

IT'S TIME TO RECRUIT!

By I. T. LITTLETON*

North Carolina libraries face a dilemma. On the one hand, there is a rapid expansion of library service throughout the state and, on the other, a shortage of trained librarians. For many years the library profession has been asking for increased federal, local, and private support. Now that this aid is forthcoming and new opportunities are within the grasp of librarians, they may not be able to take full advantage of their new support because of a lack of trained personnel. This shortage is causing acute problems all over the United States, but it is not necessary to go outside the borders of our own state to discover the seriousness of the crisis.

There are 34 professional positions vacant in county, regional, and public libraries and little likelihood that most of these can be filled with library school graduates. When the state begins to receive its appropriation of \$303,534 each year for the next five years from the Library Services Act, it will have the opportunity of improving service by employing additional personnel for its thinly spread professional staff (108 professionals for 300 county, regional, and town libraries in the state) and of extending service to the counties that do not have county-wide service now. If trained librarians cannot be located to fill present vacancies, where will additional personnel come from to carry out the program envisioned by the Library Services Bill?

Although not as dramatic but just as urgent, are acute shortages in college, university, school and special libraries. It is predicted that enrollment in colleges and universities will double by 1970, that collections will increase rapidly, and that research needs will grow. How can these libraries serve urgent research needs and an augmented number of college students without more librarians? Where are the scores of additional school librarians that are needed to give library service to an increasing number of North Carolina's school children? More special librarians must be trained also for North Carolina's industrial, technical, and scientific expansion, which is sure to come within the next few years.

Recruit!

The situation calls for immediate action on the part of librarians in North Carolina. A recent publication, "Action Manual for Library Recruiters," sponsored by the Joint Committee on Library Work as a Career and written by its Chairman, John Harvey, is full of ideas for librarians who are interested in doing something about the personnel shortage. It was first published in the September issue of *Wilson Library Bulletin*, but has now been issued as a reprint by H. W. Wilson Co. This helpful manual is recommended reading for all librarians. It is available upon request from Mr. Harvey who is Librarian of Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kansas.

Along with the manual comes an attractive leaflet, entitled "Librarianship as a Career," which is suitable for display on bulletin boards.

There is little need of repeating all the practical recruiting ideas which have been rehashed many times in the literature on recruiting and which are all set forth in such

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condensed form in the "Action Manual." However, there is some reason for summarizing recruiting efforts in North Carolina and calling attention to materials that are specifically available to North Carolina librarians.

A Planned Recruiting Program for Each Library. The University of North Carolina Library Staff Association, under the leadership of its President, Miss Charlotte Georgi, has organized a recruiting committee. This committee will carry on a regular, planned series of recruiting projects. The group will sponsor a series of meetings on librarianship for graduate and undergraduate students in the university, distribute literature and set up exhibits on librarianship, recommend personnel policy to the Library administration which will aid recruiting. Recruiting must be done at the local level by individual libraries and librarians before the library profession will ever have a dynamic program. Recruiting committees of local librarians working in a particular library are in closer touch with possible candidates than are committees at the national, state, or regional level. Ideally, every library in the state and the nation should have an active, working recruiting committee carrying out an organized program. If a committee from a library staff starts to work, it is surprising how much enthusiasm for recruiting can be generated!

Pre-Professional Positions. Librarians should be aware that it is possible for prospective librarians to "earn while they learn" in some instances. In North Carolina's regional and county libraries, such a plan is now in effect. Positions are available which may be filled by a college graduate who may be given time off to go to library school. When he completes three months of training he is given a temporary appointment until he finishes the requirements for the public librarian's certificate. Complete information regarding this plan may be obtained from the State Library in Raleigh. Several positions on the University of North Carolina Library staff are held by Library School students who work while they are completing Library Science degrees. This plan is worth considering by other libraries as an aid to recruiting.

Scholarships and Loans. There are a few loans and scholarships available to students attending library schools in North Carolina. These include scholarships which cover the cost of tuition at the University of North Carolina and the Scholarship Loan Fund of the North Carolina Library Association. A complete list of loans and scholarships in library science offered in the United States may be obtained from the American Library Association. Library schools, alumni, and library associations should look toward more scholarships for able students who may not be able to afford the extra time for library school.

Leaflets and Pamphlets on Librarianship. One simple but effective project that any library can undertake is the distribution of pamphlets and leaflets. Post them on bulletin boards! Use them in exhibits! The American Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, and the Recruiting Committee of the North Carolina Library Association all publish such materials. The NCLA Recruiting Committee has published two pamphlets: (1) "Interesting Careers! With Books and People" which is especially good for elementary and high school groups and (2) a new mimeographed "Statement for Prospective Librarians" is now available. It not only discusses opportunities, rewards, types of positions, with reference to North Carolina, but contains a description of the pro-

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grams of library training offered by colleges and universities in this state. These two pamphlets may be obtained by writing to the Treasurer of the North Carolina Library Association.

Career Days. For such occasions as Career Days, the NCLA Recruiting Committee has organized a Speakers Bureau. A coordinator has been appointed in the six educational districts of the state from whom material about librarianship as well as suggested speakers may be obtained. These coordinators are listed in the October 1955 issue of *North Carolina Libraries*. The only change is the following: Miss Mildred Herring, Librarian, Senior High School, Greensboro, has replaced Miss Marjorie Hood as coordinator for the Northwestern District. It is hoped that librarians in high schools and colleges make sure that librarianship is represented on all Career Days that are held in the state.

Libraries can have their own Library Career Days. Each county and city library supervisor would do well to emulate the county-wide Library Career Day program that was held in Catawba County by Miss Lottie Hood and reported in the January 1955 issue of *North Carolina Libraries*.

Other important aids to recruiting are merely suggested here: work with your vocational advisor; make clerical and student assistant jobs varied and as interesting as possible; hire non-professional assistants who have promise as professional librarians; publicize librarianship through newspaper articles, TV and radio spot announcements and programs; and publicize outstanding accomplishments or awards of librarians.

Plan a recruiting program for your library. Write the Recruiting Committee of the North Carolina Library Association for advice, materials, speakers. Report your activities to the Recruiting Committee so that others may learn of your efforts and your ideas.