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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Second Meeting
November 15-16, 1971

Summary of Proceedings

There were present:

Members of the Commission: Messrs. Aines, Baker, Becker, Burkhardt, Quadra, Dunlap, Goland, Lerner, Mrs. Moore, Mr. Mumford, Miss Scott, and Messrs. Velde and Zipf. (Mr. Kemeny did not attend and Mr. Baker was present for only a part of the sessions. Mr. John Lorenz, Deputy Librarian of Congress, substituted for Mr. Mumford from time to time.)

Staff: Mrs. Reszetar; Miss Bowman, Mr. Burkhardt's secretary.

Guests: As listed in the full proceedings.

The first order of business was a presentation by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). A written statement, which explained ARL's activities and made recommendations as to what the Commission might undertake, had been sent to the Commission members in advance. Mr. John P. McDonald, President of the Association, and Mr. Stephen A. McCarthy, its Executive Director, spoke and answered questions put by Commission members.

The National Serials Pilot Project, which ARL has been conducting, was explained.

Asked to define the constituency of ARL, its representatives said it is made up mostly of large university libraries. They do not, of course, corral all research--but they have a set of common concerns and problems that are different from those of college libraries or specialized libraries that support research.

Inquiries were made about user charges by university libraries. A few do make charges, it was said, and a fee system may develop, but it was felt that anyone with a serious thirst for knowledge could find a way to get the materials he needs.

Mention was made in the ARL written statement of the development of the British Library, but Mr. McDonald was hesitant about suggesting it as a model for the U.S. because of differing circumstances in the two countries.

Asked what ARL thought were top priorities for the Commission, Mr. McCarthy said: (1) To convince decision makers of the great need for money; and (2) to develop a sound plan for using the money.

Mr. Cuadra asked whether ARL has any layout of what a national library information system might be, and whether there is any document that tries to define needs of research libraries for the next five, ten, or fifteen years. The CONLIS report was thought to come closest to answering the first question. Papers being prepared by Neil Harlow for ARL will be looking to future needs, and to some extent the report On Research Libraries does this.

Mr. McDonald had mentioned the desirability of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the present research library system. While it was thought they are pretty well known to people in the field, it was said that there might be an advantage in having this Commission recognize and state them.

The American Library Association (ALA) also had sent the Commission members in advance of this meeting a written statement describing that organization's activities, and Mr. Keith Doms, President of ALA, and Miss Germaine Krettek, Director of its Washington office, were present for discussion with the Commission.

ALA was described as an over-arching agency of some 30,000 members, representing its members by type of library and by type of services provided.

The statement that had been submitted urged that the Commission concern itself with:

- 1) Clarification and perhaps codification of responsibility for library development and support at federal, state, and local government levels.
- 2) A national system for the coordination of the resources and services of all types of libraries.
- 3) An effective system of library statistics and data gathering.
- 4) Research into information needs of library patrons and programs to meet those needs.

Amplifying the first point, Mr. Doms spoke about the problems of a large public library (like the Free Library of Philadelphia) where local jurisdictions are paying for local service and yet the need exists to go beyond those jurisdictional borders, and there is no financial apparatus

to fund that service. Mr. Doms wonders whether a central library of this kind, or portions of it, might fit into a national library system. Resources and services in an urban area need articulating, an equitable system for governance and financial support should be developed, and, in the face of intense competition for public and private funds, more inter-relationship must be achieved.

Mr. Doms spoke of the fact that shortage of funds is making it impossible for public libraries to maintain their often very significant collections.

Mr. Cuadra asked Mr. Dome whether he believes it is possible and desirable to develop a national system. Mr. Doms replied that he considers it essential to do so, but he said it is hard for him to imagine in terms of "nuts and bolts."

Mr. Doms urged a whole new focus on the user of libraries, and he regards this as an area of research for the Commission.

Mr. Lorenz and Miss Krettek said that much of the needed legislation is on the books--but not funded, or not funded adequately: The Library Services and Construction Act, Title Two of the Higher Education Act, and Title Two of the Elementary and Secondary School Act. Colonel Aines thought it would be helpful to see how much of the authorized funds have been appropriated. (See p. 9 for figures supplied by Mr. Lorenz on the following day.) Miss Krettek stressed that a national network will not exist until the units that would make it up can afford to contribute something. This led Colonel Aines to ask Mr. Doms whether ALA has been looking at the larger issues as well as at the current basic survival needs of the libraries. Mr. Doms believes it has--but there is not enough money to carry out new plans. He hopes the Commission will make the point that good library service is central to man's self-improvement and self-development.

Mrs. Moore spoke of the importance of inserting the library component in legislation. There followed a brief discussion of the proposal to create Citizens' Information Centers in New York City, and copies of the proposal for those Centers were distributed to the Commission members. It appears that a large part of the funding needed for this big project could come from social security money. Miss Krettek spoke of efforts to identify all of the pieces of legislation that libraries can use.

The utility of the National Inventory of Libraries--prepared in 1957 or 1958 was mentioned. It was stressed that specific information about resources, staff, etc., and about how libraries compare with standards, is needed. And there is also a need to use this basic data politically.

Mr. Cuadra asked Mr. Doms what he imagined the role of the information facility will be in the 1980's and Mr. Doms said he thought research collections, facilities, and related services should develop on a regional basis. Problems of cooperation between localities were discussed, and it was said that cooperation happens to the degree that new money is brought into the situation.

The ALA statement had said: "The State Library is the one agency in a position to coordinate the resources and programs of all types of libraries in the state and to enter into inter-state compacts to provide needed information services." The Chairman asked whether state systems don't differ so much as to make interaction difficult, if not impossible. That apparently is so.

A model for a state library system was thought desirable. ALA has promulgated standards for state library agencies, and it was suggested that the Commission examine them, perhaps make modifications, and that endorsement or recognition of these standards by the Commission would be an important step. Several members expressed the view that priority should be given to trying to improve and help to develop and strengthen the state libraries.

Following the departure of the ARL and ALA representatives the Commission discussed, off the record, various candidates for the post of Executive Director. Then the Chairman reported that a request for \$750,000 for the Commission's work during the fiscal year 1973 had been presented to the Office of Management and Budget. This amount, he said, would provide for a staff of eight, eight meetings of the Commission, three regional meetings, and some \$343,000 for studies and contracts--though there would be no restrictions on reallocations of funds between the various categories of expenses. The report on classes of activity in which the Commission might engage (prepared for it at the September meeting by a committee of its members) had been the basis for the request for funds for studies and contracts. OMB had not yet indicated what size budget it would approve for the Commission. It was also reported that office space for the Commission had been found at 1717 K Street, N. W.

There was brief discussion of the policy the Commission should have regarding the projects and proposals of other agencies. Clearly it did not expect to be a grant-making agency which would give financial support to outside projects, and there was general agreement that it would not endorse or give indirect support to such projects. It would, however, wish to be kept as fully informed as possible about activities within its area of interest.

The Commission turned then to discussion of what it ought to undertake during its first year and, as at its first meeting, an uncertainty

about the wisdom of doing something that is immediate without having a context into which to put it underlaid this discussion.

Mr. Cuadra began by suggesting four areas of potential effort:

- 1) A national plan or a national system.
- 2) Specific research--of which, he said, there are literally thousands of conceivable projects.
- 3) Public relations--finding ways of directing attention and money to library/information problems (perhaps addressing this as a technical problem.
- 4) Finding some mechanism for bringing together information that exists and will exist.

Mr. Goland asked whether the Commission should not try to do something immediate about the problems of research libraries if, he added, the troubles of the New York Public Library and restrictive acquisition practices adopted by the Linda Hall and John Crexar libraries are endemic in the entire research library community.

The Chairman pointed out that private research libraries are not now eligible for federal support in the way that university libraries are and suggested that the Commission might recommend that they be made eligible for such support. However, he said, eligibility doesn't mean much if appropriations are inadequate; and the Commission might wish to ask whether funds appropriated have become dangerously low from the point of view of the informational and educational needs of the country, and perhaps say something or do something about that.

Mr. Dunlap attested to the dire financial situation of research libraries and said he thought a national lending library of periodicals--a so-called periodicals bank--is one of the most promising solutions that has been proposed. The possibility of studying what a national periodical bank would be like, and how it would work was discussed. The Association of Research Libraries will undertake some investigation in this area, it was noted, but Mr. Dunlap said that many libraries outside the ARL community would draw on a periodical bank, and he thought it might be fruitful for the Commission to explore this subject also. One of the things to be investigated would be the economic effect of the bank on publishers.

Other members of the Commission thought that the subject of periodicals, as it had been discussed, was too specialized for consideration at this time, and proposed concentration on more general areas. One such, Mr. Becker felt,

was the financial area. He thought a systematic approach to understanding the mechanisms of financial support, including codification or classification of financial problems that face libraries, would be very useful. Such a study, he thought, ought to be done by someone expert in money and finance. It was noted that libraries will not be the same in 1980 as they are today, but there was agreement with Mr. Goland's comment that they will certainly be no less expensive.

Mr. Lerner asked whether the Commission wishes to put pressure on the Administration for funds for libraries. The Chairman's response was that he sees the Commission's job to be to find out what is needed by the people of this country in the way of library and information services, and to try to make a convincing case for meeting the needs--in the belief that attention will be paid to that case.

Reference was made to discussion earlier in the day of the value of the National Inventory of Libraries and of the need for current basic data about libraries. There was support for the Commission's gathering or seeing to the gathering of basic information on libraries and library statistics, and Mr. Becker proposed that a consultant be engaged to assemble descriptive data on various types of libraries. (See p. 9 for amplification of this proposal.) Also, it was suggested that the Commission should ask the Office of Education to undertake the collection of statistics which are needed but may not now be available.

Members of the Commission said they wanted to receive summaries, with principal conclusions and recommendations, of the most significant studies pertinent to the objectives of the Commission, and also to know of important studies now in progress. In the first category were mentioned:

CONLIS (Committee on National Library Information Service) Report
SATCOM (Committee on Scientific and Technical Communication) Report
Weinberg Report /or maybe the 1965 COSATI Report instead/
PSAC (President's Science Advisory Committee) reports.

It seemed that the primary reason for identifying the important reports and preparing summaries of them was to give Commission members information for which they felt a need, and as well to give them a common starting point for efficient work. That, it was noted, is different from assembling reports which would tell the Commission what problems in the library/information field are most urgently in need of attention. But, it also was noted, coverage of the major reports, plus knowledge of studies in progress, ought at the same time to point to the major problems.

Messrs. Aines, Becker, Quadra, and Dunlap were asked to make up lists of the important reports which should be summarized for the Commission members. If an Executive Director is on duty in the near future, he will be expected to arrange to have the summaries prepared--by staff or by consultants; if the appointment of the Executive Director is delayed, the members of the Commission named above will be asked to suggest persons who might be engaged as consultants to prepare the summaries.

As for studies now in progress, Mr. Cuadra said that the Federal Library Committee has a list of on-going research projects in library/information science, and it was agreed that Mr. Curt Cylke, Executive Secretary of the Federal Library Committee, would be asked to come to the Commission's meeting on November 16 to let the members know what information he has available.

As reference was made to various studies of problems in which the Commission has an interest, it was observed that the same subjects have been studied over and over, and that recommendations made as long ago as ten years are standing waiting for attention. Perhaps, it was said, this is because there is need for cooperation and the crossing of political and jurisdictional lines, and up to now there has been no action agency. Perhaps the Commission can be such an agent, but also there is a need for money to carry out the recommendations that have been made.

Mrs. Moore spoke of the necessity for the Commission to pick out some area of action before too much time has elapsed, so that its constituency will not be disappointed. She urged that, whenever the Commission has something it feels it can recommend, it take its case to the Council of State Governments, to the National Governors' Conference, and to the Congress.

Mr. Curt Cylke, Executive Secretary of the Federal Library Committee, met with the Commission at its morning session on November 16 to describe and answer questions about a project financed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers which identifies some one thousand on-going and recently completed projects pertinent to the library and information community.

In the budget request for 1973 there was provision for three "regional planning conferences to which librarians, information specialists, and informed members of the user public will be invited, to work out concrete ways of responding to the regional needs." There was inconclusive discussion of the purposes of and plans for these conferences, and agreement that this subject would be discussed again at the next Commission meeting.

Members of the Commission felt that, for public relations reasons, some of their meetings should be held outside Washington--perhaps in connection with regional meetings.

At the Chairman's request, Mr. Lorenz spoke about an inquiry the Commission had received from Senator William E. Brock 3rd concerning a constituent proposal. In principle, it was agreed that in answering such inquiries the Commission should not close the door to the notion of taking positions, though it might say that it was not yet ready to respond. Mr. Lorenz said that great care should be taken with respect to things that had not been carefully studied out and that no promises of response should be made unless it is expected that they can be fulfilled.

The Commission discussed the provision in the NCLIS Act which permits it to receive money from private sources. It was agreed that any possible conflict of interest must be avoided and that this presumably could be done if the Commission accepted money only for projects it had already chosen to undertake. It was thought that available federal funding should be utilized before outside funds were sought, and that probably they should not be sought until the full amount authorized for the Commission, i.e., \$750,000 per year, had been appropriated.

This led to consideration of assistance that the Commission might receive from other federal agencies. It appeared to the Commission members reasonable to expect that the Office of Education, the Library of Congress, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies would try to respond to Commission recommendations--with funds in hand, or to be requested.

In the course of this discussion it was suggested that the Commission might wish to hear from representatives of the Office of Education in addition to Mr. Burton Lamkin--perhaps Mr. Burchinal concerning the ERIC program, the statistics people, and someone associated with the School Library Grant Program, and that representatives of COSATI (Committee on Science and Technical Information) should be asked to meet with the Commission.

Mr. Goland, by way of example, talked about the financial problems that probably will curtail the effectiveness of an international aerospace abstract program which the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics has been operating for NASA. He said that it is not now possible to look at these problems in a broad policy context and he thinks this is one of the things to which the Commission should address itself. And he thinks too that it should concern itself with the confused state of scientific and engineering information and with the need to relate government and private efforts toward a sensible national information system.

The Chairman spoke of the need for the Commission to compile a roster of consultants--people and organizations, with information about their expertise. Colonel Aines and Mr. Lorenz were asked to consult with COSATI, the Federal Library Committee, etc., and to present a list at the next meeting. It was noted also that information about possible consultants could probably be obtained from the Office of Education, ALA, the Council on Library Resources, and other sources.

Colonel Aines reported on the UNISIST meeting held in Paris in October 1971 which he had attended as a member of the U.S. delegation. UNISIST is a combined effort of ICSU (International Council of Scientific Unions) and UNESCO to begin a flexible network of information systems and sub-systems, bound together on a voluntary cooperative basis on an international scale.

The Chairman returned to two recommendations that had been made by the National Advisory Commission on Libraries, and the discussion resulted as indicated:

1) That the Library of Congress should be recognized as the National Library of the United States: Mr. Lorenz agreed to prepare a paper for the Commission on this topic--assessing the situation and suggesting what ought to be done and what is practicable. In connection with this, Mr. Dunlap agreed to prepare a paper on Great Britain's National Library system.

2) That a national research and development institute be established: members of the Commission wished to defer further discussion of this topic.

Miss Scott agreed to prepare a paper on library statistics for the Commission's next meeting.

Mr. Becker had given further thought to the basic data about libraries that ought to be assembled (see p. 6 of these minutes). He proposed that for each type of library (federal, public, state, academic, etc.) and for some types of information services and information centers, the following data be set forth:

- A paragraph on the history of that kind of library or service.
- Basic statistics.
- Something about the goals and objectives.
- How it is funded.
- The user community served.
- Key issues that face this type of library or service.
- Research activity.
- Etc.

Mr. Becker agreed to find a person to be engaged as a consultant to assemble and present this data.

Referring to the list of studies to be identified and summarized for the Commission (see p. 6 of these minutes), Mr. Cuadra asked that they include not just those which are national-plan oriented, but also vital pieces of literature with which the members ought to be familiar. Two studies in progress that should be included were mentioned: (1) one being prepared for ARL by Rutherford Rogers on national resource centers (unique major libraries) and how assistance can be obtained for them; (2) a report Neal Harlow is preparing for ARL on federal assistance to research libraries.

Mr. Lorenz had obtained statistics on sums authorized for libraries in federal legislation and sums that had been appropriated (see p. 3 of these minutes). These statistics were for the years 1957 through 1969 and for programs affecting public libraries, college and university libraries, library research, library education, etc.:

Authorized	\$1,341,335,000.
Appropriated	<u>835,828,000.</u> = 62%
Short-Fall	\$ 505,828,000

Mr. Lerner asked whether the Commission should take a direct interest in pending legislation affecting libraries and information science. The members agreed that it should not try to act as an intermediary between agencies and the Congress, but it should keep itself informed, and hopefully would (as it became known and respected) be asked to serve in an advisory role.

It was thought that the Commission's staff could look to the Library of Congress and to ALA for assistance in keeping informed about pertinent bills. Also the staff should be alert to the introduction of bills that have library implications and ought to have a library component.

It was suggested that the Commission might notify each State Librarian that it is interested in knowing of pertinent legislation introduced in the state. This led Mrs. Moore to urge that the Commission do what it can to provide information about desirable library legislation to the states. And she said too that she thinks it very important to make the Commission's mission known to the National Governors' Conference and the Council of State Governments. Mr. Lorenz suggested checking to see whether a chapter on state libraries is regularly included in the Book of States, and said he thought the conclusions of a study on the role of the state library in library development, which is being done at Florida State University, should be checked.

With respect to requests to speak about the role of the Commission and its work which its members have received and will no doubt receive in the future, it was agreed that they should consult the Chairman or the Executive Director about any problem that might be involved before speaking on substantive matters.

The next meetings of the Commission were scheduled to be held on February 17-18 and April 13-14; and the dates of June 15-16 were tentatively reserved for an additional meeting.

Quotes from NCLIS minutes regarding policy statements

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"...The question of funds from vested interestes was raised: in response Mr. Burkhardt had proposed following the policy of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which decides first what projects it wants to undertake and then accepts money for those purposes.