

National Advisory Commission on Libraries

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December 1, 1967

TO: Members of the Drafting Committee

FROM: E. Shepley Nourse

RE: Analysis of November 27 and 28 meetings of the
Commission compiled from my rough notes.

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NOVEMBER 27, 1967, SESSION

I. Organization and Emphasis of the Commission's Report

A. Organization and Procedure

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1. The ten recommendations in Wagman's revised draft were the focus for discussion, and it was agreed that some should be subsumed under broader headings. Although modified somewhat during the discussion on the following day, the five recommendations that emerged in the Monday morning session were basic.

MELVILLE J. RUGGLES
Executive Director

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Deputy Director

- a. The permanent National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. The goal is to work toward a national library system, and these originally separate recommendations should be presented in context with the recommendation for a permanent Commission; these subsequently became goals and objectives (#2-#5):
 - (1) developing a national library policy,
 - (2) strengthening libraries for the total span of education,

- (3) strengthening libraries for research,
 - (4) expediting physical access, and
 - (5) expediting bibliographic access
 - b. The Library of Congress: The National Library of the United States. The other national libraries must be mentioned here.
 - c. The federal institute for research and development affecting libraries and information science. It should be multicentric.
 - d. Strengthening the Office of Education.
 - e. Strengthening state library agencies.
2. There was apparent consensus that the report should be organized according to these recommendations, with a straightforward presentation of each recommendation itself followed by several pages of supporting text. There should also be an introduction.
3. There was apparent consensus that the Commission's literary output should proceed in three phases.
 - a. The "presentation" report to be completed before the end of the year. It would not exceed 25 pages.
 - b. The "full" report to be completed later. It should be a thoughtful synthesis of all Commission materials, drawing themes from the special studies, testimony, minutes, regional hearings, correspondence, etc. It might include the 25-pager as a first chapter and a variety of reference material in the appendix.
 - c. The special studies considered worthy of publication in addition to ERIC publication. This final phase might involve one or several volumes, but it was too soon to discuss the many possibilities for editorial development.
4. A few members urged that Wagman continue to be the Commission's author and editor, but Chairman Knight pointed out that it was bad policy for a nonmember who had also been a witness to become the creator of the report. He

urged the Commission as a whole to do its own work by concentrating on discussions of substance, to be further developed by the Chairman and one or more subcommittees working with the staff editor (Nourse). All praised Wagman for his important contribution to date and hoped he would continue to be available as an expert consultant.

B. Emphasis

1. The revised version of the Wagman text was criticized basically because:
 - a. Priorities did not emerge clearly and gaps were evident. Are all recommendations of equal urgency? Why no recommendation on manpower (the library profession and education and training for it)? Why no recommendation on public libraries? Why so much research emphasis?
 - b. A coherent picture interrelating all the elements had not been developed.
 - c. A time sequence indicating stages for goal achievement was not evident. The expedient and immediate should be differentiated from the short-range and the long-range. Some vision for the long future must be included.
2. There was apparent consensus that the Commission wants its report to be in simple hard-hitting language for a non-specialist audience and that it wants a positive, nonapologetic tone. The presentation should be modest but strong. Factual examples of difficulties should accompany the rationale for the Commission's conclusions. Arrogant emotional generalizations should be avoided.
3. The commentary on the Office of Education in the revised Wagman text was considered too critical, and there was apparent consensus that the tone here should be constructive and cognizant of OE's own efforts to solve its problems.
4. A return to the Commission's earlier concern with basic principles began to emerge with pleas for emphasizing the advancement of knowledge, user needs, obligation to youth, and the rationale for federal involvement.

5. There was apparent consensus that emphasis should be on the three recommendations with longer-range implications (the Commission, the Library of Congress, and the Research and Development Institute). However, the others are also major and of immediate importance.
6. Two suggestions for themes were mentioned:
 - a. "how we can help libraries meet tomorrow's demands" as the primary theme, and
 - b. "sharing resources as the first step toward a national system" as the secondary theme.

C. Role of the Permanent Commission

1. There was apparent consensus that the Wagman text should be revised to clarify that the Commission is not to be a capping or coordinating agency with executive and operating functions.
2. There was apparent consensus that the Commission is to be an advisory body of not more than 15 members, appointed by the President, with a strong staff and the means to:
 - a. Study problems.
 - b. Make plans .
 - c. Advise governmental and nongovernmental agencies at all levels.
 - d. Publish reports.
3. Vice Chairman Burkhardt reported that efforts are under way to have the permanent Commission mentioned in the President's state-of-the-union message.

- Adjournment for lunch -

II. Discussion on the Three Major Recommendations

A. Elements of a national policy

1. It was apparently agreed that a specific charge to the permanent Commission would be to develop national policy.
2. It was not clear how far the 25-page report could go in suggesting guidelines for policy development, but these points were mentioned:
 - a. The long-range goal is a coherent integrated national system.
 - b. The purposes and functions should be delineated.
 - c. The user is a paramount focal point. However, in stating value judgments on such things as, for example, the desirability of increasing the use of public libraries, care should be taken to qualify conclusions not yet based on evidence. A national policy cannot be based on unsupported generalizations, but hypotheses can be suggested.
 - d. Real needs vs. perceived needs.
 - e. Do we serve existing structures and attitudes or use influence to induce change?
 - f. Policy-making emerged as a function of the permanent Commission not mentioned during the morning session; other functions are planning, reviewing and recommending, and advising. There should probably be examples of each type of function.

B. The National Library

1. It was pointed out that it will take longer to set up the National Library than the permanent Commission, so the two recommendations should not be tied to each other in such a way one is dependent on the other.
2. It was indicated that Congress might be sensitive about its Library, so care should be taken in commenting about such

aspects as the Legislative Reference Service. It was pointed out that Congress itself had thought of calling the Library of Congress the National Library, so there is no need for the Commission to feel presumptuous in recommending the name change.

3. It was pointed out that, although it is o. k. to call the Library of Congress the National Library, the text should make it clear that the other two national libraries are not subsumed under it.

C. The Research and Development Institute

1. The revised Wagman text did not mention the locale of this Institute. The Library of Congress, National Science Foundation, and Department of Health, Education, and Welfare were mentioned as possibilities. HEW seemed the most likely spot, but it is not clear what decision, if any, was reached.
2. It was suggested that the text emphasize the multicentric nature of this new structure--its overlapping authority with other agencies (e. g. , National Institutes of Health) and the desirability of this integrating activity.
3. It was suggested that the Institute's potential concern with research in the social and behavioral sciences (e. g. , user studies) be emphasized more strongly.

D. Legislative Strategy

1. Vice Chairman Burkhardt reported that the Office of Education is already working on getting groundwork laid for implementing ^{the} three major recommendations. Chairman Knight reported on his White House visit, indicating December 19 as the day the Commission's recommendations should be submitted.
2. The device of a volunteer citizen's committee to make personal calls on congressmen and lobby for the legislation was suggested.

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Following a closed off-the-record session, the Commission turned to a discussion of its other recommendations.

III. Discussion on the Two Other Recommendations

A. The Office of Education

1. The revised Wagman text was criticized for its tone of unconstructive criticism of OE, and it was suggested that the Commission's objections should be specific (e. g., the theory of dispersal and administration through people). The tone should not put OE on the defensive.
2. There was apparent consensus that the problem of library statistics was the proper takeoff and that OE's challenges for the future should be emphasized.
3. There was apparent consensus on the idea of recommending a key OE staff position coordinating library matters. Possible titles would be Associate Commissioner for Libraries or Assistant Commissioner for Libraries. It was also suggested the Commissioner's title could be changed to Commissioner for Education and Libraries.
4. Ray Fry, who attended the meeting as OE observer, was asked to make a few remarks. He reported that OE is making "progress on paper," but that the freeze has created many problems, particularly in staffing. He believes the reorganized structure is o. k. but lacks coordinating mechanisms. He is enthusiastic about the regional program. The library statistics situation is clearly recognized as a problem. In response to a question, Mr. Fry stated that the four OE branches concerned with grants management are named: Library Programs and Facilities, College Resources and Training, Library Planning and Development, and Library Education.

B. State Library Agencies

1. Some suggested wording changes were submitted.
2. There was apparent consensus that the supporting text following this recommendation should be expanded to clarify the rationale for strengthening state library agencies to perform their three ideal functions: a library for libraries, service to state government, and a coordinating and planning agency in the library system.
3. There was very apparent lack of consensus with respect to the state's role in making grants from federal funds, a routing path that seems basically in conflict with the trend toward regional emphasis. There was apparent consensus that the report should state recognition of a long-run trend toward the regional, putting the immediate state emphasis on a basis of transitional expediency.
4. There was apparent consensus that the specific legislative recommendation should appear in the supporting text but not be part of the recommendation itself.
5. There was apparent consensus that when specialized jargon is used (e. g. , the word "categorical"), it should be briefly defined for the general reader.

IV. Organization and Emphasis of the Report

A. Organization

1. It was agreed that the following outline be followed in presenting the Commission's recommendations in the 25-page report:
 - a. Introduction on "What Is A Library?"
 - b. Toward a National Policy
 - c. Goals and Objectives
 - i. Libraries for the total educational span
 - ii. Libraries for research
 - iii. Physical access
 - iv. Bibliographical access
 - v. Public libraries

d. Achieving the Goals and Objectives

- i. The permanent commission
- ii. The Library of Congress
- iii. The Research and Development Institute
- iv. The Office of Education
- v. State library agencies

B. Emphasis

1. The outline above grew out of a discussion of priorities and some fear that the very important long-range objectives might be buried in the discussion of the permanent Commission's functions.
2. It was agreed the report must not look as though everything was being tossed to the permanent Commission.
3. It was agreed that the text should recognize the Commission's diverse membership and not apologize for any disagreement on priorities.

C. Inclusion of Special Studies

1. There was apparent consensus that there was insufficient time to attempt a meaningful relationship of the special-study content and the content of the 25-page report. It might be possible to attempt this for the expanded second version of the report.
2. There was apparent consensus that the third stage of the Commission's literary output should concentrate on the special studies and alternatives on their publication.

- Adjournment for lunch -

V. Content and Procedure

A. Content

1. In discussing possible elements of a national policy, a number of points were suggested, all groping back to the earlier emphasis on basic principles:
 - a. The Commission is concentrating on the transition period from the immediate to the long range and is apparently recommending an evolutionary approach, a logical development from what exists rather than starting de novo.
 - b. The rationale for Federal involvement was mentioned again.
 - c. What is the difference between a conclusion and a policy?
 - d. The heart of the national policy should be the appropriate response to society's diverse needs for access.
 - e. Not mentioned, but probably relevant here, are three needs for attitude changes evident in earlier meetings:
 - i. Need to change concept of library from repository of books to center for active information transfer.
 - ii. Need to change concept of librarian from custodian of books to entrepreneur of information transfer.
 - iii. Need to clarify basic falsity of dichotomy between conventional literary information and newer information formats.
2. Ideas not fully refined in time for the 25-pager can be included in the second-stage report.
3. A bibliography might be included in the second-stage report.
4. Some testimony might be included in the second-stage report.

B. Procedure

1. The Commission delegated responsibility to the Chairman and a new Drafting Committee (Knight, Burkhardt, Clapp, Eurich, Fussler, Lacy, Overhage, and Schramm) to pull together the 25-page report. All members will have the opportunity to review and comment, but there will be no time for major revision.
2. Specific writing assignments were given to the Drafting Committee members.
3. A meeting of the Drafting Committee was set up for 9:30 a. m. at the Century Club (north room, fourth floor), 7 West 43rd Street, New York, on Sunday, December 3. The staff editor and the executive director were invited to attend.

VI. Status of Special Studies

- A. It is still not clear, but apparently the Commission is not obligated to put all the studies it pays for into the ERIC system.
- B. Apparently the formal status of the study reports breaks down as follows:
 1. Not completed
 - a. Social Change
 - b. Public Libraries
 - c. Undergraduate Libraries
 - d. Cory's Network study
 2. Decision pending Commission review
 - a. Library Use
 - b. State Libraries
 - c. ~~School~~^{chool} Libraries
 3. Pay for, but file and forget (no ERIC or other publication)
 - a. Library Statistics
 - b. Extra-Library Information Systems
 - c. Manpower

4. Pay for, but publish only via ERIC
 - a. Libraries and Industry
 - b. Special Libraries
 5. Pay for and publish
 - a. Technology
 - b. Research Libraries
 - c. Federal Libraries (at least Leach paper)
 - d. Library Economics
 - e. Library Facilities
- C. By formal action, the Commission turned down an OE-supported study on undergraduate college libraries proposed by someone in Herndon, Virginia. It is too late to consider it although it might be good.

VII. Other Matters

- A. There was considerable worry that the Office of Education might have an incorrect impression of Commission intent with respect to some of its recommendations and that inappropriate groundwork might be laid. OE may think the Commission wants the Institute to be in the Library of Congress and the LC out of the Legislative Branch. OE will be told to keep out of LC and set straight on the tentative nature of the Commission material they have.
- B. It was announced there should be an embargo on even informal release of the recommendations until the 25-page report has been made public.
- C. There will probably be another meeting of the full Commission in 1968.
- D. There was general agreement with the feeling expressed by one member that all on the Commission had learned from each other and that it was quite an achievement for 20-odd people to educate themselves.
- E. Thanks ^{were} ~~was~~ expressed again to Dr. and Mrs. Caryl Haskins for their hospitality.