

Ad Hoc Committee

On Relations with Rolling Prairie Libraries

March 2, 1983

Minutes

The Committee was called to order by Mr. Susler at 4:45 p.m. in the Board Room. Present were Mr. Susler, Mrs. Jackson, and Mrs. Moore, Ex Officio. Also present were Mr. Dumas, City Librarian, and Mr. Ron Taylor, a reporter with the Decatur Herald and Review.

Mr. Susler reviewed the discussion of the previous meeting and remarked that he hoped the present meeting would result in some specific positions or recommendations that could be submitted to the Board for consideration. He did not think that in the meeting with representatives of Rolling Prairie Libraries Mr. Plotzke showed any indication of a desire to compromise on the issues that separate RPL and DPL, although Mr. Plotzke had said that the issues were negotiable.

Mr. Dumas distributed data culled from various publications that related to RPL finances, staff strength, membership, size of collection, etc.; distribution of federal grants within the State Library budget; allocation of moneys to support the four Research and Reference Centers in the function as libraries of last recourse for inter-library loans, etc.; and the statute that governed and defined the scope of the Rules and Regulations that the State Librarian issues in oversight of the Regional Libraries.

On the basis of these data he questioned the authority of the State Librarian to mandate reciprocal borrowing, finding nothing in the statute to support such authority. Reflecting on the history of the growing presence of the State Library in local library affairs, he noted that many of the programs were rooted in a natural movement during the past two decades to improve inter-library cooperation and resource sharing. The ends may be desirable, but the particular programs developed in Illinois such as mandated reciprocal borrowing and multi-type regional cooperative libraries present practical problems that were ignored by an increasingly aggressive State Library. This was especially true in the opinion of Mr. Dumas during the administration of Al Trezza as Executive Director of the State Library. Mr. Trezza was an extremely able bureaucrat who held very determined views with respect to the "leadership" position that the State Library should assume. Using both his powers of persuasion and the considerable discretionary funds the State received under the federal Library Services and Construction Act, Mr. Trezza utilized the existing structures such as the State Library Advisory Council and the Systems Directors and Presidents meeting, he succeeded in large measure in impressing his views on the State Library community. It is a measure of his success that several years after his administration his influence and the thrust of his programs remain.

Mr. Dumas also noted that DPL in addition to providing for reciprocal borrowing by outlying library patrons also provides the largest share of interlibrary loans in the system - and that this share will grow owing to recent action of RPL in dispersing or selling their book stock of 70,000+. Also whereas in the past RPL bought several thousand books annually for their own collection - providing much current material for ILL - its decision not to develop book collections puts a further burden on DPL.

Questions were raised regarding exactly what RPLS spent its \$700,000 annual budget for. It appeared that the largest part went to salaries and it was asked what it was that required its staff of 29. Mr. Dumas remarked that it neither cataloged books nor in any substantial way circulated books and if we dropped these two functions from the DPL, the staff in this library would be smaller than RPL's.

There was further discussion relating to these issues. Mrs. Jackson asserted that she had trouble telling Decatur taxpayers that they must pay taxes to provide library service to people in other towns. Mrs. Moore raised the question of RPL's responsibility to pay for lost books and delinquent charges that result from interlibrary loan and reciprocal borrowing.

Mr. Susler proposed that the Committee report to the Board the following proposals as the position of the Committee:

- (1) That the Library cannot accept a fiat from RPL reducing payment for services rendered.
- (2) That the Library wants to receive an off-set in kind for reciprocal borrowing or, alternatively, to receive an amount equivalent to 55% of the unit circulation cost in the preceding year.
- (3) That the Library wants to receive funds to defray the costs of ILL service and office space.

The Committee endorsed these proposals to the Board.

On questioning from Mr. Dumas, the Committee agreed that Mr. Booth should be asked to render an opinion regarding whether the State Librarian's Rules and Regulations requirement of reciprocal borrowing is supported by the statute.

The Committee adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

