

NORTH YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY,

ANNUAL REPORT -- 1975

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:

Ten years ago the North York Public Library Board faced the rather formidable task of developing a library system in a community that was growing at a rate which was outstripping the growth of library service. The year 1975 definitely marked the end of an era, an era of rapid physical growth which has led the Library to the point where very few additional branches will be required to serve the needs of the community. Pleasant View and Hillcrest Community Branches were completed in 1975 and are being well used by the people in their respective communities. The Fairview Mall Drive Area Branch has not been completed on schedule but it will open early in 1976 and will complete the area branch plan developed in 1964.

The revisions to the New Branches Report defined clearly the needs and the priorities for the future. The number of future branches in this report was reduced. The most obvious deficiency and the most urgent priority is for service to the Flemington Park community. The sense of frustration over the Human Resource Centre, proposed several years ago, cannot be adequately expressed. The need for services in this community has been documented time and time again. Perhaps in 1976 the involved and slow negotiations between the province and borough will result in action.

The second concern relating to future development is the Willowdale Area Branch. As the year progressed, the need for financial restraint became

more and more obvious and although there was a natural feeling of disappointment in the reduction of the Civic Centre plan the reasoning was clear. The problem of overcrowding and poor facilities in the Willowdale Library continues to be a pressing one. However, because of the delay in this project there will be more time for planning.

Because of the very rapid growth in the system there are still problems that are in the process of being resolved. During the year it became clear that more information was required in order to make the right decisions concerning our services. Much of this information finally comes down to financial reports. The consulting firm of Currie, Coopers & Lybrand is working with staff in developing a management information system which will provide more detailed information more quickly, thus improving the management of the Library. A second area of concern has related to the type and degree of participation of staff in the planning and management of the Library. A myriad of textbooks and articles have been written on this subject. The answers to the question are not easily come by. One approach with which we have experimented has been the use of staff Task Groups. In all, four groups were at work during the year providing information on specific library problems. The future involvement between staff, Board and administrative officers is a question which will require careful consideration and a high degree of planning.

On the Metro level, 1975 must surely be a landmark. There has developed a much better degree of cooperation and interaction. My personal feeling

is that we are all working at cooperation a little harder and the results are being seen. This augurs well for the future so that the promise of a library network in Metro may be realized. The tangible evidence has been the meetings held with the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board on the question of foreign language materials and the commissioning of the Beckman Associates study on Metro collections and services.

The appointment of Mr. Peter Bassnett as Director of the Scarborough Public Library was deeply regretted as I had enjoyed my association with him very much. However, the appointment of Mr. Gordon Barhydt as Director of Systems & Management Services at year's end has provided the Library Board with a worthy replacement.

I would like now to comment briefly on the reports submitted by Division Heads on the work of the Library.

ADULT SERVICES

The past year saw the first major change in the public service pattern of our area branches. For some time there had been concern over the level of service demanded at the Downsview Area Branch. Shifts in population, the bad location of the branch and the extremely fragmented plan of the area all created problems for this branch. In 1975 it was decided to put all the public service of the branch on one floor, augment the Italian book collection and adjust the hours to more nearly conform to the service demands. Changes of this magnitude invariably create tensions. However, the

results appear to have been beneficial. Costs have been reduced but circulation rose slightly. Reduction in hours at Bathurst Heights and Brookbanks were also made. Circulation for both branches is slightly lower in 1975. The question of hours of opening in relation to circulation is still unresolved as one of the reasons for lower circulation could be the extended loan period. This was introduced in September and seems to have resolved some of the complaints about the loan period and fines.

At York Woods, the original gallery or mezzanine was modified to create a full second floor on the back half of the building. The book collection and various services were relocated to provide a better physical environment. The work involved did cause a great deal of inconvenience to both staff and public.

The use of books in other languages continues to grow and North York reflects the growing multicultural nature of the country. Our collection is now approximately 30,000 volumes and these are sent from branch to branch as needs arise. There is now a growing demand for material in the Asian languages. It is expected that Metro will assist in supplying these needs.

Information demands continue to grow in the borough. Services such as the New York Times Data Bank and the Q.L. Data Bank are providing new dimensions to our capabilities to provide service. It is expected that other such services will be available in the coming months.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

With the development of school libraries and the multicultural nature of the community, work with children is taking on a different dimension. The staff in the children's departments are spending more time with pre-school children. This is often as a result of mothers participating in programs for women held during the day. Many of these programs relate to the specific needs of immigrants. Telling stories to the young children becomes a part of the process of the family adjustment to the Canadian scene.

In several schools in the borough we have accelerated the program of visiting classrooms. In many instances the children are not familiar with the public library as a free service. In this cooperative way, the school and the public library working together, the experience of the child is broadened.

Work has proceeded on weeding the collection and in training programs for staff working with children.

North York took an active part, through the office of the Children's Coordinator, in the organization and running of the eighth International Seminar on Children's Literature. This was the first time this international seminar had been held in Toronto.

Another major event of the year was the second annual Book Bug Bash. This is the week where children and their activities are front stage centre. Beginning with a proclamation by Mayor Lastman, who entertained a group of children in his office, and proceeding through theatrical productions, pup-

pet shows, magicians, storytelling festivals to the finale of the awarding of prizes for the best book bug picture contest, the week was an unqualified success. Canadian authors and their books have been given special emphasis in North York and Book Bug Bash week was able to focus attention on such authors as William Kurelek, Janet Lunn, Brian McFarlane and Shizuye Takashima. We were very pleased that two neighboring boroughs joined North York in the week. The children loved it and the staff got a great deal of satisfaction out of it.

We also cooperated on a Metro-wide project of developing lists of books in other languages for children. Also during the year, Metro-wide workshops on aspects of children's work were held and we expect this type of cooperative activity to continue.

ADULT EDUCATION & EXTENSION

It is virtually impossible to give an accurate figure on the number of people who attend our activities. In 1975, 894 programs, excluding story hours and film programs, took place. This was an increase of 120 over 1974. In such activity one can only record the highlights. The annual programs continue to fill very clearly defined needs in the community. These include the Women's Series, the Health Series and Man/Woman Today. All of these programs have now reached a very high level of acceptance. International Women's Year was an event which demanded the attention of an institution such as the public library. Our program activity in this area included women authors, Women and Issues and Seven Ages of Women. The most dramatic

program, however, was the one on Wills held during the summer and at which 500 people were turned away.

New developments in the area of adult education centred on the question of the Open University. Study has begun on the role of the library in the Open University and North York experimented with two types of programs. One was the Ryerson course on Developmental Psychology which utilized audio instructional tapes. The second was the French Project sponsored by the Ontario Educational Communications Authority utilizing a video tape presentation. These are tentative beginnings in what will undoubtedly become a major part of the Library's service.

In this department is included the LINK community information service. In 1975 a major breakthrough was achieved with the formation of a formal co-ordinating committee for all community information services in North York. The Library will offer files of information, training, newspaper clipping services and, of course, the mass of material available in our reference files. In addition, LINK has stimulated the development of Legal Aid in two branches and an Income Tax Service for Seniors.

AUDIO-VISUAL

The use of non-book materials continued to grow at a rapid rate in the system. By the end of the year all branches had collections of records and tape cassettes, thus completing a program begun several years ago. The circulation of these items amounted to over 233,000 in 1975.

The 16 mm and 8 mm film circulation continued to grow. The Library now has 980 16 mm prints and over 2,000 8 mm prints. Over 670,000 people saw films from this Library during the year.

We began an experiment in the use of video tape cassettes in the latter part of the year. In cooperation with the Ontario Educational Communications Authority, a small collection of video cassettes was placed in Willowdale. It is too early at this point to comment on their use.

Our Audio-Visual Department continues to work under adverse conditions but it is hoped that the move to Fairview will provide this department with good working conditions.

For the future, consideration should be given to decentralizing the collection in order to provide better access to the collection by all citizens. This idea is being studied with a view to presenting various alternatives in 1976.

TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION

The task of acquiring new books, records, tapes, microforms, etc. is the responsibility of this division. It is in this area that the impact of inflation has been felt the most. During the year book prices rose by 22% and record prices by 25%. Increases of this sort have serious implications for future budgeting and collection building programs.

During the year 142,057 volumes were added to the collection. This was

made up of 103,623 adult and 38,434 children's. Buying and processing of materials for Hillcrest, Pleasant View and Fairview were major priorities and the first two branches opened with good representative collections.

In June, our catalogue card production was switched to a computerized operation through the University of Toronto's Library Automation Systems. In addition, we are now searching bibliographic data banks for the necessary data for our cataloguing process. Again, this marks the culmination of a program begun several years ago.

We have begun work with other Metro representatives on a common bibliographic data bank for the libraries in the Metro area. The implications of such a system are quite startling as it is quite possible that in the foreseeable future we will be able to advise clients of the location of books anywhere in Metro in each of our branches through a data bank terminal.

MOBILE SERVICES

In the fall of the year our bookmobile service was reduced to one unit. It was decided to consolidate all our mobile services into one department at the Downsview Area Branch. This involved our bookmobile, the Service to Shut-Ins and the Mobile Outreach Program. This move was achieved during the summer months and has proven to be a successful move. There is now a pool of drivers available and the various programs can provide support for each other. Also, during the year the Sunnybrook Patients'

Library was moved to bright new quarters in the new wing of the hospital.

The work done by the mobile services is difficult to measure in a quantitative sense but hardly a week goes by but what some patron does not phone in or write expressing appreciation for film programs, books, records or talking books. The program unit provides a variety of programs to all ages and in a variety of situations - crafts for senior citizens, puppet shows for children, films in homes and apartment buildings and musical programs in various institutions. The Shut-In Service brings books to people who would otherwise be unable to use them. Through book deposits and individual visits this service meets the needs of an often forgotten but important group in the community.

REFERENCE AND RESEARCH

This division is responsible for the development and coordination of reference materials, the training of staff in information-retrieval techniques and the organization and servicing of the Canadiana collection. It was the responsibility of this division to develop a collection policy and selection of materials for the reference department of the Fairview Area Branch. Training programs were held in such diverse subjects as government publications, legal materials in public libraries, the reference interview and reference service to business. In some instances staff were responsible for the programs and in others specialists in the field were recruited from other libraries.

The Canadiana collection received major additions in the acquisition of the MacTavish collection. MacTavish was the editor of Canadian Magazine from 1906 - 1926. We had already acquired the Cooper collection. Cooper was the editor of Canadian Magazine from 1895 - 1906. Thus we have a manuscript collection of 32 years relating to an important Canadian magazine. The Canadiana collection now has considerable strength and is a valuable research collection. In addition to the aforementioned collection, other notable acquisitions include -

- Canadian war posters (World War I).
- Canadian drawings, a portfolio of prints by members of the Group of Seven.
- Irving Layton. Here And Now. Layton's first book and a rare item.

Use of the Canadiana collection has been inhibited by lack of space. The new facilities in Fairview should provide an opportunity for a much improved service.

PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

1975 saw the realization of a project proposed by the Library to the Borough and the Board of Education two years ago - a consolidation into one publication of all the adult educational, recreational and cultural programs of the three institutions entitled LIVING IN NORTH YORK. The response by the public was evidence of the need for such a publication.

A high degree of cooperation was received from press, radio and TV on the

activities of the Library. This cooperation was a major factor in the high achievement of the system in 1975. The program of telling the public who we are and what we have is a never ending one but when systematically done does raise awareness on the part of the citizens.

Amongst the publications for the year was included booklists, film lists and information about the Library. The January-June 1976 GOINGS ON was published by this department in December and received wide distribution.

The coordination of the displays throughout the system raised the level of displays and involved the Library in cooperation with a variety of other institutions such as the Royal Ontario Museum, schools and the Historical Society. This department also cooperated with the Canadian Library Association on conference publicity and in a graphics workshop at its conference in Toronto last June.

In conclusion, I would like to express to the staff of the Library my sincere appreciation for the work that has been done. Our age is not an easy one in which to live and institutions such as libraries are subjected to many stresses. Our success in adjusting to these stresses is due to the abilities of the staff.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express to you personally my sincere thanks for the opportunity to work with you and to the Board Members who give so freely of their time to serve their community.

John E. Dutton,
Chief Librarian.