

II^e SECTION.
9^e question.

CONDITIONS OF LIBRARIANS

IN THE UNITED STATES

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It is assumed that this question seeks not only statistical and generalized information as to salaries, promotions, pensions, holidays and vacations in American libraries, but also statements concerning the academic and professional standing of librarians, conditions of appointment, including special training, hours of service required, women in libraries, etc. It is also assumed that the question applies to all professional library workers, whether chief librarians or assistants.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL STANDING OF LIBRARIANS.

American librarianship tends more and more to assume, in public esteem, the dignity of a profession. In education and training required, in rank and in pay, the university librarian is usually regarded as the dean of a department, and the college librarian is often considered as a full professor. Assistants in such libraries are graded as associate or assistant professors or instructors. State and city chief librarians are frequently on a par with state and municipal superintendents of schools, and their assistants are comparable in education

and training to public high school teachers, except that as yet they are usually less well paid. Ordinarily terms of office of chief librarians are actually during good behavior, though in many cases there is a formal election each year. In the case of assistants, terms of office are usually at the discretion of trustees and librarian, but this usually amounts to tenure during good behavior or at least during efficiency.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR LIBRARIANSHIP.

At least a bachelor's degree (or its equivalent) is now usually regarded as the minimum educational qualification for the chief librarian and the more important assistants of the larger libraries, and at least a high school education for the librarian of a small library or for those holding the minor post in large libraries. For appointment to the more important positions there is wide and increasing insistence on special training for librarianship, gained either in some one of the ten or more American library schools, having courses of one or two years; in the practice classes conducted by many of the large libraries, or by long and varied experience in library work. These qualifications are also often exacted in filling comparatively minor positions.

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS.

In the case of a few states (e. g. New-York) and cities (e. g. Chicago) library appointments, including even those of the chief librarians, are regulated by a civil service commission outside of the governing board of the library. For the most part, chief librarians are appointed by boards of library trustees, composed of representative citizens, usually without expert knowledge of library affairs, and library assistants by the trustees on nomination of the chief librarian, who usually makes his recommendations after conducting an examination inside the library. Some libraries having the highest standards uniformly exempt from examination for original appointment library school graduates and others bringing certificates of advanced education and experience, and make all promotions

on knowledge of assistants gained from efficiency records and recommendations of chiefs of departments (e. g. Library of Congress, Carnegie Library of Pittsburg and Cleveland Public Library). Other libraries, having equally high standards, make no appointments (or practically none) or promotions, except after examination. In such cases, however, previous records are also often taken into account (e. g. Boston Public and Brooklyn Public Libraries).

WOMEN IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES.

In any report on American librarianship for an international Congress, it is important to point out that about 80 percent of American librarians are women. In a recent inquiry by the United States Commissioner of Education covering 2584 libraries, out of 7114 professional workers, 1482 were found to be men and 5632 women. The great majority of the chief librarians of the larger libraries of all classes are men. Their assistants, often including many of the heads of the important sub-divisions of the work in such great libraries, are in large measure women. Most small libraries, many libraries of moderate size, and even a few of the larger and relatively important libraries have women as chief librarians.

SALARIES.

A tabulation of the salaries paid in American libraries, based on the government inquiry already referred to, gives the following result :

<i>Salary</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Less than \$ 600	375	2560
\$ 600 - \$ 1099	459	2715
1100 - 1999	400	326
2000 - 2999	142	19
3000 - 4999	64	1
5000 - 10000	19	0
Not reported	23	11
	<u>1482</u>	<u>5631</u>

Study of this table shows that 44 percent of male librarians receive \$ 1100 and upwards and only 6 percent of female librarians receive that figure or over. An examination of a table from which the foregoing was abridged, made up in even hundreds of dollars shows that the largest single group, 1075 women, receive from \$ 600 to \$ 699; and the next largest, 792 women, receive from \$ 400 to \$ 499. The highest salary paid to a female librarian is \$ 3000 and there is but one instance of this. In the case of male librarians, the largest group by hundreds of dollars is 119, with salaries from \$ 1200 to \$ 1299; the next largest, 117, with salaries \$ 700 to \$ 799. In the group \$ 600 to \$ 699 there are 115 men. One of the large groups is from \$ 2000 to \$ 2999, comprising 69 men. Among other groups are 74 men paid from \$ 2400 to \$ 2499; 26 from \$ 2500 to \$ 2599; 35 from \$ 3000 to \$ 3499; 14 from \$ 3500 to \$ 3999; 14 at \$ 4000; 10 at \$ 5000; 4 at \$ 6000; 1 at \$ 6500; 1 at \$ 7500; 1 at \$ 8000 and 1 at \$ 10000.

The advanced salaries mentioned are of course paid almost exclusively to chief librarians. A few college and university libraries pay their head librarians from \$ 2500 to \$ 5000. In most instances these represent salaries paid to the directors of national, state and municipal libraries. Generally speaking, in the larger libraries first assistant librarians receive from \$ 1500 to \$ 4000, and department chiefs from \$ 900 to \$ 2000. Other subordinates are graded in accordance with their responsibilities. In a few libraries promotions are automatic, that is, from year to year, ordinarily conditioned however, on increased efficiency. Usually however, increase of pay occurs only with promotion to more responsible work.

In comparing the salaries of American librarians with those paid in Europe, it is of course important to take into consideration the higher cost of living in the United States and the facts that artisans and skilled mechanics as well as professional men (generally speaking) receive larger compensation in America than in Europe. The rank and file of American library workers certainly receive less compensation than do American public school teachers, with whom, generally speaking, their equipment, etc. is most nearly comparable.

PENSIONS.

In the case of colleges and universities that have been admitted to the benefits of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, their chief librarians and library assistants who rank as associate and assistant professors, are eligible for pensions. There are also one or two universities having their own pension plans, with library staffs eligible. The Chicago Public Library has its own pension plan. The great majority of American librarians are as yet without such protection for old age and the libraries lack the advantages incident to a system of superannuation.

HOURS OF SERVICE.

There are still many American libraries which require of their staffs 8 hours of service, but the tendency is in the direction of a 7 hours day, or in many cases approximately a 40 hours week. Libraries are often kept open 12 or 13 hours (and in some cases even more), but this is accomplished by having an increased staff, with assignments to different hours, usually varied from day to day, so as not to require the same persons to be in attendance every evening.

HOLIDAYS, VACATIONS, LEAVES OF ABSENCE.

In most parts of the United States there are about 7 legal holidays in addition to Sundays, when service is not required without extra pay. An increasing number of libraries, however, are being kept open on Sundays and on all holidays except Christmas day and July 4. For Sunday and holidays opening, fewer persons are required than on other days and these receive extra pay, and often pay at a somewhat higher rate than for ordinary days. The prevailing annual vacation is about one month. In some college and in a few other libraries as much as two months is allowed. Some libraries give as little as two weeks and it is by no means uncommon to give shorter vacations to juniors and to grade the length of vacation (with a fixed maximum), according to length of service.

Absence on account of illness in an increasing number of

libraries is permitted without loss of pay, within a certain limit, usually from 12 to 30 days a year. Certain libraries give half pay during brief illnesses, while others permit the regular assistant who is ill to employ a substitute, who is usually paid at a lower rate. The custom is widely prevalent to grant with full pay time for attendance at state and national library association meetings, in addition to annual vacations. Some libraries grant, within reasonable limits, leaves of absence, without pay, for purposes of study or travel.

DESIDERATA.

There is great need of a system of pensions, amply endowed, whose benefits should be open to all librarians employed in libraries maintaining certain established professional and educational standards. Such standards should include questions of appointment and promotion, a minimum salary for pension eligibility of say \$ 1000, quality of book purchased and public service rendered. The establishment of such a system of pensions would probably do more than any one thing to bring about desired improvement in salaries, especially of women, and to make well-nigh universal the high standards of appointment, promotion and liberal treatment of staffs which now obtain in many libraries.

SOURCES.

This report is based on statistics collected by the United States Bureau of Education, at the request of the American Library Association Committee on Statistics of Library Salaries (of which the writer is chairman), on the replies to a questionnaire sent to about fifty important and typical libraries and on general knowledge of conditions. It is based only slightly on published articles, the most important of which is the following: Hill, F. P. *Library Service*. (In: Dewey, Melvil. *Papers prepared for the World's Library Congress*, 1893, Washington, 1896, pp. 757-559; also in *U. S. Commissioner of Education, Report for 1892-93*, v. I. p. 747-55.)