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CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND LAW AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In the last chapter we had a ride round the world in the wake of the World-conquering Expedition of the Second Law. While in its camp, it would be an advantage if we investigate the full implications of its message and make a study of what it would involve if the Second Law is to be entertained on an adequate scale. The study of the implications of the Second Law will be easier if we consider it in the form ‘EVERY PERSON HIS BOOK’. Of these four words, it is ‘EVERY’ and ‘HIS’ that keep the secret of the implications. Hence, it would be proper to devote some time to each of these words.

The consequences of putting the emphasis on ‘EVERY’ can be inferred from the common saying किसीने भी कहा कि:— “Varied is the taste of the world” to which we may add “Varied are the requirements of the readers”. The question to be considered is: What, then, are the obligations involved in an undertaking to provide every person his book? It may be convenient to examine them under four categories—(1) the obligations of the State, (2) the obligations of the Library Authority, (3) the obligations of the Library Staff, and (4) the obligations of the readers themselves.

IV] SOURCE FOR LIBRARY FINANCE 229

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE STATE

The obligations of the State centre round (a) finance, (b) legislation, and (c) co-ordination. Of these, the last obligation will be of help in reducing the first obligation to a minimum and the second is usually the means of defining the manner of discharging the other two.

FINANCE AND LEGISLATION

We may start from the axiomatic statement that a necessary factor for the maintenance of a library system, which can render satisfactory book-service to every member of a community, is finance. Finance seldom falls from heaven like Manna. It was only in pre-historic Israel that the Lord said, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out, and gather a certain rate every day”.

For some reason best known to Himself, the Lord seems to have now given up such direct action and never says, “Behold, I will rain rupees from heaven for you; and the libraries shall go out, and gather a certain rate every day”. Hence, each community has to find, all by itself, the finance necessary for the maintenance of its libraries. If it is lucky to have in its midst millionaires, who are guided by Carnegie’s Gospel of Wealth, it may exempt many of its members from the contribution of their quota. If not, each member must put in his share and it is the business of the State to fix the levy and arrange for its prompt collection. It may either ask the Central

(1) Exodus, XVI, 4.
Government to collect and hand it over to the library authorities or empower the Local Bodies to collect it themselves and spend it on their respective libraries, or it may distribute the burden between them in any proportion.

The moment the word, library-tax, is uttered, it appears to take the breath away from our ministers. When they regain their breath, they often give the standard excuse, "There will be a hue and cry. There will be down right opposition". One possible rejoinder for this may be "Do they give up collecting every tax which is opposed?" But, if they happen to be themselves unconvinced of the message of the Second Law and of the need for providing funds to get the benefit of that message, it may not be out of place to present to them the economic bearing of the message "BOOKS FOR ALL".

The people of any community are its greatest economic asset—worth in rupees several times more than all its material property. Everything that conserves this human asset and helps to make it more productive and valuable, is of direct economic value to the community. Schools and libraries are two of the most important public institutions for improving the economic value of this human asset, even apart from its far more important spiritual value. This economic value of the people is a very real one, even though most of us never think of the vastness of this human wealth in terms of rupees, annas, pice. The data collected by the great life-

insurance companies would lead one to an understanding of the tremendous economic value of human beings in the mass and the vast possibilities of increasing this value through the supply of BOOKS FOR ALL.

"Here are the conclusions of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company on the economic value of the people of the United States, as based on the studies made by their technical staff: The material wealth of the United States in 1922 was $321,000,000,000—an inconceivable sum. The economic value of the people of the United States that year was five times as great—more than fifteen hundred billion of dollars—over one trillion, five hundred billion of dollars.... And yet in all our discussions of taxation we are in the habit of giving vastly more consideration to material wealth than to human wealth. Studies such as those of the Metropolitan indicate the tremendous importance of schools and libraries in developing the economic value of our people, for it has been demonstrated many, many times that the average properly educated person is of much greater economic value to the community as well as to himself than an uneducated one."  

However, a knowledge of this tremendous value—the greatest natural resource of every community as well as of the country as a whole—is rarely realised by the general tax-payer. It is the

(1) Essays offered to Herbert Putnam ... on his thirtieth anniversary as Librarian of Congress, p. 370.
The business of the statesman, who is at the helm of affairs, to perceive it clearly and, instead of taking refuge under the unwillingness of the short-sighted tax-payer, to take a bold step forward. Then, he is sure to get encomiums showered on him or on his memory for such bold action, in the days to come. The statesman is put at the head of affairs just to inaugurate such far-seeing measures, not within the ken of ordinary men, and not merely to run the well-established machinery of administration. Few are the statesmen who possess this far-sightedness and courage of conviction.

As for the people who are served, if they get the books they want when they want them and if they are made to realise, by actual experience, that the libraries exist but to serve their interests, it will not be long before they rejoice to see the library item on their tax bill. Indeed the experiences of countries, where it is now held to be a worthy expenditure of public funds for the State to offer its citizens a free service of books, point to that conclusion. To give but one example, “In 1850 the Public Libraries Bill (of England) was carried by a majority of 17 only. In 1919, it was carried without a division”. Perhaps it may be instructive to trace, in greater detail, the slow but steady melting away of the opposition to the library-tax, as the advantages of public library

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Prompted among other things by a paper of Edward Edwards entitled “A Statistical View of the Principal Public Libraries in Europe and the United States of North America,” read before the Statistical Society of London on 20th March, 1848, Mr. William Ewart gave notice for a Select Committee on the need for provision of public libraries, in the autumn of the same year. On the 14th February, 1850—after the receipt of the report of the Select Committee—the same gentleman moved the House of Commons for leave to introduce a modest and purely permissive “Bill for enabling Town Councils to establish Public Libraries and Museums” by levying a rate not exceeding one halfpenny in the pound, on the general assessment of the town. In opposing this inoffensive permissive measure, which imposed an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the rate-payers for adoption of the Act in any Town, Mr. Buck proclaimed that “the additional taxation, which the Bill proposes, at a time when the nation is so generally impoverished, is considered a great grievance by the manufacturing as well as the landed interests of the country”. Another, Mr. Goulburn, sided with the opposition pleading that “the poorer rate-payers, who would have either no time for reading or might live at a considerable distance . . . would yet have to bear

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F—30
their full share of the expense”. Mr. Bernal chimed in with the remark that the Bill would “enable any Town-council, desirous of carrying into effect the views of any small section of the inhabitants, to tax the general body of rate-payers for an institution which might soon degenerate into a mere political club”. Mr. Spooner “almost feared that, by the institution of lectures hereafter, these libraries might be converted into Normal Schools of Agitation”. After this series of outbursts, a division was taken. The Ayes were 118, the Noes 101.

The opposition was pertinaciously continued at every subsequent stage and the patience of the promoters of the Bill was sorely tried. Several narrowing modifications were thrust into the Bill and six divisions had to be taken, until, at last, in a tattered form it received the Royal assent, on the 14th of August, 1850. A ludicrous mutilation, that the guerilla warfare of the opposition introduced into the Act, left the formation of the library to chance-gifts by precluding the purchase even of a single book with municipal funds, while the guardians of these funds were permitted, if they pleased, to incur any lavish expenditure for buildings and furniture. But it was felt that it bravely broke the ice and, however crude, contained the seeds of a wiser legislation for the future.

When, however, Mr. Ewart moved in 1854 for leave to introduce an Amending Bill, the opposition was much milder. Mr. Caldwell expressed his conviction that “the whole country was greatly indebted to the Honourable gentleman for the pains he had taken with this subject”. Another Right Honourable gentleman was of opinion that “these institutions had been most beneficial” and added that his constituents “were extremely anxious for the extension of the principle”. The active opposition was confined practically to the two old diehards, Buck and Spooner. The final division gave 64 Ayes and 22 Noes, although the maximum leviable rate was doubled. In 1866, by another Amending Act the majority necessary for adoption of the provisions of the Act was reduced from two-thirds to one-half.¹

The peculiar power of the Second Law to gradually melt away opposition, provided a statesman with vision takes it up, is amply borne out by the fact that the 1919 Act, which altogether removed the hampering limit to the library rate and empowered any library authority to levy any rate it liked for library purposes, was passed, as we saw, without a single division. Indeed the opposition to Library Legislation resembles the arguments against the art of swimming. One might say that unless a man could float he could not swim and that unless he could first swim he could not float. And, yet, this arm-chair logic is stultified by the action of the man of faith, who, leaping and struggling, finds that he can swim.

The power of the Second Law to melt away opposition is the direct result of the education imparted by the supply to EVERY PERSON OF HIS BOOK. We saw in the second chapter how a judicious supply of useful books, sent at a venture quite unasked to a fruitgrower in a village in Cambridgeshire, opened his eyes to the value of books. Certainly he would no longer grudge paying his quota to his county library service. And, after all, the creation of a favourable public opinion really consists in the creation and integration of such individual opinions.

Exactly similar has been the history and experience of all the nations that made an attempt at library legislation in the nineteenth century. But the nations that then adopted a policy of "wait and see" are like the man who postponed locking his stable door. They now attribute their backward position, in the economic rivalry of the world, to the delay they thus caused in the supply of BOOKS FOR ALL and are straightaway plunging into compulsory legislation. They seem to rely on the Mimamsa maxim न कदाचिदनिःस्तं जगत् “Never was the world unlike what it is at present” and the similar dictum, न कदाचिदनिःस्तं जगत् “Nowhere is the world unlike what it is here”. Many countries are now fast following the lead of Czechoslovakia in straightaway putting into force a compulsory Public Library Act, with a definite time-scheme for the establishment of Universal Library Service.

IV] ENHANCE THE VALUE OF THE HUMAN ASSET 237

Neither Madras nor any province of India should hesitate any longer to adopt a proper Public Library Act and to spend the little money that is needed to enhance the value of their human asset so as to bring it to the level it has attained in the other countries of the world.

A DEPARTMENTAL CONFERENCE

Present:

1. The Development Minister.
2. The Finance Minister.
3. The Education Minister.
4. The Director of Public Instruction.
5. The Director of Public Health.
6. The Director of Industries.
7. The Director of Agriculture.
8. The Director of Rural Reconstruction.

The Second Law also was, by special invitation, present.

The Development Minister.—Gentlemen, with your permission, I shall first convey to the distinguished lady the most sincere welcome of our Government. It is significant that, unlike other distinguished visitors from overseas, she has spent a year amidst our commoners, before giving us a chance to show her the State’s hospitality.

Coming to business, this conference is a direct outcome of the activities of our distinguished guest.
Her mission is to provide BOOKS FOR ALL. It is a problem bristling with difficulties.

The Education Minister.—Thanks to the propaganda of the SECOND LAW, I'm sure I can't face my constituency, unless something is done before the next election. My colleague referred to the difficulties. The main difficulty is that of Finance. I trust my other colleague will give his generous help in this all-important work of National Education.

The Finance Minister.—I shall be most happy, if I can be of any help in the matter. But, I don't see any way of finding money except by additional taxation. You know what that would lead to.

The Director of Public Instruction.—Now that finance has been mentioned, I may say at once that it is financially unsound—it is penny-wise and pound-foolish if I may use that expression—to spend annually 6.95 crores of rupees on the Elementary Education¹ of children and to plead lack of funds for the establishment of suitable village libraries . . . to keep them literate and to extend the bounds of their knowledge, after their formal schooling ceases"¹. I don't know if the Minister for Finance is aware that not less than "39 per cent of the children educated relapse into illiteracy within five years of their leaving school".² Is this economy of Public Funds?

The Education Minister.—There is no doubt that we must take a long view of things.

The Second Law.—Gentlemen, if I may interrupt you at this stage, I shall read out an extract from an address to the Efficiency Club by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education of the United Kingdom, "One of the principal considerations that weighed with Parliament in passing the Continuation School Clauses of the Act was that under the system as it existed at that time, the sums spent in elementary education between the ages of five and fourteen were to a great extent wasted—mark the words—by the absence of further provision for the children, and it is only when the continuation schools— I shall add

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'and Public Libraries'—are in proper working order that we shall obtain benefit for what we are now spending on our elementary schools'.

The Education Minister.—I have read that address of Mr. Herbert Lewis with some care. I have made some notes from it; "The situation is full of difficulty. But may I remind you that there is a very great quantity of work to be done at the present time at a comparatively trifling cost?" Now, I shall implore my friend, who is generous enough to grant us seven crores to purchase literacy, to give us at least seventy lakhs, to begin with, to retain that literacy. Surely he sees wisdom in sanctioning a certain recurring percentage of the capital cost to the Department of Public Works to keep their buildings in good repair. I only want what amounts to a similar maintenance charge.

The Director of Rural Reconstruction.—I join the Education Minister in his appeal to his colleague. The library as an instrument of education has too often been neglected ... What India wants to-day, besides the ordinary school and college libraries, are small public libraries of which there are very few ... These libraries, one of which should be found in each important village, will cater for the needs of both the English knowing and the vernacular reading public.

My work in the village is largely handicapped by the absence of libraries. There is no means of keeping the ideas alive and making them grow in the people's minds.

The Director of Agriculture.—I may say the same about the work of my department.

All the valuable work we carry on at Pusa and Coimbatore are like pumping water into a huge city reservoir, which ought to be, but is not provided with distribution-pipes.

The Second Law.—I found practically all your publications used with interest, by the farmers at Reading.

The Director of Public Instruction.—There you are. Reading has a library. We don't have it. That makes all the difference.

The Finance Minister.—I am not so sure. You remember we had a Publicity Bureau, not long ago. That used to distribute

(1) YAXLEE (Basil A.): Working out of the Fisher Act, p. 78.

most of your publications free in tons to each village. That has demonstrated the inertia of our people, the unwillingness of our people to learn.

The Development Minister.—I am afraid I should ask my learned friend to refresh his memory with the recent Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. I would particularly invite his attention to the concluding sentence of the Commissioners—I quote from p. 90 of the Abridged Report, which in fact is identical with what occurs in p. 674 of the Main Report—“Our enquiry has convinced us that, given the opportunity—mark that word—the cultivators of India will be found willing and able to apply in progressive degree the Services of Science and of organisation to the business of agricultural production”.

I quite agree, however, that these pamphlets of the Publicity Bureau went straight into the oven. But why?—

The Second Law.—Because a postman handing over a packet of printed slips is not like a librarian who establishes contact between books and people.

The Director of Agriculture.—I am obliged to the distinguished lady for putting her finger on the right spot. I was about to say, we spend several crores a year on preparing a grand feast of Agricultural Improvements, but we omit to invite the guests and we grudge to pay for service.

The Development Minister.—Surely, that white elephant of the new Imperial Council of Research may wait. My friend will perhaps get a better return for his money by placing that sum at the disposal of the Second Law of Library Science. We go on making things top-heavy.

The Finance Minister.—Its creation is due to the Royal Commission,¹ you quoted from.

The Director of Agriculture.—If you swear by one recommendation of that Commission it is difficult to see why another—perhaps a more vital—recommendation should be quietly passed over.

The Finance Minister.—What are you referring to?

The Director of Agriculture.—I shall read from the Report. I think, it is at page—.

The Second Law.—Page 672, please.

The Director of Agriculture.—Thank you. Right you are. Here is what they say.

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(1) ROYAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE IN INDIA: Report, pp. 48-58.
"Throughout our Report, we have endeavoured to make plain our conviction that no substantial improvement in Agriculture can be effected unless the cultivator has the will . . . to take advantage of the opportunities which science, wise laws and good administration may place at his disposal. Of all the factors making for prosperous agriculture, by far the most important is the outlook of the peasant himself". Now, what is the amount that the budget provides for this 'by far the most important' recommendation? Again, "This, in the main, is determined by his environment."

The Second Law.—I only demand a place for books in that environment.

The Director of Agriculture.—They proceed to lay down "We have no hesitation in affirming that the responsibilities required to effect this improvement rests with Government."

The Finance Minister.—My friend is discreetly abstaining from reading the next sentence:

"The realisation of this important truth has led, in recent years, to a large increase in expenditure on the departments concerned with rural welfare".

The Development Minister.—Then I must certainly read out also the sentence after that. "None the less, we feel that its force is inadequately appreciated by the Government of India and by Local Governments and that the necessity that the rural problem should be attacked as a whole, and at all points simultaneously, is still insufficiently present to their minds. We cannot but think that the failure to grasp the full significance of the proposition we have laid down in some measure explains the absence of any co-ordinated attempts to effect that change; . . . in the psychology of the peasant without which there can be no hope."

The Director of Rural Reconstruction.—Certainly no hope. Every minute of my life I am realising the practical wisdom of these words. I often find the Agricultural Propagandist rushing through the village with his demonstration-van. As soon as he leaves the village, the effect of his demonstration disappears.

The Second Law.—If there is a village library—a live library with a live librarian—
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that won't happen. To gather back the money sunk in the Agricultural service, to gather it for the uplift of the country, to convert the product into an available form, you must give EVERY PEASANT HIS BOOKS.

Certainly, it cannot be considered wise or economical to turn down the National Library Scheme on grounds of Finance.

The Director of Public Health.—The constant effort of my Department to obtain for the nation the best value for all it spends is equally thwarted by lack of public libraries.

The Second Law.—The United States of America considers the cost of her great library service as a valuable insurance premium for health insurance.

The Director of Rural Reconstruction.—I agree. One great lesson that my experience has taught me is this: Nothing is more certain than the fact that the physical advancement and health of mankind is dependent, not upon a physician's efforts, but upon the whole social evolution of the people. Now, these desired ends are not reached merely by announcing them, still less by leaving things to chance, drift or fate. There is need everywhere for

an educated and enlightened public opinion. Only an educated people is an effective people in combating disease, and people cannot be educated without an efficient net-work of Public Libraries.

The Finance Minister.—Is it suggested that the Public Library should concern itself with a work that is primarily the business of the Department of Public Health?

The Second Law.—Yes and No. No, if it relates in any way to the handling of disease; yes, in the dissemination of knowledge, that will save life and make the community more healthful and joyous in work and life.

The Director of Public Instruction.—I quite realise that we pay very inadequate attention to this side of education at school. Nor do we have a system of free libraries, where people may inform themselves of the laws of physiology and health.

The Director of Public Health.—That is why India's death-rate is double that of England and Wales. Her infantile mortality is about 4½ times that of New Zealand. In India the expecta-

(1) Annual Report of the Chief State Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health (Great Britain), 1927.
tion of life at 5 is approximately 35 years as against 54 in Great Britain. Put in another way, of 100,000 boys born alive in Denmark more than half would be living at age 65, while in British India just about half would be dead at age 11.\(^1\)

**The Second Law.**—Certainly it is no wonder, if we remember the wonderful library system of Denmark. ‘BOOKS FOR ALL’ is Denmark’s motto and that has paid her—

**The Finance Minister.**—Does the distinguished lady mean to suggest that if we plant libraries here, the boy who dies at 11 will live up to 65!

**The Director of Industries.**—That remark is neither fair nor correct. All that she means is that public opinion, well and constantly fed on Public Libraries, would more than anything else support all sane movements towards better sanitation and protection from infectious diseases; and more wholesome views as to food and clothing, exercise and fresh air and sober-living,\(^2\) which would, in the long run, increase the average life.

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\(^2\) GORE (John K.): *A World’s War Against Disease*, p. 54.
and means to raise the necessary funds. As I said, I am at a loss—

The Development Minister.—Yes, that is what I feel too. It is better we put our heads together and solve the problem of Library Finance. Perhaps, the distinguished lady can enlighten us with what she might have observed in her extended travels.

The Second Law.—It is usually met in one or all of three ways: (1) Local rates, (2) Grant-in-aid from Government, and (3) Private benefactions and endowments.

The Education Minister.—The last category mentioned by the Second Law brings to my mind our vast Religious Endowments, which now appear to be hardly well used.

The Finance Minister.—That is an idea. Quite an enormous portion of the wealth of the country is tied up in these medieval institutions. Certainly we must modernise the form of these charities. At any rate, if it is done we need not feel sorry that a Carnegie was not born in India.

The Development Minister.—True. But, there may be legal difficulties in the way.

The Director of Public Instruction.—We may get it examined by the Advocate-General.

The Finance Minister.—And if necessary bring in suitable legislation.

The Second Law.—Such endowments can only give a start. But money for the annual up-keep should be found locally. Local responsibilities should be left on local shoulders.

The Finance Minister.—That will be very difficult to bring about.

The Second Law.—I shall only point out that the experience in other countries clearly proves that once people begin to enjoy the benefits of a well-conducted library service, they cheerfully vote to pay for that service.

The Development Minister.—Let us assume, for the present,—

The Finance Minister.—I am not so sure.

The Second Law.—If you will bear with me, I can prove, by a priori reasoning as well as the example in other countries, that the money you spend on libraries comes back to you in the long run tenfold. It would come back in the shape of economy due to the improved civic sense and habits of the citizens, in the shape of greater human-power due to the higher average life, in the shape of increased out-put of production due to greater skill in the workers, in
the shape of better balance of trade due to more informed methods of marketing—

The Finance Minister.—That is all right. But—

The Education Minister.—There can’t be any but in this matter. As the Right Honourable J. R. Clynes said once: “We spend enormous amounts of public money on a great many objects, and so much money has been expended on all manner of causes, and for all manner of purposes, that we cannot any longer say that we cannot afford the public money for any purpose of this sort. Indeed, we cannot afford any longer to save public money in this way and stop ourselves in regard to what is now one of the most important purposes of our public activity. I do not regard money, whether it be laid out privately or through the public purse, as an outlay completely spent without return, when we pay out in connection with any educational purpose. It is not expenditure in that sense, in the sense that it is money paid over and done with; it comes back in worthier forms. To the extent that we improve, say, the average man or woman educationally, there is improvement... The man who loves books, who likes to read, whether in the library or in the home, depend upon it, is usually a better man than the man who never troubles his head about books at all... It is a most serious thing for the future of any country to have a Democracy which is not educated, to have a Democracy which is dependent upon the penny newspapers or the penny pictorial, or whatever it may be, so that... the work has to be begun, and—no matter what discouragements you feel in the earlier stages of an effort of this sort, the greater the discouragement, the greater the energy in that purpose, or the immense usefulness of such purposes,—is bound to benefit the State as a whole...”

The Development Minister.—I was saying that, assuming that a careful levy of taxation is possible, we should like to have further advice from the Second Law regarding practical details.

The Second Law.—If you add to your brilliant galaxy of Directors a Director of Public Libraries, he will look after the details.

Perhaps, I may add that, even before your Director is appointed, you may get a modest library legislation brought into force.

The Development Minister.—That is exactly what I wanted. Will you mind staying a little longer, so that we may draft, at least, the main clauses of a suitable Library Bill.

The Second Law.—I anticipated this and hence I have already drafted a Bill for Madras with the assistance of some of your Directors and your Drafting Secretary. With slight modifications it can be used by other provinces as well.

The Finance Minister.—Have you a copy with you?

The Director of Public Instruction.—Yes. Here are enough copies.

The Second Law.—I am reminded of an extraordinary way in which an American State has made crime a source of Library Finance.

The Development Minister.—How can crime develop libraries?

The Second Law.—The Constitution of Michigan, ever since its inception in 1835 down to this day, has been having a provision whereby the proceeds from all penal fines collected for the violation of State Laws are set aside for library use; the amount thus appropriated being more than 15 lakhs of rupees per annum.

The Director of Public Instruction.—We had something similar here.

The Finance Minister.—Really! What is it?

The Education Minister.—I believe our friend refers to the Fine-Hall of one of our Andhra Colleges. You see, we had a resourceful Principal who accumulated all fine collections and built with it a general assembly hall, which is also used to house the college library.

The Director of Industries.—Another Principal, who is a friend of mine, has utilised all such fines for decorating the college walls, with a Fine-Arts collection.

The Development Minister.—Let us hear more from the distinguished lady about the working of that extraordinary provision in the Michigan Constitution.

The Second Law.—The penal fines collected in each county remain in the county and are distributed annually to the district libraries of the county according to the population. The largest amount of penal fines for libraries in one of the counties was realised when a number of officials and others were fined and some sent to prison in con-
connection with a water-supply scandal, involving bribery in a conspiracy to tie up a city in a contract with a private concern. The city received its share of these fines and the library immediately invested several hundred dollars in books on every phase of water-purification, with the hope that they might contribute something to the city's unsolved pure water problem.¹

The Finance Minister.—This is indeed a very illuminating instance.

Let us now adjourn for lunch. We may meet to-morrow at 11. That will give us some time to look through the Draft Library Bill, so that we may discuss it later with more intimate knowledge and greater facility.

Extracts from the Draft Public Library Bill

PART I

CENTRAL AUTHORITY AND LOCAL AUTHORITY

1. Central Authority.—(1) The Ministry of Education shall be the Central Library Authority for the Province of Madras.

(1) Essays offered to Herbert Putnam... on his thirtieth anniversary as Librarian of Congress, pp. 373-374.

IV] Who should be Library Authority 257

(2) A Bureau of Library Service shall be attached to the Ministry of Education and it shall be charged with the superintendence of matters relating to Public Libraries.

2. Director of Libraries.—The chief executive officer of the Bureau of Library Service shall be the Director of Public Libraries and he shall work under the general direction of the Minister for Education.

3. Advisory Committee.—(1) There shall be an Advisory Committee for advising the Bureau of Library Service on any matter referred to it by the Ministry of Education.

(2) The Minister for Education shall be the Chairman and the Director of Public Libraries shall be the Secretary of the Advisory Committee.

(3) The other members shall consist of (i) three elected by the Legislative Council, (ii) two nominated by the Council of the Madras Library Association, and (iii) two nominated by the Governor in Council.

4. Local Library Authority.—For the purposes of Public Libraries—

(a) the Council of the Corporation of Madras, as respects the city of Madras,

(b) the Municipal Council of every Municipal town with a population of over twenty thousand, according to the census of nineteen hundred and thirty-one, as respects its Municipal area, and

F—33
Ranganathan, Shiyali Ramamrita. 
The Five Laws of Library Science. 
(Sarada Ranganathan Endowment for Library Science). 
Madras Library Association, 1931.

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Pauline Atherton.

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http://dlist.sir.arizona.edu/
(c) the District Board of every District other than Madras, as respects its District (excluding the area of any such Municipality), shall be the Local Library Authority.

5. Library Committees.—(1) Every Local Library Authority shall have a Library Committee or Library Committees, including also experts not necessarily members of the Authority, constituted in accordance with this Act.

(2) (a) All matters relating to the exercise by the Local Library Authority of the powers under this Act, or of any powers connected with libraries expressly conferred by or under any other Act, scheme, or order on the Local Library Authority, except the power of raising a rate or borrowing money, shall stand referred to the Library Committee, and the Local Library Authority, before exercising any such powers shall, unless in its opinion the matter is urgent, receive and consider the report of the Library Committee with respect to the matter in question.

(b) The Local Library Authority may also delegate to the Library Committee, with or without any restrictions or conditions as it may think fit, any such powers aforesaid, except the power of raising a rate or borrowing money.

(3) The Library Committee of a Local Library Authority shall be constituted in accordance with a scheme, made by the Local Library Authority, and approved by the Ministry of Education, which shall formulate a schedule of model provisions with respect to the making of such schemes.

(4) Any such scheme shall, when approved, have effect as if enacted in this Act, and any such scheme may be revoked or altered by another scheme made in like manner, which shall have the same effect as an original scheme.

(5) A Library Committee may, subject to any directions of the Local Authority, appoint such and so many sub-committees consisting either wholly or partly of members of the Committee, as the Committee thinks fit.

6. Power of Municipal Councils to relinquish powers and duties under the Act.—The Municipal Council of a Municipality having any powers or duties under this Act may, at any time, by agreement with the District Board of the District, and with the approval of the Ministry of Education, relinquish in favour of the District Board any of their powers and duties under this Act, and in that case the powers and duties of the Authority so relinquished shall cease, and the area of the Authority shall, as respects those powers, be part of the area of the District Board.

7. Provisions as to co-operation and combination.—(1) For the purpose of performing any duty or exercising any power under this Act, a Local Library Authority may enter into such arrangements as it may think proper for co-operation or combination with any other Local Library Authority or Authorities and any such arrangement
may provide for the appointment of a Joint-Committee, for the delegation to that committee of any powers or duties of the Local Library Authorities (other than the power of raising a loan or borrowing money), for the proportion of contributions to be paid by each Local Library Authority, and for any other matters which may appear necessary for carrying out the arrangement.

(2) The Ministry of Education may, on the application of two or more Local Library Authorities, by scheme provide for the establishment and (if thought fit) the incorporation of a Federation for such purposes of any such arrangements as aforesaid as may be specified in the scheme as being purposes relating to matters of common interest concerning libraries which it is necessary and convenient to consider in relation to areas larger than those of individual Local Library Authorities and the powers conferred on Local Library Authorities by this section shall include power to arrange for the performance of any library functions by such federation as if it were a Joint-Committee.

Provided that no Local Library Authority shall, without its consent, be included in such a scheme establishing a federation and no Local Library Authority shall be obliged to continue in a Federation except in accordance with the provisions of a scheme to which it has consented.

(3) A scheme constituting a federation may, on the application of one or more of the Local Library Authorities concerned, be modified or

repealed by a further scheme, and, where a scheme provides for the discontinuance of a federation, provision may be made for dealing with any property or liabilities of the Federation.

8. Inspection of Minutes.—The minutes of the proceedings of the Local Library Authority, and, where a Local Library Authority delegates to its Library Committee any powers, and the acts and proceedings of the Library Committee as respects the exercise of those powers are not required to be submitted to the Local Library Authority for approval, the minutes of the proceedings of the Library Committee relating to the exercise of those powers shall be open to the inspection of any ratepayer at any reasonable time during the ordinary hours of business.

PART II

SCHEME AS TO POWERS AND DUTIES

9. Schemes for comprehensive organisation of Public Libraries.—With a view to the establishment of a national system of Public Libraries available for all persons capable of profiting thereby, it shall be the duty of every Local Library Authority, so far as its powers extend, to contribute thereto by providing for the progressive development and comprehensive organisation of Library Service in respect of its area, and with that object any such Local Library Authority from time to time may, and shall, when required by the Ministry of Education, submit to the Ministry schemes showing
the mode in which its duties and powers under this Act are to be performed and exercised, whether separately or in co-operation with other Local Library Authorities.

10. Preparation and submission of schemes.—(1) The District Board of a District, before submitting a scheme under this part of the Act, shall consult the other Local Library Authorities within its District (if any) with reference to the mode in which and the extent to which any such Local Library Authority will co-operate with the District Board in carrying out its scheme, and when submitting its scheme shall make a report to the Ministry of Education as to the co-operation which is to be anticipated from any such Local Library Authority and any such Local Library Authority may, if it so desires, submit to the Ministry of Education, as well as to the District Board of the District, for consideration in connection with the scheme of the District, any proposals or representations relating to the provision or organisation of Library Service in the area of that Local Library Authority.

(2) Before submitting schemes under this part of this Act a Local Library Authority shall consider any representations made to it by any persons or bodies of persons interested, and shall adopt such measures to ascertain their views as it may consider desirable, and the Local Library Authority shall take such steps to give publicity to their proposals as it may consider suitable or as the Ministry of Education may require.

11. Approval of Schemes by the Ministry of Education.—(1) The Ministry of Education may approve any scheme (which term shall include an interim, provisional or amending scheme) submitted to it under this part of this Act by the Local Library Authority and thereupon it shall be the duty of the Local Library Authority to give effect to the scheme.

(2) If the Ministry of Education is of opinion that a scheme does not make adequate provision in respect of all or any of the purposes to which the scheme relates, and the Ministry is unable to agree with the Local Library Authority as to what amendments should be made in the scheme, it shall offer to hold a conference with the representatives of the Local Library Authority and, if so requested by the Local Library Authority, shall hold a public enquiry in the matter.

(3) If thereafter the Ministry of Education disapproves a scheme, it shall notify the Local Library Authority, and, if within one month after such notification an agreement is not reached, it shall lay before the Legislative Council the report of the public enquiry (if any) together with a report stating its reasons for such disapproval and any action which it may intend to take in consequence thereof by way of withholding or reducing any grants payable to the Authority.

(4) If any Local Library Authority fails to submit a scheme to the Ministry of Education either within one year after it is asked to do so by
the Ministry of Education or before 1945, whichever date is earlier, the Ministry of Education shall lay before the Legislative Council a report stating any action which it may intend to take in consequence thereof by way of withholding or reducing any grants payable to the Authority.

PART III
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

12. Duty to provide and maintain Public Libraries.—(1) The Local Library Authority whose scheme has been approved shall, in accordance with and subject to the provisions of this Act, maintain and keep efficient all Public Libraries within its area which are necessary and have control of all expenditure required for that purpose and shall provide such additional Public Libraries as are, in the opinion of the Authority itself, necessary in order to provide for its area a sufficient number of Public Libraries.

(2) The Local Library Authority shall have power to appoint the necessary staff subject to the Regulations framed in this behalf by the Ministry of Education and placed before the Legislative Council.

(3) The Local Library Authority, for the purpose of providing sufficient Public Libraries for its area, may provide, by building or otherwise, library buildings properly fitted up and improve, enlarge and fit up any library buildings provided by it and supply books, magazines, newspapers, maps, specimens of art and science, lantern-slides, cinema-reels and apparatus and other relevant materials and conveniences and shall have power to do or provide everything necessary for the efficiency of the Public Libraries provided by it.

(4) The Local Library Authority may discontinue any Public Library provided by it or change the site of any such Public Library, if it satisfy the Ministry of Education that the Public Library to be discontinued is unnecessary or that the change of site is expedient.

13. Liquidation of illiteracy.—(1) A Local Library Authority may take such steps as it may think fit for the liquidation of illiteracy among the adults of its area and, for that purpose,

(a) may associate with itself any committee on which the Local Library Authority is represented who will undertake to provide the means of such liquidation of illiteracy; and

(b) may aid that committee by furnishing such land, buildings, furniture, and apparatus as may be necessary, but, save as hereinafter provided, the Local Library Authority shall not incur any expense in respect of the staff required.

(2) Where the Local Library Authority shall resolve that any of the persons within its area seeking the benefit of its Library Service are unable by reason of illiteracy to take full advantage of the Library Service and shall have ascertained that funds other than public funds are not available or are insufficient in amount to defray the cost of the
liquidation of their illiteracy, it may spend out of
the rates such sum as may be approved by the
Ministry of Education for that purpose.

14. *Prohibition of fees in Public Libraries.*—
No charge shall be made for admission to a Public
Library provided under this Act for any library
area or, in the case of a lending library, for the
use thereof by the inhabitants of the area; but the
Library Committee, if it think fit, may grant the
use of a lending library to persons not being
inhabitants of the area, either gratuitously or for
payment.

**PART IV**

**Finance**

15. *Power to accept gifts.*—A Local Library
Authority shall be competent and shall be deemed
always to have been competent to be constituted
trustees for any library endowment for purposes
connected with Library Service, whether the endow-
ment was established before or after the
commencement of this Act, and shall have power
to accept any real or personal property given to it
as a library endowment or upon trust for any
purposes connected with Library Service.

16. *Endowments.*—(1) Nothing in this Act
shall affect any endowment or the discretion of any
trustees in respect thereof. Provided that, where
under the trusts or other provisions affecting any
endowment the income thereof must be applied in
whole or in part for those purposes of a public
library for which provision is to be made by the
Local Library Authority the whole of the income
or part thereof, as the case may be, shall be paid
to that Local Library Authority, and, in case part
only of such income must be so applied and there
is no provision under the said trusts or provisions
for determining the amount which represents that
part, that amount shall be determined, in case of
difference between the parties concerned, by the
Ministry of Education.

(2) Any money arising from an endowment,
and paid to a Local Library Authority for those
purposes of a public library for which provision
is to be made by the Local Library Authority shall
be credited by the Local Library Authority in aid
of the rate levied for the purposes of Library
Service.

17. *Library Fund.*—(1) The expenses to be
incurred by a Local Library Authority in the
execution of this Act shall be met from the Library
Fund, maintained by the authority.

(2) To this fund shall be credited:

(a) The amount raised as library-rate,
which the Local Library Authority may raise at such
rate or rates as may be determined by it from time
to time;

(b) The amount (if any) which the
Authority may transfer to it from its general
funds;

(c) The amount realised from endow-
ments (if any);
(d) Any other amount that the Authority may receive for general library purposes;

(e) An amount, not less than the sum of the amounts appropriated from the above sources, for actual expenditure, in the preceding year, for the purposes defined by this Act, which the Local Government shall annually contribute subject to such conditions and limitations as may be prescribed in the Regulations framed by the Ministry of Education and placed before the Legislative Council from time to time; and

(f) Any special grant that the Local Government may give for specific purposes such as acquisition of land, construction of library building, or other specific purposes, subject to such conditions and limitations as may be prescribed in the regulations framed by the Ministry of Education and placed before the Legislative Council from time to time.

18. **Power to raise loan.**—(1) A Local Library Authority may borrow money for any of the purposes under this Act on the security of any fund or rate applicable for those purposes with the sanction of the Ministry of Education.

**PART V**

**Acquisition, Appropriation and Alienation of Land**

**PART VI**

**Accounts and Audits**

**PART VII**

**Inspection, Returns, Reports, etc.**

27. **Inspection of Public Libraries.**—The Ministry of Education may by its officers, or by other organisation, inspect any Public Library for the purpose of ascertaining the character of the Library Service.

28. **General returns.**—A Local Library Authority shall make such report and returns, and give such information to the Ministry of Education, as the Ministry may require.

29. **Collection of information.**—In order that full information may be available as to the provision for Library Service and the use made of such provision, it shall be the duty of the Library Committee when required by the Ministry of Education to furnish to the Ministry such particulars with respect to the libraries as may be prescribed by Regulations made by the Ministry and placed before the Legislative Council.

30. (1) **Public Enquiry.**—The Ministry of Education may hold a public enquiry for the purpose of exercise of any of its powers or the performance of any of its duties under this Act.

The Ministry shall furnish a copy of the report of any enquiry so held to any Local Library
Authority concerned with the subject-matter of the enquiry, before taking action on it.

31. Annual reports.—The Ministry of Education shall annually lay before the Legislative Council a report of its proceedings under this Act during the preceding year.

PART VIII
Bye-Laws

32. (1) Power to make Bye-laws.—A local Library Authority may make bye-laws for all or any of the following purposes relating to any Public Library which by virtue of this Act is under its control:

(a) For regulating the use of the same and of the contents thereof, and for protecting the same and the fittings, furniture, and contents thereof from injury, destruction or misuse;

(b) for requiring from any person using the same any guarantee or security against the losses of or injury to any book or other article;

(c) for enabling the officers and servants of the library to exclude or remove therefrom persons committing any offence against the bye-laws or otherwise.

(2) A copy of the bye-laws made under this section shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Ministry of Education for information. If the Ministry finds any reason for so doing, it may suggest a reconsideration of or amendments to such bye-laws.

(3) All offences under any such bye-law may be prosecuted and all penalties recovered in a Court of Law having jurisdiction over the Library Area.

PART IX
General Clauses, Definitions, etc.

Co-ordination

The third obligation of the State—that of co-ordination—is really an attempt to reconcile two opposing factors, *viz.*, the necessarily limited nature of the finances of a community and the apparently unlimited finances required to provide *EVERY PERSON HIS OR HER BOOK EVERY MOMENT*. These two factors can be reconciled only by a judicious pooling of the resources of the community by a carefully articulated scheme of library co-ordination and co-operation, which should not be left to chance or to the sweet will of the libraries themselves, but should be actively fostered by the State in the interests of national economy. There are three types of co-ordination possible, at three different levels, which need different modes of action, *viz.*, (1) fixing a lower limit to the size of the ultimate Local Library Area, which is to be done by legislation; (2) fostering amity, specialisation and inter-library loans, which can only be done by informal suggestions made at periodical conferences; and (3) maintaining certain central
agencies, which must be financed and managed directly by the State.

It would be futile to invest a small area, whose ratable assessment is not fairly high, with independent library powers. With its meagre income, no efficient library service will be possible. Obviously no building can even be considered; to talk of a staff with a scale of salary, that can attract and retain really able, professionally qualified men, would be absurd; book-purchase must be inevitably small. The little money of each such small library would be absorbed, almost completely, in the duplication of one and the same set of certain commonly required fundamental books. Hence, the State should fix a minimum ratable assessment or a minimum population as the qualification for an independent library area.

In Madras, we can have really efficient service only in cities with a population of 50,000 or over. There are, in the whole province, only 12 such cities, viz., Madras, Madura, Trichinopoly, Calicut, Kumbakonam, Tanjore, Negapatam, Salem, Cuddalore, Coonanadu, Conjeeveram and Coimbatore. Even if we agree to admit second-rate town libraries, it won't be wise to go to towns of less than 20,000 population. And there are only 40 other towns with such a qualification, viz., Mangalore, Rajahmundry, Tinnevelly, Vellore, Guntur, Eloffore, Palamcottah, Palghat, Vizagapatam, Masulipatam, Bezwada, Tuticorin, Bellary, Vizianagaram, Nellore, Dindigul, Srivilliputtur, Raja-

palayam, Aruppukotai, Berhampur, Cannanore, Tellicherry, Adoni, Mayavaram, Kurnool, Saidapet, Tiruvalur, Srirangam, Chidambaram, Erode, Gudiahtham, Sembiam, Mannargudi, Virudunagar, Tenkasi, Tiruvannamalai, Tenmali, Vaniambad, Anakapalle, and Bodinayakanoor, in order of population. Thus, the province can have, at the most, only 52 Urban Library Authorities. All other areas should be served only by the 26 District Library Authorities that should be instituted. Such a District Library Scheme, with travelling library facilities, is the only means of securing satisfactory service with the small finances that can be made available.

Even with as few Library Authorities as 78 for the whole province, it may not be possible for each authority all by itself to find sufficient funds to provide for EVERY PERSON HIS OR HER BOOK. Even if funds are forthcoming, it will be highly wasteful to do so. While each Library Authority should own one or more (if demand justifies it) copies of certain ordinary books, it is not conducive to national economy, for each of them, to buy copies of costly or occasionally used books. In fact, it is necessary that the 78 Library Authorities should arrive at an agreed scheme of specialisation. In such a scheme, each Library Authority will have, for its share, the building-up of as complete a collection as possible of materials bearing on local history, local industries and other local interests. If Salem is predominantly a weav-
existing in the State Library of Prussia. It must have a Union Catalogue of all the libraries of the province and bring about a smooth exchange of books between libraries, as and when required, so that any student in any corner of the province can get HIS BOOK with the least possible delay, cost and worry. It must also maintain a Central Library of rarely used and costly books for lending to any library on request, so that the 78 Library Authorities may invest their book funds in oft-used books and books of local interest. It must also gather the ‘dead’ books of the several Library Authorities from time to time and arrange for the housing of just a sufficient number of copies in permanent custody for occasional use. While it would be impossible for each Library Authority to give shelf-space for all its ‘dead’ materials, it is not proper for each such authority to destroy them indiscriminately and independently, lest certain books should happen to have no representative copy whatever in the Province. It should further provide for the maintenance of certain types of special libraries, such as the Library for the Blind and the Seafarers’ Library, which, by their very nature, cannot get localised.

While these activities are absolutely necessary, the Bureau of Library Service may, with advantage, interest itself also in co-operative cataloguing as the Library of Congress does; it may endeavour to publish bibliographical aids from time to time; it may be possible for it to so influence the publish-
Unless the University has an indefinitely long purse, it would be well advised to restrict the Departmental Collections to duplicate copies of important reference books, in daily demand by the members of the department and certain other oft-used books in the line of enquiry which is, for the moment, engaging the attention of its members. The departments should be encouraged and advised to draw all other kinds of books from the Main Library as and when need arises. In particular, it is doubtful if any University can be rich enough to purchase duplicate sets of Scientific Periodicals, whose number has already crossed the 25,000 mark. The executive of the University should try to invest its funds on single copies of as many different periodicals as possible rather than permit the departments to have each the luxury of a complete run of some of such periodicals, opened, perhaps, on half a dozen occasions in a term.

If the executive of the University attempts such co-ordination, it can certainly make its library allotment go much longer than otherwise and make a closer approximation to the ideal of the Second Law. Individual departments may not be able to take a comprehensive view of the University Library system as a whole and may, under the obsession of their immediate and isolated interests, each prefer to have duplicate copies of all kinds of materials ever at their elbow. While such an ideal arrangement may be worth having in theory, it is only the central executive of the University, which
has to cut the coat according to the cloth, with prudence and a longer view of things, that can see the problem in its proper perspective and decide the extent to which an approximation to that ideal can be ventured.

At the same time, the executive should minimise the handicaps of the departments due to the curtailment of duplication, by judicious housing-arrangements. The orientation of the University buildings can be so made that all the departments virtually have the whole library system at their elbow. If the Second Law is borne in mind, and also from the point of view of the Fourth Law, it must be made possible to locate most of the research departments under the same roof as the library. Even if it is not practicable to accommodate all the departments in that way, the executive should at least be guided by the principle that the research departments have the first claim for all the available extra space in the library-buildings.

The Obligations of the Library Authority

While well-thought-out legislative and co-ordinating measures on the part of the State are necessary, they are not by themselves sufficient. The State action can find the money, and may, perhaps, be of help in providing the building. But the life, necessary to vitalise them, can only be supplied by the local Library Authority. This obligation of the Library Authority centres round two factors, (1) the choice of books, and (2) the choice of staff.

IV] Ideal Way of Forming a Library

Choice of Books

Mention has already been made of one aspect of the choice of books, viz., specialisation with a local bias. The ideal way of fitting a library to give EVERY PERSON HIS BOOK may be that of gathering together all the products of the printing press from its very inception to the present moment, from the first book printed by Caxton to the last book printed to-day. "Some idea of its size is given by Iwinski who, in 1911, published the results of an elaborate statistical study of book-production. He estimated that there were then in the world twenty-five million 'different books'. We should, however, find need to correct this figure if we bear in mind that Iwinski limited his estimate to 'different books', and did not take into account different editions, reprints, issues, variant copies, etc., of the same book, neither did he include such occasional, fugitive, and ephemeral items as maps, charts, prints, proclamations, music, engravings, broadsides, news-sheets, newspapers, sermons, almanacs, etc., which would swell his estimate to an enormous extent." With such a bewildering number of materials in print, it can be seen that every Library Authority should willingly co-operate with the other libraries in the country—perhaps even in the world at large—and accept a policy of

(2) Essays offered to Herbert Putnam . . . on his thirtieth anniversary as Librarian of Congress, p. 114.
specialisation, if it is to help EVERY READER WITH HIS OR HER BOOK.

As a matter of fact, it may even be said that it is not so much to the size of the library as to the choice of its collections that the Second Law looks for the fulfilment of its message. It would insist that the essentially limited nature of the finance of a library makes it imperative that as much knowledge and judgment are required in the choice of books "as in the choice of a house or a wife, a wireless valve or a sparking plug. Roomfuls of books may be a mere accumulation, whilst a simple shelfful may constitute a library, the volumes having been selected and placed side by side to serve a definite purpose ... A good general library might be regarded as a grouping of such special collections, properly co-ordinated so as to strengthen and amplify each other without wasteful overlapping".¹

Another important aspect of the choice of books is that of going in for a large number of encyclopedic and other reference books. In the first place such books are usually costly and cannot be bought by individual citizens and secondly such books will usually furnish most of the information that is frequently sought by the majority of readers. With a good collection of such reference books, the problem of supplying EVERY READER HIS OR HER MATERIAL will be solved to a large extent. That this elementary fact has to be

nically trained, properly paid staff. Now we may add the need for an adequate staff. This problem will again turn up in a more serious form when we discuss the Fourth Law.

A Library Authority that is anxious to obey the Second Law and give EVERY READER HIS BOOK, should realise "that an enormous proportion of the general public, not excepting the more studious and intelligent, are not aware of all that libraries contain or that books contain, and even when they have some apprehension, do not know how to get what they are in need of. Few have the knowledge and skill required to extract the very best out of any kind of library... One of the most familiar experiences of all who have to do with libraries is to see people, hard up for information, going away empty handed after a protracted search for what is ready waiting, properly catalogued and indexed, and perhaps contained in ready-reference works staring them in the face on the open shelf". If the Library Authority realises this, it will appreciate the need for an adequate competent staff to show every reader "how to use books as tools and libraries as workshops" and to make even the limited resources of its library yield to EVERY READER HIS OR HER MATERIAL.

The Obligations of the Library Staff

This brings us to the next category of obligations, viz., the obligations of the Library Staff.

There is a Tamil proverb which says that even though the desired boons may be granted by God, they may be held up by the ministering priest. Similarly, even though the State and the Library Authority might have duly discharged their obligations to the Second Law, its mandate may not be properly carried out unless the library staff discharge their obligations in an efficient manner. We are not referring here to the possible negligence or indifference of the Library Staff. They have been dealt with in the first chapter. On the other hand we refer only to what the Second Law would demand of an earnest staff, actuated by a sense of duty. The obligations of the library staff to facilitate the fulfilment of the Second Law centre round: (1) shelf-arrangement, (2) cataloguing, and (3) reference work.

The obligations of the Library Staff which centre round these points will appear in even stronger light, when we deal with the Fourth Law. Hence, we shall try to complete the study of the implications of the emphasis on 'every', by devoting a few lines to the obligations of the readers themselves.

The Obligations of the Readers

We have seen that hardly any library can afford to get duplicate copies of books. Hence EVERY READER can get his books only if each reader remembers that he is not the only person using the library. He should not forget that the Second Law pleads not only for his rights and

(1) BAKER (E. A.), Ed.: The Uses of Libraries, p. 4.
privileges but also for those of others. It is usual to invoke the civic sense of people in some places by a placard with the legend "when you leave this place, see that you leave it as clean as you would like others to leave it for you". Each reader who uses a public library should be guided by a similar maxim. He should show as much consideration to the interests of other readers, as he would like that they should show to his own interests.

While maxims like this are easily accepted in theory, it usually becomes difficult to observe them in practice, without the aid of some external help. While nobody is so obtuse as not to perceive the imperative need to observe the rule of the road if road-travel is to be safe, most people cannot resist the temptation to break it unless the policeman enforces it almost at every turn. Hence the readers should look upon the rigid enforcement of the rules of a library as an aid rather than as a hindrance. They should try to obey them as cheerfully as one obeys the directions of the policeman on point-duty.

**Library Rules**

One usual rule, to which readers often object, is that which fixes an upper limit to the number of volumes that can be taken home at a time. This limit may be fixed as three, or six or eight or any other number. Arguments may be found in favour of any particular number. Hence, whatever be the number fixed by the rule, it may appear to be purely arbitrary. But once that number is fixed the Second Law expects that every reader should deem it an obligation to respect that number without murmur. One should not go behind that rule and question on every conceivable occasion the propriety of the number chosen. When a member had in his possession one more book than the rules permitted, a librarian had reluctantly to write to him asking him to return the extra book. But he flared back writing, "I am afraid the rules of your library are too exacting for it to become popular and your notice reminds me of the methods of the income-tax department. I am, however, returning one book as desired". The librarian expressed his thanks for the last sentence and treated the rest of the letter as not written.

Every reader should realise that this rule is intended not to inconvenience the individual but to benefit the public in general. A library book at the house of one reader is necessarily withdrawn from use by others and the rule attempts to minimise this objection to lending by limiting home-use to as many volumes at a time as can be reasonably expected to be in active use. While six books used at one time by a reader, who must consult them all together, are performing useful service, even a single book that lies idle for a week on some one's private table is being wasted.

Another rule, which causes perhaps much greater vexation, is that which fixes a time limit for the return of books taken on loan. Experience all the world over has taught the Library Antho-
rities that this rule cannot be enforced without a penalty for its infringement. The favourite penalty is a monetary fine of so much per day for the retention of a borrowed book beyond the period allowed. The idea here is not to make this fine a source of revenue. On the other hand the library tries to help the reader in every possible way to avoid paying such fines. It usually indicates the due date on a special date-slip attached to the first page of the book. It sends a reminder card as soon as it becomes overdue and every week thereafter until the book comes back. But the trouble about this, as about all fines for trivial misdemeanour, is that it comes to be regarded as payment for a privilege. The person who wants to keep a popular book an extra fortnight, thereby inconveniencing the next one on the waiting list, knows that it will cost him only a few annas to do so and he cheerfully pays it, unmindful of his civic responsibility. This is as bad as it would be if a motorist should take with him extra money for fines, to be able to pay for the privilege of rash-driving.

There are others that get irritated by the term ‘fine’ appearing in the library rules. They argue vociferously, ‘We are not criminals to be fined. We are gentlemen, I have never paid any fine either to my school or to any court of law. The payment of fine is most demeaning to me’. There are still others who ask to be exempted on the ground, ‘I am a busy man. I can’t always find time or remember to examine that date slip and return the book in time’. Or ‘I am frightfully engaged in intensive research. I draw so many books at a time. Hence I can’t afford to find out when each book is due’. Very often, the fact in such cases may be that the book lies on the reader’s private table unopened for days and days, others being deprived of their legitimate use.

Another rule that has been dictated by experience is that books of ready reference, rare books that cannot be replaced, heavy books that cannot be safely carried, Art books that are full of plates, which are, by nature, frail and easily destructible, should not be taken home but should be consulted only in the premises of the library. Dictionaries, cyclopaedias, directories, year-books and such other publications are not intended to be and cannot, ordinarily, be read continuously. Further they contain such a fund of varied information that practically every person would require their use. The frequency of their use would be not only high but would also be evenly distributed throughout the day. If a reader appreciates the anxiety of the Second Law to give EVERY READER HIS CHANCE to use them, he would see the anti-social nature of confining them to his private study, where they are bound to be idle for most of the day.

The Art Books like Ananda Coomaraswamy’s Indian Art or Ganguly’s Rajput Painting or Hurlimann’s Indien, not only have a delicate physique but are also very costly. Since libraries
cannot find funds to buy copies of such books more than once, the Second Law requires that such books are carefully kept and used in the library itself, so that their life may be prolonged as much as possible, to give EVERY READER HIS CHANCE to use them. If a reader has the goodness to calculate the extra-cost incurred by him in using them in the library itself and compare it with the possible risk involved in their removal from the library and remembers his obligations to his fellow-readers, he will see the unreasonableness of desiring to break this restrictive rule.

Another important class of printed material about which severe restrictions are usually placed by all libraries is that of periodicals. The current numbers, which alone contain the latest phase of the progress of thought, are of vital interest to many a reader. One unfortunate trait that persons, engaged in narrow fields of work, develop either unconsciously or purposefully is to assert that certain periodicals are of interest to themselves only and hence would be best used, not while lying on the library-table, but on their personal study-table. It is difficult to argue this point. The Second Law would plead with them saying,

"Let the guiding fiction be, not that no body else would require it but that many others would require it. Sacrifice a little of the luxury of turning through the pages of a periodical coming hot from the press, while reclining on a lounge with the charming domestic setting. Do cultivate the habit of looking at a library as a place to go to,—as a community centre,—and make it a point to drive to the library once in two or three days so as to look into the latest issues of even a larger number of periodicals, without at the same time depriving others of their chance."

The anti-social habit of segregating periodicals and perhaps forgetfully letting them lie for an indefinite period amidst the heap of unused books on private tables appears to be most prevalent in professional colleges and universities. Of course, plausible excuses and justifications may be forthcoming. But the Second Law would only ask them to look at the other side of the picture and calmly consider the little sacrifice that is required on the part of individuals to form a systematic habit of periodically going to a central place to use them and the immensely greater chance such a habit will give to an immensely large number of students and other readers, who perhaps are less influential and command less leisure and facilities but are no less interested in their use.

Those that short-sightedly revolt against the time-rule, fine-rule, reference-book-rule and periodicals-rule are not so difficult to handle. They at least call a spade a spade. But a much more intractable reader is one who concedes everything and says "Yes, your rules are all necessary. Every body should respect them if every body is to have the fullest benefit. But let me alone be
exempted”. This special privilege may be claimed on several grounds. One may say “I am a member of the Municipal Council (or whatever body it may be) that manages the library. Hence, I should be shown special considerations. One special consideration that I elect to ask is exemption from all library rules”. Another may say in a crisp form, “Wherever I go, I am given special privileges”. They would appear to measure the happiness of their life by the number of occasions on which they get preferential treatment, in suppression of rules and regulations.

Instances like this may be multiplied ad infinitum. But suffice it to say that the criterion of the Second Law in giving special privileges is not the reader’s social status, official position or love and delight in special treatment, but the capacity to fully and genuinely utilise such special privileges, which by their very nature should affect the ordinary privileges of other readers prejudicially. Hence the obligation that the Second Law would throw on the readers is to try one’s best to conform to the Library Rules and ask for special privileges sparingly and only when it is absolutely impossible to have one’s requirements fulfilled without them.

**The Obligations of the Library Staff**

Now, we may shift the emphasis to the word “HIS” and trace the consequences. The first effect, that came to be realised as soon as the emphasis shifted to ‘his’, was to understand that the business of the Library Staff is not merely to
dole out across the counter the books that are asked for. On the other hand their business is to know the reader, to know the books and to actively help in the finding by EVERY PERSON OF HIS OR HER BOOK. This phase of the work is known as “Reference-work”. The first thing is to know the reader. We referred to the importance of it in the first chapter.\(^1\) We also referred, in the third chapter,\(^2\) to the only systematic way in which this power can be acquired and in which it is sought to be acquired in Germany by the work that is being carried on in the ‘Leipzig Institute for Readers and Reading’.

**Reference Work**

It needs to be emphasised that ‘Reference work’ cannot be done without special training and intensive experience. The laymen, who manage our libraries, seldom realise this obligation that the Second Law throws on the Library Staff but act on the assumption that any S. S. L. C.-holder will do for library work. But even they know that the holding of the S. S. L. C. does not qualify one to run a locomotive and that good manners and common sense are not all that is required for the practice of medicine. But since they regard library work as mechanically handing out books, the existence elsewhere of library schools, of degree courses in library science and of a Chair of Library Science in a University like Gottingen, is a puzzle to them.

\(^{(1)}\) Cf. pp. 63-67.

\(^{(2)}\) Cf. pp. 207-208.
They may be still more puzzled if they are told that libraries are now beginning to employ "readers' advisers" to whom readers may apply for aid in FINDING THEIR BOOKS. They may even object that such advisory service smells too much of school-mastering, whereas the adult learner must depend on himself. The reply that western countries give to such an objection would be "A man must digest his food in his own stomach, but that is no reason for refusing to cook it or for withholding knife, fork and spoon".¹

Next to knowing the readers, the Library Staff have to realise that they exist for readers. They have to find out how much help could be given to EVERY READER TO FIND HIS BOOK without going beyond the limits of common sense and without becoming private secretaries or private tutors. The following extract from a book-mark with the legend *purposeful reading*, issued by Detroit Public Library, throws much light upon the way in which this obligation should be discharged by the Library Staff. It says that the library's *Educational Counsellor for Readers* will devote "his time to the more intimate discussion of books and reading with those who may wish to know of the book journeys of some one else. His position will be, not that of an instructor, but of a sharer of good things, who will likewise enjoy hearing of the pleasures of other adventurers. Further more


IV] It is a peculiar sort of Knowledge 293

a large part of his time will be devoted to giving talks on books and other aids to readers wherever he may be called upon to do so by organisations interested in either general or specific intellectual pursuits".¹

If the obligation, that the emphasis on the 'his' in the Second Law throws on the Library Staff, is to be interpreted in such an ideal way, it can be easily realised that the necessary knowledge of books and book-collections should be very vast and thorough. While what may be learnt from the backs of books or what may be remembered by shape, size, colour, location and other associations may be of some help, they cannot be sufficient. When books are added in hundreds, week by week, however retentive may be the memory, one loses track of the accessions and the mind cannot hold all the titles.

Again it is a peculiar sort of knowledge that is needed to find for EVERY PERSON HIS BOOK. People at all levels will seek the help of the Library Staff to find their books. It may be a freshman that wants help to prepare for the scholarship examination; it may be a senior student who wants to lead a debate on feminism; it may be a professor who wants to settle a point in the phonology of the Dravidian vowel system; it may be a physicist who wants the book that will give him just enough and no more of Matrices to
understand Heisenberg’s treatment of Wave Mechanics. Here are some typical topics on which queries were received in the course of one month. They will give some idea of the range and difficulty of the work:

(1) The method of calculating the quantity of sun’s heat that will fall in a year on the sides of a wall in the latitude of Madras;
(2) The advantages of pile foundations;
(3) Methods of utilising waste-products;
(4) The parts of Central India where iron deposits are said to be likely;
(5) Tamil-English equivalents of the names of plants;
(6) The vitamin content of the common Madras dishes;
(7) An authoritative account of the Hindu Karma theory;
(8) A readable book on behaviourism;
(9) The best book on ‘Statistics’ for teachers’ use;
(10) Information about the coastal survey of Bombay and in particular about the silting up of the old harbours of the Kathiawar Peninsula;
(11) The number of electors and of those who actually polled during the last three general elections in each constituency;
(12) The quantity of monazite mined in the different countries of the world in 1929;
(13) A picture of a Roman Villa;

(14) An account of the conventions about flying corresponding to the Rule of the Road and a Code of Air-laws.

No person can depend on his memory to say what his library resources are on such a bewildering range of subjects. The Library Staff have necessarily to depend on certain recognised mechanical aids, to discharge their obligations in helping EVERY PERSON TO FIND HIS BOOK.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The first tool consists of published bibliographies. The word Bibliography is a source of great confusion to many people. Murray’s New English Dictionary mentions four different uses of this term. We are here concerned only with the fourth use given therein, viz.: “A list of the books of a particular author, printer, or country, or of those dealing with any particular theme; the literature of a subject”.

One result of this aspect of the Second Law has been that hardly any subject is now unprovided with a bibliography. In addition to the select bibliography, that it has now become the practice to append to each book, there are several general bibliographies as well as those on specific subjects. John Minto’s Reference Books published by the Library Association in 1929, is a good guide from which the important bibliographical books required for a library may be selected.
The obligation that the Second Law would impose on the Library Staff is that they should acquaint themselves with the scope and structure of such bibliographical books. It is only close and systematic study and frequent use that will secure for the staff the necessary facility in using them quickly and effectively. It is seldom that the arrangement is similar in different bibliographies. This makes the work of the Library Staff all the more arduous.

**Reference Books**

Another class of books of which the Library Staff should cultivate an intimate knowledge is that of ready reference books, such as atlases, dictionaries, directories, encyclopaedias and year-books. There are now many such reference books in the field. In fact, most of the major subjects and even some of their minor sub-divisions have been provided with ready reference books. Many readers are not aware either of their existence or of the extent to which they furnish information. The requirements of the Second Law can be fulfilled to a remarkable degree, if the Library Staff have made a special study of the contents of such reference books. There can be nothing more embarrassing to a librarian than to say that he cannot find for a reader the information he seeks. But the frequency of such embarrassing situations can be considerably reduced if he acquires thorough familiarity with a representative set of reference books. Indeed, the percentage of readers that could be satisfied with the material culled by a skilful librarian from such publications is amazingly large.

**Catalogue**

A third obligation that the Second Law would impose on the Library Staff refers to the catalogue. Books are mostly of a composite nature. Very few of them really are of the monograph type. While there may be a primary subject pertaining to a book, it generally deals with several other subsidiary subjects as well. It may happen quite often that the treatment which a subject receives in a book in which it occupies a subsidiary place is of just the kind that a reader requires. The chapter on Vectors—a sub-division of Mathematics—contained in Haas's *Theoretical Physics* is just the kind of treatment that many students of Mathematics may be seeking. Mrs. Manning’s *Ancient and Medieval India*, which should naturally be placed in the division of Cultural History, contains chapters giving a clear synopsis and criticism of the outstanding works in Sanskrit Literature. It contains also a good exposition of the different schools of Indian Philosophy. Perhaps, the pages devoted to the theory of classification of biological sciences in J. A. Thomson’s *Introduction to Science*, will be of utmost interest to students of classification. Many of the anthropological books contain much information of philological interest. They give not infrequently complete vocabularies.
Ranganathan, Shiyali Ramamrita.  
The Five Laws of Library Science.  
(Sarada Ranganathan Endowment for Library Science).  
Madras Library Association, 1931.

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