

Need a Library Grant?

By Lyn Harrington

Editor's Note: Canadian Library Week is to be celebrated April 8th to 14th, this year. Institute members will want to keep informed of any special programs or events arranged by their County Library or the Library in their nearest town. Perhaps in some places there may be ways for Institutes to co-operate in the program.

CANADIAN LIBRARY WEEK is being celebrated April 8 to 14, in 1962, but any week of the year is the right time for evaluating library resources in your community.

Two years ago, new library legislation was passed in Ontario, permitting the formation of County Libraries. We've had 'em for years? I thought so, too. It turns out those are county co-operative libraries. The municipalities bear the tax burden, while the rural areas shoulder little responsibility.

At present, 14 out of the 38 counties of Ontario have co-operative library systems, with transfer of books from branch to branch, sometimes with bookmobile service. It's far from satisfactory.

Let's face it—Ontario really has poor library service. Out of 937 municipalities, only 486 have libraries, and nearly half are "Association," not tax-supported.

William A. Roedde, until recently with Northwestern Regional Library service, on one of his calls to distribute books at a rural school. Mr. Rodde is now Director of Ontario Provincial Library Service.

—Photo Courtesy Imperial Oil



—Photo Courtesy Imperial Oil

Bookmobile from Northwestern Regional Library Co-operative, based at Fort William and serving towns and villages for miles around.

We Canadians are a cautious people, and not least, we Ontarians. In the two years, Women's Institutes, Home and School Associations, educators and boards have poked and prodded, testing the new regulations for flaws.

Yes, a County Library will cost the rural dweller more than he pays at present—one mill as compared with $\frac{1}{4}$ mill—on the new "equalized assessment." The grants to libraries within the county co-operative system are reasonable, but new grants to true County Libraries are more than doubled. It's worth looking into.

Who runs such a library? The Board will comprise a Warden, three County Councillors, and three public-spirited citizens appointed by the Council. The already established libraries will keep their own boards, though with fewer responsibilities, and one or more bookmobiles will serve outlying areas.

What's the catch? Well, a County Library will call for higher taxes in the country—an item you can't ignore. What does the countryman get in return? Better library service in schools, in established libraries, at the crossroads. You can use your borrower's card at any branch library in the county.

With books he enjoys, Johnny quickly learns to read—and nowadays he's got to read to get along in school. The adult who reads for information is usually ahead socially and professionally. A larger book collection can be bought with an enlarged budget—you have a wider choice. And better reference tools. (It saves you time to have statistics handy, rather than having to write away to the government.)

The librarians who have run the library for years won't lose their jobs. They'll have more time for actual library service, not the time-