

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY

SUBMITTED TO THE
LEGISLATIVE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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HISTORY

The Legislative Reference Library was established in 1969 as a nonpartisan legislative service. By statute, the Library is required to collect and maintain materials of governmental and legislative interest, and is permitted to prepare reports and studies. Since 1969, the Legislature has added to the Library's responsibility. Today LRL is responsible for maintaining and making available to the public the tapes of House and Senate committee proceedings and floor debates. (Rules) We have also been designated as recipient of 10 copies of all publications prepared by state government agencies, and as such, we are required to publish monthly, a list of publications received. (MS 3.195) In the future we will house and make available microfilm copies of all engrossments of bills since 1957. The bills are in the process of being filmed.

COLLECTION

The Legislative Reference Library attempts to acquire a timely mix of books, periodicals and pamphlets in all subject areas that are or may become of concern to lawmakers.

Currently, the Library houses some 14,000 books and pamphlets, including MSA, USCA and other legal, legislative, and government publications. Each year the professional staff reviews the collection, discarding dated materials.

At present we receive 35 newspapers and 400 periodicals. These are also under constant review. Those that prove less useful are discontinued.

In addition to the traditional library materials, the Legislative Library maintains files of newspaper clippings arranged by classification number, personality or legislative district. We add four legal-size file cabinets of clippings each year. The collection dates from 1969 and is heavily used.

Since 1973, the Rules Committee of both houses of the Legislature have made the Legislative Reference Library the custodian of the tapes of committee and floor debate. We are now holding approximately 2800 reels. Records kept on the usage of the tape recordings of the committee meetings and floor sessions of both houses for the past six months show an average of 35 people per month. The listeners are separated categorically as 58% being members of the public, 25% Legislative staff, and 17% state employees.

MINNESOTA DOCUMENTS

The Legislative Library is required by law (MS 3.195) to receive and retain 10 copies of all publications prepared by State Agencies. Since enactment of this law we have received approximately 10,000 titles or 100,000 items. With the number increasing each year, we anticipate receipt of 6,000 titles in 1976. The Library has funds to microfilm these documents. (See section under PLANS for more information.)

There are two problems associated with this program. First, many agencies do not willingly comply, causing the Library to expend time attempting enforcement. Second, with the publications constantly increasing in number storage space is becoming scarce.

To facilitate acquisition of Minnesota documents the Library publishes The LRL Checklist. As of July 1, 1976, this checklist will be sold to the public by the Documents Division of the Administration Department. The price which covers only handling will be \$15.00 per year. Production costs will continue to be paid by the Library. Legislators and staff will continue to receive their copies free. At the time the checklist is offered for sale, changes in format will be made which will enable the Library to produce the item more efficiently with savings both in personnel time and materials.

TECHNICAL PROCESSING UNIT

The Technical Processing Unit, an often under-rated element in the provision of quality library service, handles the acquisition, cataloging and classification of materials. The departure of the Assistant Director has necessitated a temporary reorganization of this unit. In reorganizing, we have centralized decision-making and instituted uniformity in the performance of similar job routines. This is working so well, that we expect these changes to become permanent. Currently, we are reviewing both the individual work assignments and routines.

At this point in time, it seems likely that we will need an additional part-time clerk typist to support the technical service staff.

Again, scarcity of space hampers the operation of this unit.

USER SERVICES UNIT

The Legislative Reference Library User Services Unit should ideally attempt to anticipate the information needs of each Legislator, staff, and Commission member and bring to their attention all materials which merit review. Realistically, at the present we have neither the staff nor the paths of communication to enable us to provide this type of individualized information screening service. Provision of such service is one of our goals.

Presently, the User Services Unit provides excellent traditional service. Through the User Services Unit, the Legislature has access not only to the information held in our collection, but also the materials and resources available throughout the metropolitan area, the state and the nation. Our staff is trained to respond to immediate needs for information or facts, and to less pressing needs of long term study materials or quotes for speeches. We pride ourselves on our versatility and flexibility.

The Library prepares two regular publications. The Technical Services Unit in cooperation with the User Services Unit publishes, as an aid to the library users, a listing of recent acquisitions. This publication known as the Library Star was issued irregularly throughout the year. With the July issue the name will become LRL Resources and the publication will be issued monthly. At the same time we will be expanding the content to include relevant materials added to the Capitol Area Library collections. Our other regular publication, the LRL Checklist, was discussed previously under Minnesota Documents. The Legislative Library prepares and, at times, publishes bibliographies on specific subjects.

This last year the User Services Staff initiated a current contents service. Each month contents pages of journals selected by our Reference Librarian were forwarded to Committee Chairmen. The Chair or his aid selected titles of articles from these lists. The Library then copied the articles. Recently, we have offered this service on an expanded and individualized basis. Research and other staff members have let the Library know what periodical contents pages they would like to see on a regular basis. Response to the offer of this service has been excellent.

At present, we can provide ERIC and NTIS searches through an agreement with the University of Minnesota. The procedure is slow and cumbersome. Shortly we will have access to the Lockheed data bases through the Education Department Library and currently, on a short-term experimental basis, we have access to a limited number of SDC data bases through the Highway Department Library. Presently LRL patrons do not make heavy use of these services.

This spring the Director has been meeting with the members of the research staffs in an attempt to assure that our collection and service policy reflects their needs.

For over a year, it has been evident to the Library staff that the Legislators and research staffs housed in the State Office Building do not make as much use of the Library as those housed in the Capitol. Seventy-five to eighty percent of our users, during the interim and more during the session, are housed outside the Capitol, yet this population accounts for less than thirty-three percent of Library use. The Library staff feels that Legislators and staff housed in the State Office Building might make more use of the Library and would be better served if the Library has an auxiliary reading room in that building. The research units support this proposal.

Even though we do not have any supportive figures for the past years the staff believes there has been an increase in overall use of library service and demand for materials. Below you will find summarized statistics we began to keep in March of this year. In time, trends and use patterns will become evident.

From the beginning of March 1976 to the end of May 1976, we answered 1288 informational reference questions and 446 research type reference questions.* Of these 768 questions were asked by Legislators, 458 questions were asked by the Research Staffs, 129 questions were asked by Interns and 379 questions were asked by other State Agencies and the general public.

From July 1, 1975 to June 21, 1976, we circulated approximately 386 items each month. Of these, 304 items were available directly from our Library collection, while 82 items were obtained through interlibrary loan.

As with our use measurements, we cannot determine the increase in total circulation. However, it is evident that the interlibrary loan (MINITEX requests) figure has increased. During the period of July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975 total requests numbered 633, by contrast, during the period July 1, 1975 to June 21, 1976 the total requests numbered 981. This represents an increase.

* Questions are differentiated by the length of time taken to respond. Informational questions take less than five minutes. Research questions take longer.

The User Services Unit, like the Technical Unit, is hampered by insufficient space. As a consequence of crowding, noise is a problem in the reading room. The confidentiality of the exchange between the Librarian and patron cannot be assured, and materials are difficult to locate and retrieve.

As with the Technical Unit we are reviewing the User Services Unit in order to assess quality and efficiency of service. Recommendations are several months away. The review has just begun.

STAFF

In February of this year I was appointed Director and Steve Plumb was appointed Assistant Director. In June Mr. Plumb submitted his resignation. As of July 1, the staff will consist of two professional librarians, the Director and the Reference Librarian, an Assistant for Minnesota Documents, four Technicians, one full-time and three part-time Clerks and an Accountant.* Only one of these part-time Clerks is a Typist.

The Legislative Library has never had a procedure for personnel evaluation. This June, we initiated a semiannual personnel review. The purpose of these meetings between the Director and individual staff members is to discuss work load and to establish individualized priorities and measurement criteria.

* Shared with several commissions who reimburse us for her time.

FACILITIES

The Library's main reading room is located in 111 State Capitol. Off of this small room is an alcove which houses our legal collection. On this side of the north entrance to the Capitol the Library also has two offices. Across the hallway from these rooms are three other small offices. All Library offices also contain segments of the Library collection either in file cabinets or 3 x 7 foot shelves. The Library has another office area in the basement and two small storage rooms. All basement rooms have environmental problems. Two flood, two are extremely hot and dirty, and all three are rodent infested. We have the use of a portion of Room 107 located in the State Capitol. We house the House of Representatives floor debates and committee hearing tapes and current Minnesota publications in cardboard boxes in this room.

As noted several places in this report lack of adequate work and storage space adversely effects all aspects of library operation.

PLANS

PUBLICATIONS:

The Reference Library intends to publish an information brochure describing collection and service. This publication will be made available to all Legislators and staff prior to the opening of the 1977 Session as part of our effort to reach out to potential users.

Next month we will begin to compile a descriptive listing of information resources available in the various Capitol Area Agencies.

ADVISORY GROUP:

The Library needs communication between, and input from the various user groups. The establishment of a Library Advisory Committee which would make recommendations or evaluate proposed additions to the collection, hours, services and programs, would aid in making the Library more responsive to user needs. It might also be useful for this group to meet with directors of other information providing units serving state government.

MINNESOTA DOCUMENT MICROFICHE INDEX:

As noted earlier, the Library has funds to microfilm the copies of Minnesota State documents it receives under MS 3.195. The project would involve reproduction of these items on 4 x 6 microfiche cards. Fiche cards are easily stored, retrieved and can be reproduced either in kind or as paper copy. We are working closely with the Administration Department to develop a system of indexing which would enable users to locate the desired items through author, title or subject. The Documents Department has expressed interest in using this system to supply state depositories (MS 16.58.) Space savings would be immense. Presently, these documents are stored in 119 boxes and also bookcases. Each year, at present growth rate, documents received under 3.195 require the addition or the equivalent of 12 bookcases. If they were reproduced and stored on fiche, the present collection plus the 1976 items would take up only two 4 x 6 sixteen inch file drawers. The Library has equipment to read and reproduce fiche.

DATA BASES:

We plan to evaluate Library use to see if we need and can justify purchase of a terminal and bibliographic data bases.

CONCLUSION

In summary the problem which hampers all aspects of service - provision of confidential communication between librarian and patron, the efficiency of library operation, and the storage and retrieval of materials - is lack of space.

FISCAL FACTS

Balance as of 3/31/76.....	\$266,584.64
\$13,500 salaries per mo.	-240,000.00
<u>2,500 expenses per mo.</u>	
\$16,000	
x 15 mo.	
\$240,000	\$ 26,584.64

Proposed expenses:

Microfilm Project	10,000.00	
Summer Part-Time Help	2,500.00	
Booklet-1 mo. @ 6/hr	1,050.00	
July 4% raises	3,240.00	
Jan 4% raises + grid	<u>3,600.00</u>	
		<u>20,390.00</u>
		<u>\$ 6,194.64</u> balance

(Library will be reimbursed approx. \$4,000.00 for acct. services)