Amnesty week fails

Amnesty Week, a time of forgiveness for those grossly overdue books, was not as successful as Betsy Cornwell had anticipated, Mrs. Cornwell, head librarian at the Georgetown Public Library, explained the week's poor

"We find that the ones which are stubbornly overdue will simply never return the books. The public is often too afraid to bring back the ones which should have been returned a long time ago."

Mrs. Cornwell stated that over the past 18 months more than 100 books have been declared write-offs. This total includes only those which were officially borrowed. A complete inventory check is necessary to calculate the amount of books which were stolen.

Over 90 of the missing volumes are of a non-fiction, technical or practical nature. Mrs. Cornwell believes that the books are not missing out of carelessness. "When Shakespeare projects come up the shelves magically clear. Fortunately these books often mysteriously re-appear on the shelves."

It's the taxpayers who suffer the loss of both the ordinary and sometimes irreplaceable volumes. To replace a two-to three-year-old book the library faces a 40 percent increase of the book's original cost.

However, these are not the only expenses the library must consider when replacing a book. Administrative costs in persuing a lost book often reaches five to six dellars. Postcards, phone calls and, at times, statements all result in

unnecessary expense.

A high percentage of the books written off are from people whom the administration cannot locate. Books are often packed up with family possessions and never find their way back to their original home.

According to Mrs. Cornwell, the existence of the fine system for overdue books is under fire all over Ontario. The dropping of fines in Georgetown is regarded as desirable for it would result in less expenses for both the library and for the taxpayer.

Commenting on the possibility of discontinuing the line system Mrs. Cornwell stated, "a great deal depends on how the public is prepared for it. In a close knit community it would probably be very successful because people then feel it's more of a personal matter to return the books."





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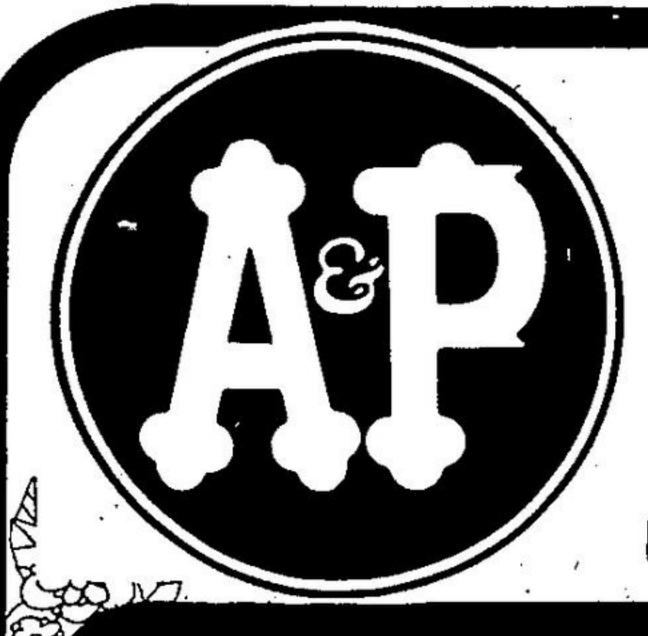
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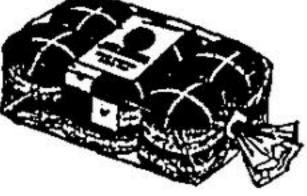
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