

Legislative Reference Library
Minnesota State Legislature

A REPORT ON THE FOUNDING
OF THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
AND
A PROPOSED WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET FOR 1969-1970

The Legislative Reference Library was started in November, 1968 to meet a need for informational service for both Houses of the Legislature. Under the sponsorship of both the House Rules Committee and the Senate Rules Committee a Subcommittee on Legislative Library was created to undertake to start such a Library. Early in 1968 that Subcommittee had engaged a consultant to make recommendations for such a library.

The files and equipment of the Legislative Research Committee were assigned to the new library, and a librarian was appointed in November, 1968 and one assistant was appointed starting December, 1968.

In January the Legislature convened, and the job of the Library became one of utilizing its inherited resources in providing information for research and staff workers as well as for individual members who made requests. This direct reference service has taken virtually all of the time of the staff, with the result that the work of purchasing basic reference and other works, and of cataloging materials, has had mostly to be postponed until after the Session. In the meantime, the Librarian has secured excellent inter-library loan and reference use cooperation from the Hill Reference Library, the St. Paul Public Library, the State Law Library, the State Education Department's Public Library Division Library, and others. Putting first things first, securing information needed for Legislative work this session was given top priority. The volume has been such that the job of expanding and developing the Library has not yet been given the time that is needed.

Nonetheless, the Library has gotten off to a good start organizationally. Starting January 1, 1969 subscriptions were placed for the four Twin City

daily newspapers, and the following newspapers with national news scope: New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor, and National Observer. Current issues are kept for ten days and then old issues are clipped. The result to date is a file of clippings that is already well established. Reports of legislative news are preserved by subject, and items on subjects of Legislative interest from all these newspapers are filed.

Many documents have been secured from the Federal government and other sources, but there still has not begun to be enough time to spend on acquisition and cataloging of materials.

Quarters for the Legislative Library were found in three small rooms on the first floor of the Capitol -- very appropriate space, but any visitor can see that space is already a problem. The largest of the three rooms was set aside as a reading room, where researchers and members can sit and work with library materials. This meets the needs of the current session and the coming interim. By the next session the Library will have a good reference collection ready for intensive use. The need for more adequate reading space will be urgent then.

Of the other two rooms, one is a work room and the other an office, the bulk of the subject files being located in these rooms.

An urgent need faced immediately is more work space and more storage space. One vault has been assigned to the Library off of Room 112 (a Senate Hearing Room). There are other vaults there that are not yet in use. If one or more of these could be assigned to the Library, it would fill the need for additional storage space as the Library grows, at least for a few years. A work room is needed urgently for the work of clipping and typing. A lounge room next to the women's lavatory just across the hall from the Library would be an excellent solution during the interim.

Financially the status of the Library in the current year is this: a budget of \$30,000 was provided for the year July 1, 1968 - June 30, 1969, the House and the Senate each supplying half of this amount. Because it was not possible to employ personnel and start operations as early in the fiscal year as hoped, and because the Legislative Research Committee's equipment became available, it is anticipated that \$9,000 of this year's funds will not be needed.

With a cash expenditure this year of \$21,000, then, the Legislative Reference Library will have become an actively working service agency for the Legislature. It is fortuitous that the Session occurred so soon after the Library's founding. The experience of receiving the many requests from research workers and members is providing excellent background for the developmental work that will take place in the interim year and one-half between sessions.

PROGRAM FOR 1969-1970

To complete the organizational work will be the primary aim of the year and one-half in the interim. At the same time, the Library would expect to work closely with the Interim Committees and their staffs as they study subjects assigned to them.

Organizationally, the work to be done consists of:

1. Acquiring materials. Major emphasis will be on finding materials that will be useful in this particular service agency and then purchasing them or, where possible, securing them as gifts. The aim will be to build a collection of real strength in providing information that it is anticipated will be needed. Part of this will be in the form of reference directories and books, and part will be reports from legislative research staffs in other states.

It is hoped that the latter material can be secured through an exchange of publications as worked out through an arrangement called the Interstate Exchange of Legislative Service Agency Publications, which is sponsored by the Council of State Governments. Thirty-eight of the states are members of this Exchange. The work of sending materials to them, and of processing for use publications received from them, is a sizable undertaking. It is recommended as essential because what members of the Legislature ask for repeatedly is what other states are doing on subjects in which they are concerned. To receive such publications routinely as they are issued is an ideal opportunity for this type of Library.

2. Cataloging and Indexing Materials. A prime purpose of a library is to organize the publications it has in an orderly manner so that information in them can be found efficiently when wanted. Careful cataloging and indexing is the key to retrieving information that lies within printed publications. Since virtually none of this work was done in the past, there is a great backlog of indexing the publications already in the Library. To this will be added the same kind of work on the flow of new publications that are received.
3. Reference Work is a library term referring to the search for specific information that readers request. In the interim this would chiefly be for those involved in committee studies. Mail inquiries may also come from individual members on occasion. Although the volume of this activity would be considerably less than when the Legislature is in session, it is still a matter of

urgency at the time it is needed. A certain amount of use of other libraries is needed at such times. The more the resources of other libraries of all kinds in the Twin Cities are known, and the more informal working relations are developed, the more useful such contacts might be during the next session.

Reference service is an on-going function that is always important to the researcher seeking information.

4. Bibliographical and Publication Work. Lists of references on subjects of Legislative interest are an activity the Library should get started in before the next Session. Individual members may ask to have such bibliographies prepared, or the Library may initiate some when a need for them is sensed.

At some point, probably just prior to the opening of the next Session, the Library should start issuing to the members of both Houses a selected list of new acquisitions.

PROPOSED BUDGET

In order to implement this work program, a budget request totaling \$50,073.20 for fiscal 1969-70 and \$54,690 for fiscal 1970-71 is submitted.

PERSONNEL

As in most service agencies, the major part of the budget is for personnel. To develop the Legislative Reference Library and get it firmly established, a staff of one librarian and one assistant is not adequate. For that reason the addition of a professional assistant to assist with the professional library work of bibliographic and cataloging and reference work is requested.

A clerk-typist is essential to the increased loan of cataloging and indexing work, as index cards must be typed as directed by a professional

librarian who makes the decisions as to what is to be recorded and how it is to be done.

In addition, part-time student pages are needed to do the newspaper clipping. The clipping file will be one of the areas of work turned over to the present assistant. It will be her job to check eight newspapers every day and decide what shall be clipped, marking the items. A page will then do the physical clipping. After that, the assistant will have to mark each clipping with the subject under which it is to be filed. During this first session, pages are assigned from the House or Senate to come to the Library to do clipping as they can be spared. During the interim such help will not be available, of course, so pages will be needed on the Library staff. In the future sessions it would be better for the Library to employ one or two student pages to do this work and to re-shelve books that have been used. Whether one or two pages would be used would depend on the number of hours available from the student. The physical work of mailing for the exchange program would be done by the pages.

To summarize the personnel needs, a staff of four full-time workers, plus part-time pages, is requested. To review, the full-time staff would be the Director and the present assistant (who would be Administrative Assistant), the proposed additional librarian (to be called Assistant Librarian) and one clerk-typist.

LIBRARY MATERIALS

Subscriptions to periodicals and newspapers are currently approximately \$1,200 annually. A similar sum is needed each of the next two years, with an increase of \$100 per year each year for anticipated price increases.

Book purchases vary from a directory that can cost \$25.00 or more; to hard-cover books that cost \$5.00 to \$10.00; to pamphlets that may cost less than \$1.00. When a library is in routine running order it is desirable to

schedule purchasing as a steady flow so as to minimize overloads of work with incoming materials. The budget estimate is based on an allowance of \$125.00 per month for purchase of books and pamphlets -- or \$1,500 per year.

From the book purchase funds, deposit accounts would be maintained with the Government Printing Office (to pay for Government publications that are sold for relatively small amounts) and deposits for photocopying work, etc. from other libraries.

POSTAGE AND SHIPPING

Book deliveries often involve express charges. In addition there will need to be provision for mailing of Minnesota legislative study reports to states in the Legislative Exchange for service agency publications. Normal postage is used in requesting gift copies of publications, ordering publications, and answering inquiries.

TRAVEL

Provision is included for attendance of a staff member at one or more national conferences in the library or legislative field to the extent of \$300 per year. An additional \$200 per year is requested for any other trips (as to state or nearby states to visit other legislative libraries or library or other conferences appropriate to the work) as well as local mileage for trips to other libraries to secure material.

EQUIPMENT

Because additional space is an urgent necessity, and because space available is likely to be in the nature of additional small work rooms or vaults made available, provisions have been made for purchase of shelving and work tables and chairs as well as for file cabinets and a typewriter.

SUPPLIES AND TELEPHONE

These essential items complete the statement of budget needs of the Library.