

## NORTH CAROLINA RECRUITING PROJECT

By CORA PAUL BOMAR\*

The North Carolina Library Association in cooperation with the American Library Association has recently initiated a statewide program in recruitment for librarianship. Funds to launch this project were provided in a grant to the American Library Association by the Reference Books Section of the American Textbook Publishers Association. During the ALA Midwinter Conference, North Carolina was selected as the state to develop a pilot program in library recruitment which, it is hoped, will have implications for other states and for the nation as a whole.

A Library Recruitment Conference was planned as the initial phase in developing the North Carolina program. A North Carolina steering committee worked closely with ALA Headquarters staff in making arrangements for the Conference. Invitations were issued to representative librarians and lay leaders within the state, and to representatives of selected national groups including the American Library Association, the American Textbook Publishers Institute, and the American Personnel and Guidance Association. Members of the national library press were invited to participate as observers.

Since the objective of the Conference was to mobilize the thinking of the participants, no formal agenda was structured for the meetings. Materials were sent to all participants in advance of the Conference, in order to give them some orientation to the problem. Included in these materials were working papers prepared by North Carolina librarians: "Good Library Service for North Carolina"; "Quality of Personnel Needed for Library Work"; and "Some Patterns of Existing Programs in Library Recruitment." Also included were three ALA pamphlets emphasizing good library service: "Fountains, Not Reservoirs"; "Books and Libraries"; and "Every Child Needs a School Library."

In addition to preparing working papers, the steering committee developed a collection of recruitment folders, posters, and other materials representing many fields of work, for display at the Conference. Requests for sample publications met with excellent response, and the display of varied recruitment literature proved helpful to Conference participants.

The Library Recruitment Conference was held in Raleigh, North Carolina, on May 10-11, 1958. Emerson Greenaway, President of the American Library Association, moderated the four sessions. Dr. Harold Lancour, Associate Director of the University of Illinois Library School, was designated as recorder, with responsibility for editing the official proceedings of the Conference. Participants included state and national leaders in the fields of education, communications, business and industry, publishing, civic affairs, counseling, and librarianship.

The four sessions of the Conference were centered around the problem of recruitment to the library profession, with special emphasis on the needs of North Carolina. Many ideas emerged from the informal discussions of the group. Early in the Conference it was agreed that recruitment is one of the most important and difficult problems confronting library service. The responsibility of the profession for interpreting library service and library needs to the public was pointed up by one lay participant, who stated that he was not aware of the shortage of librarians until he read the orientation materials in preparation for the Conference.

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Members of the group formulated basic factors to be considered in planning a recruitment program: (1) the need to determine the purpose in recruitment (recruitment to the profession as a whole rather than to special fields of librarianship); (2) the need to identify the audiences for recruitment efforts; (3) the need to determine the kinds of printed and audio-visual materials needed for recruitment, and to develop those not already available; (4) the need to develop a framework for carrying out a planned program for recruitment; and (5) the need to establish means by which this program can be activated.

Recommendations of the Conference for implementing the pilot project in library recruitment included: (1) the appointment of a full-time coordinator for the project; (2) the provision of adequate budget derived from financial support within the state plus grants from interested agencies outside the state; (3) the organization of a special coordinating committee, based upon the existing NCLA Recruiting Committee and composed of both lay and professional personnel, to activate the project.

Comments made by participants of the Library Recruitment Conference indicate wide-spread interest in the recruitment program. Dr. Benjamin Powell, President-Elect of ALA, stated: "The North Carolina Library Association and its Recruiting Committee have an unusual opportunity to make a major contribution to the cause of librarianship, and I shall be glad to assist you whenever you think I can be useful." Dr. W. H. Plemmons, President of Appalachian State Teachers College, wrote: "Our group here is enthusiastic about what you did in Raleigh. All of us will be happy to contribute further in any way we can."

On June 4 the Executive Board of the North Carolina Library Association, meeting with representatives of the Recruiting Committee, developed the framework for organization of the Recruitment Project. The former Recruiting Committee was dissolved and a new committee — the Special Coordinating Committee on Recruitment for Librarianship as a Profession — was formed to replace it. This committee is charged with responsibility for formulating the program for the NCLA-ALA Recruitment Project, subject to approval by the NCLA Executive Board, and for establishing policies and procedures to put the approved program into effect. Membership of the new Committee will consist of twenty-five members, a majority of whom shall be members of NCLA, three shall represent ALA, and the remainder shall represent appropriate non-library agencies and groups in North Carolina. The chairman of the former committee, Miss Cora Paul Bomar, State School Library Adviser, is charged with responsibility for organizing the new committee. The Special Coordinating Committee will present to the NCLA Executive Board, by October 15, a report of its organization, together with an outline of its proposed program and a proposed budget.

North Carolina considers it an honor to have been chosen for this special pilot project in recruitment for librarianship. Members of the Special Coordinating Committee recognize the opportunities which this program affords and the responsibilities it involves. The Committee invites the support and advice of librarians throughout the Southeast and the nation in developing a successful recruitment program.