unlikely that a person will develop it in his adult years, and his entire intellectual and emotional development will, therefore, be stunted. For the growth of the mind and personality the formation of the reading habit in childhood is perhaps of even greater importance than formal schooling. One of the greatest living writers of children's literature, Eleanor Farjeon, has said that she was never sent to school at all and that she owes the growth of her talent entirely to the fact that she was brought up in a house full of books. In her book, "The Little Bookroom", she writes:

"In the home of my childhood there was a room we called 'The Little Bookroom'. True, every room in the house could have been called a bookroom. Our nurseries upstairs were full of books. Downstairs my father's study was full of them. They lined the drawing room walls, and overflowed into my mother's sitting room, and up into the bedrooms. It would have been more natural to live without clothes than without books. As unnatural not to read as not to eat."

How many children in Ceylon are fortunate enough to grow up in an environment of this kind? Poverty is, of course, one barrier that cuts off thousands of children from the pleasure and profit of reading. But it is not the only reason for the scantiness of reading habits, for I know many well-to-do parents who would cheerfully spend a hundred rupees on toys or party clothes for their children but think it unnecessary to buy them any books other than their school texts.

One purpose of a children's library in Ceylon should be not only to bring books within the reach of those children who are denied them because of the poverty of their parents but also to encourage the book-buying habit among middle and upper class parents by implanting in their children a love of books and a demand for them.

The average Ceylon child is not introduced to books in his home; he is rarely encouraged to read widely even in his school. Except in a few of the bigger schools, school libraries are either non-existent or very small and poorly equipped. The Ministry of Education has recently introduced a very desirable reform in limiting the number of text-books which children are obliged to buy, and it has asked the schools to build up libraries to induce children to read widely outside their prescribed books. But while the limitation on the number of text-books has been enforced, the development of school libraries is hardly taking place. The sum allotted by the Ministry of Education itself to Government schools for this purpose is Rs. 75,000 in the current budget—which works out to the magnificent sum of about Rs. 20 per school for the entire year.

It is not surprising that this state of affairs should be accompanied by a decline in the reading habit among the present generation of children and a rise in the popularity of comics which require little reading ability. Since many of these comics contain also material undesirable for children, the Government has enacted legislation to control them, (The Children and Young Persons—Harmful Publications—Act). Without being content with such restrictive legislation, public authorities should adopt the more positive approach of making good literature accessible to children in order to combat the bad.

In progressive countries, where many more children than in Ceylon have access to books in their houses and in school libraries, public authorities yet consider the provision of special children's libraries an essential part of a public library service. "During a recent visit to Poland," states Mr. R. Siriwardena in a memorandum submitted to the Commission, "I was privileged to see the children's library housed in the Palace of Culture in Warsaw. The main part of the library has 30,000 books, with a separate section for very small children. The library contains several reading rooms where children may spend their leisure, and has a staff of trained librarians to guide and assist the children in their reading. This is in a city whose population is just twice that of Colombo, and which twelve years ago, at the end of the war, was a heap of ruins."

The building up of a children's library service in Ceylon even remotely comparable to this can be attempted only by the Central Government, and is a task obviously beyond the capacities of the Municipality. What is possible within the limits of the Municipal Council's resources is the development of a children's section of the Public Library itself.

Mr. Siriwardena, for whose competence, scholarship and interest in children's libraries I have the highest regard, adds:

"The Public Library might build up its own children's section from scratch. There would be, I think, an advantage in housing the children's section on the Public Library premises themselves, if space could be found. I do not know whether anything will come of the long-standing proposals for a new Public Library building, but although the present situation of the library is far from ideal (particularly because it is far removed from the

middle class and working class residential areas of the City), it might still be desirable to have the children's section too on the same site. For it will be difficult for many children to visit the library by themselves, and not every parent will be willing or able to accompany his children for their convenience. On the other hand, if the children's section is housed in the same place as the rest of the Public Library, children can always accompany their parents when the latter are going to borrow books for themselves. I visualize the children's section as a place where a parent should be able to leave even a very young child while he goes to the main library to pick out books for himself. The children's library should be so designed (and, I must add, so staffed) that it will have a place even for the small child who cannot yet read but can get pleasure out of a picture-book. The important thing is to create an interest in books among as large a group as possible, to build up the Public Library as a centre through which the reading habit can be brought into the entire family."

The children's library may consist of two sections—lending and non-lending. The non-lending section will include the following:—

- (a) Picture-books for very young children.
- (b) Magazines.
- (c) Reference books—e.g., children's encyclopaedias.

I include picture-books in the non-lending section for two reasons: first, these are books which can usually be skimmed through in a short space of time, and second, it is unwise to allow children to take books home until they have reached an age when they can reasonably be expected to take care of them. But that does not mean that the youngest children should be excluded from the library: they should be allowed to develop an interest in and a proper respect for books under the watchful eye of a librarian who can help them to learn how to handle and use books.

The picture-books will regrettably have to be mainly in English because of the almost complete absence of such books in the national languages: this, however, does not matter very much since the main appeal of the books will be pictorial. The magazines can be in any language: even magazines printed in foreign languages which are not understood by Ceylonese children can have a place as long as they contain pictorial matter which is of value.

The lending section should consist of both story-books and instructional books for children in all three languages—English, Sinhalese and Tamil. The English books should be carefully selected on the basis of two considerations: intelligibility to the majority of children from the point of view of language difficulty, and relevance to the interests of Ceylonese children in content. It will *not* do to assemble indiscriminately the traditional children's classics that were read by English-educated children a generation or two ago, because the background and language ability of most children today are very different.

The Sinhalese and Tamil sections should be as comprehensive as possible. There is a fairly wide range of translations and other literature in Sinhalese produced within the last few years that is within the comprehension of teen-age children. The volume of books in Sinhalese for younger children is much smaller, but that difficulty cannot be surmounted until more literature is produced. Many more books are available in Tamil for children at all levels, owing to literary activity in South India.

The majority of both Sinhalese and Tamil books are paper-bound, so that it may be necessary to give them a more durable binding before placing them on the library shelves. However, since most books are cheap, replacement when they are worn out will not be a difficulty.

It is very necessary that the library should insist on child-users taking proper care of books—not only in order to protect the stock, but also to give children a training in the use of books which is an essential part of the education that a library provides. The shockingly mutilated condition of many books in the Public Library is an indication of the lack of social sense among borrowers. This situation would improve in time if future citizens were trained in the use of a library from childhood. In the children's section parents should be made ultimately responsible for the return of books in good condition, but an effort must be made to impress on children themselves that they must protect books and not deface or mutilate them.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the success and proper working of a children's library would depend in a great measure on its staff. They must be selected for their knowledge of children's books as well as their understanding of and affection for children themselves. They must be able to create an atmosphere of friendliness, to enlist the interest of the child in books and assist him in selecting his reading. If the idea of a children's section in the Public Library is adopted, I think it is also very necessary to have a special advisory board composed of educationalists and others who would be interested in the project and would be willing to render voluntary service in helping with the selection of books and offering general advice on the running of the library.

With the inauguration of such a children's section, the supply of necessary reading matter to schools (suggested in Part 2) becomes easier.

Part 3.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NATIONAL LIBRARY.

A City Public Library system is limited both in the scope of its functions and in regard to the numbers of readers it serves. The service it offers, the literature it stocks and the personnel it employs are all related to these limited aims. A National Library, however, is a larger, more substantial and more lasting undertaking. It is, in the first place, a repository wherein are collected and preserved, in varied forms, treasures of literature and other records concerning the history, culture and achievements of the entire nation. In the second place, it is a storehouse of the world's best wisdom as preserved in print, in drawing and in recorded sound. Information in regard to the highest and the best achievements of man, whichever part of the world he lived or lives in, would be available in a National Library. Thirdly, outside established academic institutions like the University, it will be the centre of research into the various fields of knowledge. Fourthly, it would be the organizing centre directing the development of Library service in the entire country, by providing them with adequate bibliographical services, cataloguing and classifying apparatus and information, as for instance the Library of Congress in Washington does. Fifthly, in a country like Ceylon where authorship and publishing are activities for the novice, undertaken often without guidance or patronage or other help, a National Library would be a source of guidance to writers and to publishers. This last point is obvious enough and was urged strongly by Mr. B. R. Devarajan, C.C.S., in the course of his evidence.

Briefly, these are the main functions that a National Library serves. The organization of such a National Library should have been, therefore, a first priority in the work of cultural development of our country. The undertaking has been unfortunately overlooked and delayed. I feel convinced that there should be no further delay in the building and establishment of such a Library.

It is clear from what has been said that the stock of literature in a National Library would be different from that in a City Public Library. Everything acquired by the National Library will be preserved permanently for all time. It

will naturally also be a depository library for all publications, even of a periodical character, of this country. By law, copies of everything published would have to be sent to the National Library, as is the case in regard to every National Library. All such publications would be carefully catalogued, classified and preserved for the present and for the future. The bulk of the literature in the National Library will be therefore available for reference purposes only. There may or may not be a lending section. Such a library will also be a national depository library for publications of various international agencies and organizations. It will also maintain contact with National Libraries of other countries and such contact is essential for the exchange of information about rare and new literature. The staff of such a National Library would need to be highly qualified academic persons, with professional training, who are capable of undertaking some research on their own and assisting in the accomplishment of the various duties which fall on a National Library. Outside the University or Universities of this country, I would regard such a National Library as the main fount for the spread and dissemination of knowledge. It is therefore a vast and ambitious undertaking, performing a service which in this country no other institution other than the Universities can perform. The Universities by themselves would be incapable, unaided by such a National Library, of functioning as a central source of inspiration and performance, because by their very nature they would be concerned only with their own members, senior and junior. The rest of the country's population would need an inspiring fountain, a source of accumulated literature and a generous guiding factor to help them in their pursuit of learning. I have mentioned some of these aspects in detail in order to assign to a National Library the place that should be given it in the circumstances prevailing in our country today. Unless a National Library is conceived on this scale and in this context, it will fail to serve the purpose for which it is intended.

It can thus be seen that a National Library is a stupendous undertaking and cannot be launched upon in a piece-meal fashion or with limited funds. I feel certain that financial and other assistance can be obtained for such a Library from well-known charitable organizations like the Carnegie Foundation of the U.S.A., which was primarily responsible for the spread of the Public Library system in England through its generous disbursements of funds, from agencies like the U.N.E.S.C.O. and from friendly countries like the United Kingdom, U.S.A., Soviet Union, China and India. I would even say that funds may be obtained as gifts from these countries for the building and equipping of a National Library. I am almost certain that assistance in the form of gifts and money for the purchase of books and gifts of books and periodicals and micro-films will also be available in abundant measure from these countries and agencies. Perhaps a tentative plan of the scope and needs of such a Library could be drawn up by a body of learned persons in this country and assistance sought for the accomplishment of such a programme from friendly countries. The Government itself would need to spend a large sum of money towards the project.

The National Library would be performing a vital creative function in the development of the cultural life of our people. Its responsibilities in a country like Ceylon will be greater than in a culturally developed society like Great Britain or France. Even the first step in the development of our cultural life cannot be taken without the organization of a National Library. Its organization is the first immediate task of the Government.

It was suggested by Mr. Redmond that the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament should form the nucleus of our own National Library. He had in mind the position in the U.S.A. where the Library which was originally built for the use of the Members of Congress and called the Library of Congress became later in fact the National Library of U.S.A. I am inclined to disagree with Mr. Redmond's view. The history and growth of the Library of Congress into a National Library took place under different circumstances and over a longer period including a good part of the 19th century. The libraries of our Houses of Parliament are extremely small and are working libraries for the Members of Parliament. A

National Library has nothing to gain from the parentage that our Parliamentary Library can provide. There already exist in Ceylon (1) the Government Archives, (2) the Museum Library; and (3) the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch). The literature in these three libraries should, in my opinion, be brought together as a first collection of the proposed National Library. These libraries contain rare and important books and manuscripts relating to the history, development and life of our society and country and would be necessary in a National Library. There are, I believe, also collections of old manuscripts in these libraries and in other specialized libraries, in temples and so on, which can be collected or acquired for the National Library. I have no doubt that given the assurance that they would form part of the National Library collection, the Royal Asiatic Society and the Colombo Museum will be prepared to hand over their collections to the National Library. The Archæological Department itself must be in possession of rare literature, prints, photographs of historical records etc. which can also be brought into the National Library. Round the nucleus formed by these collections an adequate stock of books and literature can in course of time be acquired for a National Library. As by law copies of all books printed in Ceylon could be required to be sent to the National Library, the stock of current Ceylon publications could soon be increased; to the extent that the National Library succeeds in maintaining close international contact with foreign libraries and learned societies, books and periodical literature published abroad and information about them could speedily be acquired by the National Library.

Various problems will arise in the course of organizing such a Library and they can only be dealt with as the work progresses. But a building or buildings on grand proportions and on an adequate scale have to be provided for and a trained expert staff must be recruited as the important first steps. If there is one project on which it will be inadvisable for a Government to be niggardly it will be a National Library.

CHAPTER IX.

TRAINING OF LIBRARIANS.

It would have been noticed that a great handicap in the provision of a satisfactory library service in the country has been and is the absence of people professionally trained in the business of librarianship. I have emphasized already that librarianship is a profession that requires training as is the case in regard to any other profession. At the moment there are no facilities for the training of librarians in Ceylon and there are not in Ceylon more than half a dozen librarians professionally trained abroad. It will be expensive and, in my view, rather illogical to send young men and women abroad for training in librarianship.

The need for professionally trained librarians of various levels in Ceylon is admitted. Schools, local authorities, Government departments, other specialized libraries, are all in need of trained librarians, and the need is likely to grow in the years immediately ahead.

I feel strongly that facilities for training in librarianship should be made available without delay in Ceylon. The University of Ceylon in Peradeniya has, in my opinion, all the facilities necessary for providing a course in librarianship. It has a big library; it has a professionally trained staff; it has a body of teachers who can provide elementary instruction in subjects like literature, history, epigraphy, etc. Obviously the University is the best institution to provide such training. The University should therefore be requested to start a diploma course in librarianship without delay. Academic courses for the diploma are conducted by various universities—for instance, the University of London, the University of Delhi, the University of Madras, etc. The syllabus for the diploma could be adapted from the syllabus of any of these universities to suit conditions in Ceylon. That is obviously a matter for the University authorities who will be organizing such a course. But there is a matter of some importance which I might mention

here. Librarians perform many different functions. They, therefore, need not all be possessed of the same academic qualifications. As a rule, the more responsible work in libraries,—book selection, classification, cataloguing, reference library work—are undertaken by graduate librarians. All other library work could be undertaken and efficiently discharged by librarians who may not be graduates. Thus there need to be made available two grades of librarians: graduate librarians and non-graduate librarians. Both groups will undergo roughly the same professional training in the routine methods of librarianship, though in certain branches of library work graduates will receive more specialized training which will take advantage both of their general competence and their specialized subject-knowledge. For our conditions in Ceylon, for the moment at any rate, training for librarianship can be of two types,—one type for graduates and another type for non-graduates. Each course need not last more than one year. The syllabus would be naturally different and most of the instruction would be also given separately. Instruction in the elementary principles of librarianship will be shared by both groups in common but specialization in branches of library work would profit only graduates. Provision must be made also for the training of non-graduates in their respective languages: Sinhala and Tamil. I think, therefore, that a year's course given to graduates can be called "Diploma in Librarianship" and that given to non-graduates called "Certificate in Librarianship", carrying different salary scales. In view of the need to select people possessing appropriate qualities for librarianship and to encourage people to become librarians and also because librarianship is a service that requires continuity of effort, it will be necessary to provide trained librarians of both groups with salary scales higher than what they would receive if they were not so trained and found employment in untrained professions. I would estimate that the minimum number of trained librarians necessary for the Island at the present moment would be about 500. I make this calculation on the basis that all grade I, grade II and grade III schools in the Island would require immediately at least one trained librarian and that all local authorities above the level of village committees would need the services of at least one librarian. Other bigger libraries would require more than one librarian and village committees must soon be encouraged to organize their own public libraries in charge of trained librarians. Moreover, several Government departments have libraries of their own, in charge of untrained officers. 500 is therefore a very low estimate. The University may be able to provide facilities for the training of about 75 librarians annually in both grades, though perhaps this is an optimistic figure. On this assumption, to complete the training of 500 librarians would require about 7 years, by which time the number of librarians required would be still greater.

Perhaps this is a matter for the Minister of Education to raise with the University authorities. I feel it my duty to invite attention of the public to the urgency and need for the immediate provision of facilities for training in librarianship. The spread of education and the need which is implicit in a democratic way of life for the dissemination of basic and new knowledge to individuals make the organization of libraries managed by trained librarians a condition precedent to the preservation of the democratic way of life. The price a society pays for the neglect to perform this essential function is often very great as it tends to lead to the eroding away of the spiritual foundation which nourishes a democratic outlook and conduct.

I have been brought face to face with this problem of the need for training in librarianship by the discovery I made in the Public Library where about 40 adults who have worked for several years in the Library and who presumably have decided that that is their life's career, yet remain completely unconscious of the responsible character of their duties and untrained in the way of providing the service that they would, I have no doubt, very much wish to provide. That such a large body could find employment in a public library and receive as payment for their services a large slice of the Municipal funds and yet not be able to discharge conscientiously their duty and even feel frustrated as a result of such inability, was to me a painful

discovery. If this is the condition in which other library officers work in other libraries, as I have no doubt is the case, it is a sad state. Something must be done immediately to find for these library officers a purpose to justify their work and to give them the competence with which to do it; otherwise they get frustrated and the society which pays them does not get the service it requires. In Ceylon, for various reasons, which I need not describe here, the reading habit, the awareness that from printed books not only mental relaxation but also useful and indispensable knowledge are available are not common features of our life. In such a context the librarian's duties are in a real sense creative, because he has not only to provide the books that people want but also to encourage large numbers of men and women who can read but do not know why they should read, to use literature for their own benefit. For society at large only a trained librarian can accomplish this function in the case of adults after they finish their schooling. That is why I regard training in librarianship and the supply of such librarians as urgently necessary.

P. KANDIAH.

5th May, 1958.

Communications and memoranda were received from the following:—

1. Mr. Wilfred M. Gunasekara, Librarian, Information Department.
2. Mr. R. Siriwardena, Journalist, Lake House, Colombo.
3. The Ceylon Progressive Writers Association.
4. Library Attendants and Reading Room Supervisors, Public Library, Colombo.
5. Mr. S. R. Mendis, High Street, Wellawatte.
6. Mr. M. I. M. M. Sabir Pasha, 15, Meda Welikade Road, Rajagiriya.
7. Mr. M. R. de Silva, 123, Baseline Road, Colombo.
8. Mr. D. P. Weerasingha, Unemployment Relief Works, Cotta Road, Rajagiriya.
9. The Principal, Holy Family Convent, Colombo 4.
10. Mr. W. Panditaratne, 67/4, Nawala Road, Nugegoda.
11. Mr. D. A. Redmond, Librarian, Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research, 31, Torrington Place, Colombo 7.
12. Mr. John Rodrigo, 106, Wall Street, Colombo 13.
13. Mr. M. T. Deen, Zahira College, Colombo.
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16. Mr. M. S. Jaldeen, 76/23, Maligawatte Road, Colombo 10.
17. Miss W. G. Turney, 46, Kynsey Road, Colombo 8.
18. Mr. H. Jayasena, 185, Baseline Road, Colombo 8.
19. Mr. R. N. S. Keerthisingam-Karalukulasingam, 14, Camp Road, Nugegoda.
20. Mr. M. S. M. Falil (No address stated).
21. The Editor, "Lankadipa", Colombo.
22. Mr. K. D. Siriwardhana, 24/7, Darley Road, Colombo.
23. The Ceylon Association for the Advancement of Science, University of Ceylon, Colombo.

The following gave evidence before the Commission:—

1. Mr. Wilfred M. Gunasekara, Librarian, Information Department.
2. Mr. R. Siriwardena, Journalist, Lake House, Colombo.
3. Mr. Pieter Keuneman, M.P.
4. Mr. D. C. G. Abeywickrema, Librarian, Public Library, Colombo.
5. Mr. W. R. A. Abraham, Cloak Room Attendant, Public Library, Colombo.
6. Deputation from the Ceylon Progressive Writers Association.
7. Miss U. M. Van Langenberg, Library Assistant, Public Library, Colombo.
8. Mrs. T. M. S. Coorey, Library Assistant, Public Library, Colombo.
9. Mr. M. W. H. Thabrew, Senior Library Assistant, Public Library; Colombo.
10. Mr. B. J. Ariyanayagam, Library Assistant, Public Library, Colombo.
11. Mr. D. A. Redmond, Librarian, Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research, Colombo.
12. Mr. B. R. Devarajan, c.c.s., Chief Operations Manager, Ceylon Transport Board.
13. Deputation from the Colombo Tamil Sangam.

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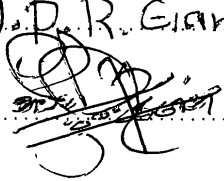
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