

MUNDELEIN
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HALF DAY
RONDOUT
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EXPLAINS LIBRARY BOOK SITUATION

(Continued from page 8)

ing list of new books, number of copies, and number of applications on reserve, will illustrate both the nature and ground of the complaint.

How It Operates

Book	No. Copies on Hand	Reserve List
Adams: Epic of America	2	8
Adler: What Life Should Mean to You	2	10
Buck: Good Earth	5	22
Cather: Shadows on the Rock	7	38
Chase: Mexico	1	8
Deeping: Ten Commandments	4	16
Galsworthy: Maid in Waiting	5	18
Lewis: Half a Loaf	2	13
Milne: Two People	3	21
O'Neill: Mourning Becomes Electra	3	10
Sackville-West: All Passion Spent	3	10
Terry-Shaw: Letters	2	16
Judith: Paris	3	9

Various Causes

The peak demand arises from many causes, some of them beyond analysis. It is stimulated by current book-talks at clubs, by newspaper and book-reviews, by lists of best-sellers, and by the intimate social talk of the book reader—all of these factors operating at once to produce an immediate call for a particular book. There is no reserve list of patrons waiting for the books of yesteryear. To meet this demand within a reasonably short time, the library must purchase additional duplicate copies or reduce the lending period.

This is precisely what has been done. A duplicate is purchased and placed on the 10 cent rental shelf with a time limit of seven days. A fine is charged for overtime. Apparently this action meets public approval for the rental shelf is in constant demand, and, together with the fines on the regular two-week books, brought in a total of \$160.71 during the month of November. Any further reduction of the lending period or increase of rental would seem to be inconsistent with public policy, and the methods of circulating libraries operated for profit. There is, of course, an appreciable difference between a rental of 10 cents a week and circulating library charges of 5 to 25 cents a day. In their willingness to pay fines for overtime, borrowers are themselves a factor in keeping other borrowers waiting. Yet as a public institution operated by public funds the library would be open to just censure if arbitrary action regarding the time-limit, the rental rate, or fines for overtime, were taken in the interest of the minority reader.

Other Alternative

The other alternative—the purchase of additional copies—opens up a practical question of management related to expenditure. Reference to the table will illustrate how far the library has gone in the direction of furnishing duplicate copies of popular books. Every purchase of duplicates is overshadowed by the deadly consideration that within a few months, a year at most, these copies will be reposing in a state of perpetual rest on the shelves, for the life of a popular book is a transient one, and the time soon arrives when one copy will meet the reader demand. On the other hand, the library is not a museum for the seclusion of specimens of the world's literature, but in purpose and character a circulating agency supported

by the public who demand the books. Through many years of careful buying it can meet the need of reference works of permanent value and occasional use. But the demand for the new book is current, present, immediate, and there is no way to meet it save by supplying the book. For this reason duplicates are purchased, in numbers related to the demand, as nearly as it can be estimated, and with consideration given to the character of the book and—an important item—its cost.

Buy Too Few Books

In the opinion of the writer, the world buys far too few books. The home that does not overflow with them lacks character—let us not say culture. But this opinion is not evidence and the spending possibilities of a library board which keeps expenditure within its budget are limited. Even if the librarian has decided upon the desirability or necessity of purchases, there is only so much to spend and the total must cover a wide range of tastes and an ever increasing flow of publications.

The appropriation for books for the current year totals \$4,000, approximately 20 per cent of the expenditure. The November book bills were \$362.82. If the reader cares to consult the published lists of purchases or the lists of the bulletin board of the library, and, item by item, weigh the list against the expenditure, he will readily form an opinion as to the problem of duplicate purchases. No librarian or book committee is infallible in judgment, but it must exercise selection in every item purchased. The purchase of a duplicate is therefore in every case a particular situation wherein the demand for the book must be balanced against the cost and against the demand for some other book. To attempt to satisfy the call for a new book at the peak of demand by purchasing unlimited numbers of duplicates would be on the face of it utter folly. So the result is a compromise—a working compromise—in the interest of the larger public who patronize the library.

Fortunate Here

Let me add as a personal comment that we are indeed fortunate as a local public, at a time when many public libraries are curtailing their purchases of new books, to be able to continue, without exceeding our budget, the regular policy of adding to our lists the majority of the current new publications in the fields of general literature, travel, biography, and fiction, and these in as many copies as the circumstances permit. It is hoped that the public will verify this by frequent inspections of both lists and books on exhibition.

CARD OF THANKS

We wish to thank our many friends for their kindness and sympathy, also for the many floral offerings, during our recent bereavement.—Mr. and Mrs. August Johnson and family.

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