

Development of Administration in Library Service: Current Status and Future Prospects

THIS ARTICLE attempts to assess the point to which management of libraries has progressed, to draw parallels with related fields, and to point out avenues which appear most promising for furthering development of management theory and practice in the library field. One distinct limitation of present-day thinking about management or administration is that there has not yet been developed a standard or universally accepted terminology covering managerial activity. To avoid confusion over semantics, the terms administration and management will be used interchangeably; what is meant here is that group of executive functions commonly associated with the management or administration of any organizational enterprise.

In 1900, libraries were small compared to their modern counterparts, librarianship was fundamentally a custodial function, and the techniques of management were relatively simple. Public library clienteles were small and highly literate, and consequent demands upon librarians were modest. College libraries were designed primarily to serve the faculty and only incidentally the students, and the duties of the librarian were frequently absorbed by any available professor. As libraries grew in size, methods were devised locally to organize and preserve the collections, and these techniques were passed on to apprentices or other library workers through individual or class instruction. Early in the century the principal attributes necessary for the library administrator were scholarly attainment and local library experience.

If there are serious questions about the

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magnitude to which management functions in large public and research libraries have grown in the last half century, Tables I and II, which detail the growth of selected public and university libraries respectively, should help to dispel them. Enormous advances have been made in the scale of financial appropriations, in the size of library book stocks, and in the number of employees needed to render these collections useful. One inevitable by-product of such a growth pattern has been the development of the host of administrative problems which are a function of large and complex organizations. A crucial question is the degree of understanding of the major issues of organizational management among library administrators and how well this understanding and the skills and insights which grow out of it have kept pace with the rapidly increasing size of library operations.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In a survey made for the ACRL College Libraries Section in December, 1949, sixty-three libraries from twenty-nine states replied to a questionnaire which listed areas considered most to require research investigation in the college library field. Administration ranked first in frequency of response and greatly outranked all other issues.¹ Yet, while there is almost universal agreement that one of the critical needs is better understanding of management, there has been a paucity of serious analyses of this question. Careful scrutiny of library literature over the last thirty years reveals few significant contributions. Brief review of some of these may aid in understanding the present level of thinking.

In 1930, Donald Coney suggested some applications of scientific management to li-

¹ Dorothy E. Cole, "Areas for Research in the College Library," *CRL*, XI (1950), 328.

TABLE I
STATISTICS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

| LIBRARY | OPERATING EXPENDITURES | | NUMBER OF BOOKS | | ALL STAFF | |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 1900 ¹ | 1955 ² | 1900 ¹ | 1955 ² | 1921 ⁴ | 1956 ⁵ |
| Boston | \$302,457 | \$3,222,637 | 772,432 | 2,085,660 | | 740 |
| Cleveland | 72,943 | 4,270,787 | 165,868 | 2,819,142 | 529 | 896 |
| Chicago | 272,790 | 4,777,672 | 258,498 | 2,294,369 | 453 | 1,204 |
| Minneapolis | 61,295 | 1,651,351 | 114,000 | 960,040 | 168 | 354 |
| St. Louis | 78,225 | 1,453,043 | 135,000 | 1,066,339 | 230 | 340 |

TABLE II
STATISTICS OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

| LIBRARY | OPERATING EXPENDITURES | | NUMBER OF BOOKS | | ALL STAFF | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| | 1900 ¹ | 1955 ³ | 1900 ¹ | 1955 ³ | 1920-21 ⁶ | 1955 ³ |
| Columbia | | \$1,288,145 | 295,000 | 2,116,641 | 62 | 312 |
| Chicago | | 718,066 | 329,778 | 1,911,111 | 93 | 121 |
| Illinois | \$ 1,495 | 1,443,114 | 42,314 | 2,888,557 | 51 | 245 |
| California (Berkeley) | 12,940 | 2,015,520 | 79,417 | 2,063,082 | 28 | 309 |
| Harvard | 78,820 | 2,034,163 | 560,000 | 5,955,766 | 65 ⁴ | 376 |
| Yale | 34,500 | 1,061,116 | 285,000 | 4,280,473 | 43 | 233 |

¹ U. S. Education Bureau, *Report*, I (1900), 923-1165.

² U. S. Office of Education, *Circular No. 471*, "Statistics of Public Libraries in Cities With Population of 100,000 or More: Fiscal Year 1955."

³ *CRL*, XVII (1956), 58-65.

⁴ American Library Association, *Bulletin*, XVI (1922), 426-451.

⁵ Enoch Pratt Free Library, *Salary Statistics for Large Public Libraries*, 1956.

⁶ Princeton University Library, *College and University Library Statistics, 1919/20 to 1943/44*, 1947.

braries.² This early effort classified library functions in management terms and discussed proposed methods for improving objectives in large research libraries, production problems, the functionalization of work, the standardization of methods, and efficiency in the use of personnel. However, twenty-two years later, in an article on management advances, the same author concludes by saying. "There is a regrettable lack of firsthand acquaintance with management literature, and of orientation in the management field, on the part of library administrators and those who write on library management. Much of librarians' writing on this subject is more descriptive than analytical, and often, more naive than sophisticated. There is a real lack of bridging literature, that is, articles that relate the con-

cepts and practices of professional management literature to library situations. There is probably a need for some means of directing librarians to those parts of management writing that have applicability to library work."³

In what is probably the most advanced treatment yet attempted, Paul Howard delineates key elements of administrative theory and applies these principles to library situations in an effort to develop a theoretical framework for management functions as applied to libraries.⁴ Howard describes and illustrates library applications of the following functions of administration: directing, ordering, supervising, controlling, organizing, evaluating, and representing. Two of his conclusions are noteworthy: "A knowledge of the true functions

² Donald Coney, "Scientific Management and University Libraries," in G. T. Schwenning, ed., *Management Problems*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), pp. 168-198.

³ Donald Coney, "Management in College and University Libraries," *Library Trends*, I (1952), 91.

⁴ Paul Howard, "The Functions of Library Management," *Library Quarterly*, X (1940), 313-349.

of library management should enable the library profession to select candidates for managerial positions much more accurately than is possible at the present time" and "It should be possible to work from this [framework], or similar basis, toward the formulation of a comprehensive and definitive theory of library management."⁵ Since 1940, no major advances in the theory of library administration have been made beyond the introductory propositions advanced by Howard.

In sharp contrast with other professions, no book or monograph has yet been written which attempts to evolve and apply a theoretical framework as a tool for achieving a better understanding of library administration. A few books have appeared; several are even distinctive and definitive works, which treat the organization and problems of particular types of libraries—public, college, university, or special. The characteristics which all these volumes share is the great degree of concern with descriptive detail and not theory, the concentration upon the distinctive institutional problems and the operating features of the type of library treated, the great emphasis upon method and technique, and the unconcern with principles which may be common in the administration of any large library effort, regardless of type.

It would be unfair, of course, to exclude from all mention the important work which was done from the mid-1930's into the 1940's at the University of Chicago where a concerted effort was made to link the study of library administration to that of public administration. This work culminated in significant volumes such as Carleton Joeckel's *Government of the American Public Library* (1935) and Arnold Miles and Lowell Martin's *Public Administration and the Library* (1941), and in the academic preparation of some of the leading administrative practitioners which the library field has developed. The fundamental orientation of this movement, however, was institutional, and the theoretical bases were never fully developed. Cognizance must also be given to the specialized materials which have been developed to aid the library administrator in approaching the technical problems of

⁵ *Ibid.*

administration with sharper and more effective tools. Perhaps the most important effort of this type was Emma Baldwin and Williams Marcus's *Library Costs and Budgets; A Study of Cost Accounting in Public Libraries* (1941).

The large mass of material published in the professional journals of librarianship dealing with management issues can best be characterized as a type of latter-day folklore. There is a plethora of how-we-do-it articles which describe particular techniques employed by individual libraries, with the presumption that methods which work (or seem to work) one place are sound operating principles to guide action elsewhere. The literature is deficient in contributions which attempt to theorize and very little can be generalized when the preponderance of published offerings are accounts of noncumulative, isolated experiences. Virtually no writing has attempted to distill from a study of administrative practices in a number of institutions a set of hypotheses which might provide a framework for understanding common situations in different settings.

The promise which Carleton Joeckel held out for advancement of administration in 1938, "[Library administration] is new in the sense that the close and scientific study of library administration as a subject worthy of consideration in itself is only in its beginnings,"⁶ has not been fulfilled.

CURRENT ORIENTATIONS TO ADMINISTRATION

One relatively widespread phenomenon which suggests that library management in many institutions is being subjected to increased scrutiny, is the library survey. This device (broadly analogous to the use of management consulting firms in industry and government), attempts to focus detached professional thinking upon the administrative issues facing the library under surveillance. In a perceptive, but perhaps too-gentle critique, Ralph Shaw characterizes the historical evolution of the library survey through three phases: The first period controlled by "macromanagement" experts, broad gauged administrative generalists; the second phase given over to the "micromanagement" specialists, expert in the technical

⁶ Carleton B. Joeckel, ed., *Current Issues in Library Administration*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), Introduction.

library functions; and the present stage, in which a first-rate survey team is directed by a broadly oriented management generalist, aided by a crew of specialists who function as staff assistants to the survey director.⁷ Even if we accept Shaw's judgment, while incidence of the use of the library survey appears to be increasing, there is no indication that this device is adding appreciably to the total understanding of library administration. That is not to say that individual surveys may not be extremely valuable to the institutions under investigation. Such studies frequently do provide the means for obtaining keen diagnosis of problems and equally penetrating proposals for the solution of problems. Unfortunately, however, each survey situation is an isolated entity, detached and disassociated from other comparable operations. A large number of library surveys have been published, a corps of survey experts has been developed, but out of this phenomenon has come no new understanding or insights, no distillation of administrative principles, no accretions to the knowledge of the controllable or uncontrollable variables of the administrative process in the library organization. There has not been one significant comparative analysis of administrative issues growing out of these efforts.

Another characteristic of present day thinking about library administration is the prevalence of sharply different points of view and attitudes toward what are the most effective means for advancing understanding and practice of management in libraries. One position is enunciated most clearly by the documentalist school. This group, identified largely with Dean Jesse H. Shera and the Western Reserve School of Library Science Center for Documentation and Communication Research, energetically attempts to apply to librarianship the skills and techniques of the basic and applied sciences. For this group, the most crucial issues facing library administration are the technical problems, and primary concern is centered upon the development of effective devices for the retrieval of information.

At another pole is the faction whose position is most clearly articulated by Lawrence

Clark Powell who suggests that "To administer libraries calls for gifts of the mind and the spirit" and, almost as an afterthought, "as well as theoretical knowledge of management and a knack for gimmicks and gadgets."⁸ In describing a proposed program in library education, his primary concern is with a "rededication to the simple facts of library life."⁹ This, in essence, is the position of the humanist who sees the library administrator as scholar and bookman, with management only a minor function which he performs as an aside, and, presumably, intuitively.

TRAINING FOR LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

The most penetrating discussion of educational preparation for administration in libraries was contributed by Martin in 1945.¹⁰ He characterizes courses in administration offered in library schools as susceptible of three different levels of presentation. The first type treats material under the general rubric of administration which is not covered elsewhere in the curriculum—book charging systems, order routines, statistical records, preparation and care of materials, etc. The second kind considers the "elements of management"—those topics or problems with which a library administrator deals on a day-to-day basis. This type of presentation is exemplified by a concern with such issues as buildings and equipment. Martin then advocates that such courses be advanced to a third level and centered around what he terms the "administrative process." While he, unfortunately, presents little amplification of the details and content of such a course, the implications are that the material considered would be of a theoretical as well as applied nature. Martin's first level is not administration at all. His second level covers actual operational functions and their control, rather than administration. It is only his proposed third level which would seriously concern itself with a different order of performance—the functions of the executive in management—as contrasted with the functions of library operations.

Interestingly enough, while Martin's analy-

⁸ Lawrence Clark Powell, "The Gift to Be Simple," *Library Journal*, LXXXII (1957), 314.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁷ Ralph R. Shaw, "Scientific Management in the Library," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, XXI (1947), 349.

¹⁰ Lowell Martin, "Shall Library Schools Teach administration?" *CRL*, VI (1945), 335-340, 345.

sis was published a dozen years ago, since which time professional education has swung almost exclusively from the undergraduate to the graduate level and in the process undergone a decided reorientation of values and emphases, a review of present-day courses reveals only a few instances of major modifications in the content of the formal courses in administration toward an administrative process orientation.

The remarks which follow are based upon written communications with every ALA accredited library school and an analysis of the syllabi, outlines, and reading lists used by these programs in their courses in administration. Out of a total of thirty-six inquiries, replies were received from twenty-five schools. Of this number, only eighteen had made available their materials in time to be considered in this study. Several schools were not willing to provide details of their courses; others indicated that the administration courses were being revised and that new materials were not yet available. However, every school of major national reputation did comply in full or in part, and is, therefore, represented in the conclusions drawn. Admittedly, it is difficult to assess the level of instruction exactly and fairly, based solely upon examination of outlines and reading lists without the complementary insights gained from personal interviews with the instructors. Systematic analysis of the materials at hand leads to the following conclusions.

Only three of the eighteen schools responding approach the teaching of administration from the standpoint of an "administrative process." In each of these three instances, there are clear indications that a conscious attempt is being made to study library administration as a substantive area and to distinguish administration from a preoccupation with the techniques and methods of the production and service functions of libraries.

Seven schools are apparently treating administration in exactly the same way which Martin characterized as the first level of instruction and continue to offer courses covering materials and subjects which are not considered elsewhere in the curriculum. The other eight schools provide courses which appear to fit the description of Martin's second category, in which administration is

equated with concern for physical plant, legal foundation, financial control, etc.

Certain other attributes of courses in library administration are worth noting here. In nearly every program there are specialized courses in the administration of distinctive types of libraries. Either these faculties believe the process of administration varies in different types of libraries, or these are not courses in administration, but treatments of the problems or functions of public, college, university, or special libraries.

Reading lists in administration courses draw most heavily from the library literature. While there is occasional reference to, or assignment in, the broader management literature of business administration, public administration, or administrative behavior, this is uncommon. If the thesis advanced earlier that library literature is poor in substantive contributions toward understanding of administration is correct, the student suffers from an inappropriate intellectual diet.

One almost universal characteristic of the course or courses in administration (based upon a review of the catalogs of the schools) is their elective feature. A survey of the work of practicing librarians would doubtless reveal that many exercise control over, and responsibility for, the work of others. The degree of responsibility would vary widely, between one extreme of supervision of one or two clerical assistants to that of the highest management post in a large organization. An understanding of administration would appear to be equally relevant as part of the professional equipment of every librarian, including specialists in research, reference, and cataloging, who, while not directly concerned with administrative performance, need to understand the theory and framework of administration if only to appreciate their roles in the total organization in which they function, and their own relationship to it.

The central theme of this paper is not education for librarianship. But in its concern with key issues of present-day library administration, some general judgments must be made about the caliber, extent, and effectiveness of academic preparation. Library administration, as it is practiced, and even more particularly, as it is taught, is not a model of intellectual refinement. It

does not have a clearly defined, well-organized body of subject knowledge. Its subject knowledge has no simple, or even complex, theoretical basis or structure. Its literature is a motley of descriptive treatment of operating methods used in individual, varied settings. The content of most of the courses appears to describe practices and to make general recommendations for what are presumed to be successful techniques. Where it might, and perhaps should, improve itself by borrowing heavily from many diverse disciplines such as business, law, economics, political science, and education, it does not, or does not very often.

Underlying the issue of education for administration is the question of who is best equipped to teach the courses. Powell makes the point in discussing this issue that "Librarianship today is suffering from . . . [being] taught by teachers who have never been successful librarians, or even librarians at all."¹¹ According to this standard, only those who have administered are qualified to teach administration. A perfunctory review of the backgrounds of those who actually offer the courses, in *Who's Who in Library Service*, suggests that the overwhelming majority are drawn from the ranks of the practitioners, present and past. There is a serious question of how useful this has been. While this group may, in fact, have administered or be administering libraries with notable success, they have up to this point contributed little to furthering the development and understanding of the subject of library administration. One alternative would be to turn the instructional reins over to a research-oriented group. The rationale is best expressed in the following passage taken from another field.¹² "The practitioner, both by equipment and by temperament, is geared to action, and the scientist to explanation. The practitioner's action is not random, or irrational however. It is based on a kind of wisdom and experience which can best be described as clinical acumen. Clinical acumen is not something mystical. It is compounded of partly conscious, partly unconscious, knowledge

and facts which form the basis for a rational judgment. One procedure for developing a more scientific base for welfare practice, I believe, will be the identification and explanation of the elements that enter into clinical acumen." Further and more specifically, "the formulation of practitioner knowledge into testable proposition calls for a kind of competence and interest not possessed by most practitioners. It calls for the kind of analytical, generalizing ability and interests possessed by scientists whose major concern is with analysis and generalization."

If this point of view were to be generalized and applied to librarianship, it would not suggest necessarily that every administrator by virtue of this exposure was incapable of conceptualizing his experience, or that a research-oriented person necessarily could. It would suggest, however, that there is a propensity for this to be the case. If then the practitioner is considered to be less well equipped to distill from experience the actual principles which guide him because of a fundamental action-focus, and if the social scientist is basically concerned with introducing order and relationships to what appear otherwise to be unconnected phenomena, and if research may aid in providing meaningful generalization, the case for the non-administrator or scholar-teacher, is strengthened.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Assuming administration to be common to all large-scale organizations and assuming that the problems, issues and approaches which develop in one type of institutional environment may have relevance for other settings, a comparative review may prove of interest. Library administration parallels public administration in a number of ways, and, in a very real sense, library administration is only an extension of public administration. There have been, traditionally, two major avenues by which to study public administration. The first is the so-called "organization" or "program" approach, in which administration is viewed from the point of view of a specific type of functioning unit—police, prison, fire, municipal government, etc. This approach, which considers the usual group of administrative problems—planning, personnel, budget, etc.—is concerned with administration as a process,

¹¹ Powell, *op. cit.*, 313.

¹² David G. French, "The Utilization of the Social Sciences in Solving Welfare Problems," in *Social Work Practice in the Field of Tuberculosis* (Symposium Proceedings July 27-August 1, 1953), University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, 1954, p. 29.

but primarily it focuses upon the specific tasks and functions of particular agencies or types of agencies. This approach is supported by the theory that administration cannot be studied meaningfully apart from the specific program to be administered, that an administrator administers something, and that this something is highly important to the manner of administration. Translated into library terms, this same point of view is presumably reflected in the widespread prevalence in library schools of distinct courses in public, college, university and special library administration.

The second major approach rests on the concept of administration as management. According to this notion, there are certain managerial processes which run through the whole of administration, whatever the program. Among these are planning, programming, organizing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and appraising, and each of these processes is sufficiently alike from program to program to justify special study of the process itself.

Those who speak authoritatively for public administration today, generally accept the concept of management as a process running through all organizations, while recognizing, of course, that management does not take place in a vacuum. While the curricula of individual universities offering programs in public administration offer concentrations in specialized program areas such as police administration and city management, "it is clear that the universities have accepted the concept of public administration as a process in setting up their educational programs for the public service, for the emphasis is on management rather than program."¹³

In spite of disclaimers within the profession to the contrary, and certainly to a degree which is nowhere near being paralleled in the field of library administration, public administration is the focus of considerable research attention. As a matter of fact, research has progressed to the point where public administration is now widely conceived of as an "interaction" discipline, drawing many of its key contributions from

other behavioral sciences. The great value of such a cross-disciplinary approach is that while researchers in other fields may focus upon the same problems, their perspectives and conceptual tools are considerably different. This tendency has given rise to some new and stimulating approaches to administrative problems, and to a wider exploration of new methods, techniques, and research frameworks. Some of the insights currently being used in studying public administration as an applied area are being drawn from a number of what would formerly have been considered novel sources, including the following fields:

Politics—Research attention is being directed more and more to the question of political behavior as a tool for understanding administrative issues. What was once a public administration taboo (on the theory that administration and politics were dichotomous issues), is now generally viewed as a crucial element of the administrative process. While the amount of reciprocal contribution from politics to public administration, and vice versa, has been very limited, indications are that this may not continue to be the case.

History—In cognizance of the generally accepted difficulty of applying the scientific methods of controlled experiment to a dynamic social field, increasing research attention is being brought to bear on the record of the past. Perhaps the greatest lesson to be learned here is the means of coping with the type of administrative issue which is recurrent.

Cultural Anthropology—Particular attention is being directed to understanding cultures and issues of underdeveloped areas, and the lessons learned from these cross-cultural studies are providing useful insights for assessing administrative problems of more complex societies. This discipline has proved crucial in advancing the study of comparative administration, a topic which relates to perhaps the single fastest growing program area in the public administration field.

Sociology—Many of the issues which form the basis of inquiry into human organizations such as status, class, and power, are proving equally useful in furthering understanding of administration. The literature of bureaucracy has enriched the study of

¹³ R. C. Martin, "Education for Public Administration" in *Education for the Professions*, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, 1955, p. 194.

public administration immeasurably and provided many meaningful insights.

Social Psychology—Closely tied to sociology and social anthropology, this discipline has provided administration with the valuable concept of the informal group, studies of leadership, role playing, and the entire area of tests and measurement.

Economics—There has been considerable exchange between economics and public administration and even a tendency to converge. The managerial economics theory of the firm has its parallel in the public corporation, and the firm as a system of power and the public agency as an equilibrating economic force, tend to cross and to provide each other with corresponding insights.

Business Administration—Scientific management has grown up out of the field of business administration and been adapted to the public sphere. The insights into human behavior gained from the Elton Mayo Hawthorne experiments on social conditions in the plant, and the Harvard Business School case study method, have each been translated into public administration terms.

Obviously, administration in the public field faces many internal, technical problems. However, the insights being gained through other social sciences are causing a review and re-evaluation of many old questions. Many writers have spoken of the revolution in the social sciences, that is, the mushrooming of widespread study in all the areas of social interest. New fields are being born such as cybernetics, econometrics, and sociometry. Cross disciplinary advances are being made to formulate new methods of attacking administrative problems—leadership studies, small group theory, communication theory, game, and role theory. If public administration, which has a genetic and even organizational relation only to political science, is reviewing its own position in these new terms, what then should be the implications for library service, which is the genetic offspring of all the social disciplines? And if the following criticisms can be legitimately levelled at the general program of research activity in the field of public administration, what could not be said of library administration?¹⁴

¹⁴ F. C. Mosher, "Research in Public Administration: Some Notes and Suggestions" in *Public Administration Review*, XVI (1956), 178.

(1) There has not been enough research performed; the stimulus for research effort has been insufficient; and research output is falling behind the needs.

(2) There has been insufficient planning, direction, and channeling of research efforts; areas of crucial concern have been neglected.

(3) There has been insufficient communication within the field with the result that few know what others are doing; and the outlets for research products are inadequate.

(4) There is inadequate communication between this field and related fields of the social sciences in either direction; there is inadequate collaboration, cooperation, and interaction among them.

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

The field of contemporary education is characterized by a vital concern with the questions of administrative leadership. Undoubtedly, the single most conspicuous achievement has been the evolution of the Cooperative Program in Educational Administration. Developing from a concern with the underlying issues of educational leadership, three major associations in the education field, in conjunction with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, planned to study the question and sponsored five regional conferences during 1949-50. Out of these sessions was born the Cooperative Program in Educational Administration, financed by grants from the Kellogg Foundation totalling several million dollars, and designating at first five, and later three, more educational institutions, where the program was to be carried out. The grants were specifically earmarked for "action-research" programs in the field of educational leadership. Each individual study center evolved a series of objectives which were used to direct the specific lines which the inquiry was to take at that university.

A development of interest is the general revision of the program reported in 1955 at one of the regional centers, the Midwest Administration Center, at the University of Chicago.¹⁵ The major lines along which research was to be directed here were: (1) the formulation of a general theory of administration to guide both practice and research, (2) the classification of administrative functions, roles, and effects through experimen-

¹⁵ "New Program in Administration," *Elementary School Journal*, LV (1955), 311-314.

tation and research, (3) rigorous application of present knowledge and of accumulating theory and research to the selection and preparation of persons for administrative roles, (4) continuous re-education of those engaged in administration through more effective use of a combination of conferences, discussion groups, publications, audio-visual presentation and consultative service, and (5) improvement of the situation through which education is provided. A key element in this program involves the preparation of a field staff comprised of younger educational administrators with interest in theory and research who are to be trained on an interdisciplinary basis over a period of one to three years as part of their orientation to the program. Some of the resources which Chicago planned to use in this program included the departments and professional schools of anthropology, political science, sociology, industrial relations, business, law and social service.

Perhaps the most perceptive summary of advances in thinking about administration in the field of education is provided by John Walton who suggests that "the mounting interest in the theoretical aspects of educational administration indicates a dissatisfaction with the traditional study of the subject and a desire to formulate a rubric of administrative doctrine, if not a scientific theory."¹⁶ Even more interesting are Walton's observations about the three possible channels along which the theory of educational administration may develop, observations which may, incidentally, be equally relevant for library administration.

The first avenue would arise from the assumption that the administrative function cannot be abstracted from the other functions of the educational enterprise and that the educational administrator is principally a scholar rather than administrator. The second possible type of theory to emerge would be to abstract administration from the other functions of an institution so that it might become a science. This would require the identification and classification of the elements of administration and the formulation and testing of precise causal relations. Such a theory would provide for specialists

in administration, rather than education, who might presumably be interchangeable from one institution to another—school, hospital, library, etc. The third theory is only a reflection of what the author suggests most often unwittingly happens. Because education is a complex, unwieldy, heterogeneous, social institution, the primary requisite of an administrator is the facility to see relationships. Such an administrator would need to know how to run an organization but also would have much to say about its purposes. Specialists provide the administrator with facts and technical data, but decision-making about all aspects of education—purposes as well as procedures—would be left to the administrator. This presupposes the availability of an administrator who is endowed with the capacity to attack not only administrative issues but substantive educational questions as well. Obviously, the third alternative would provide the most satisfactory solution; unfortunately, there are no hints about where to find or how to develop such a class of administrators.

Not only is there active concern with administration at the lower levels of education, but college and university administration is the focus of considerable attention as well. Evidence of this concern is expressed by one university president who writes, "The duties are so complex that it is surprising that this vocational field has not been accepted generally as a discrete art or science requiring special educational training. Higher education has instructional programs preparing people for everything but its own operation" and, "It is high time that administration in higher education was recognized for what it is, a vitally necessary function, one of the most difficult of all areas of administrative activity, and an undertaking to be consciously prepared for."¹⁷

One noteworthy development in recognition of this need has been the program evolved at the Harvard Business School. Aided by a Carnegie Foundation grant and sponsored by the Association of American Colleges, in 1955 the Institute for College and University Administrators was begun. This has been an attempt to adapt the same techniques used in the short training

¹⁶ John Walton, "The Theoretical Study of Educational Administration," *Harvard Educational Review*, XXV (1955), 169.

¹⁷ J. A. Perkins, "Public Administration and the College Administrator," *Harvard Educational Review*, XXV (1955), 216.

programs for business executives which the Harvard Business School provides, to the training of college officials. The value of the program has been characterized by the Carnegie Corporation as follows: "the Corporation undertook what appeared at the time to be a rather speculative venture, but one that proved to be eminently successful."¹⁸

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

The degree of concentration of thinking and activity in the two fields reviewed suggests clearly that in comparison, the theoretical and practical study of administration in the library field is lagging considerably. However, the picture is not completely black. Several recent developments are particularly noteworthy.

The most dramatic event has been the establishment by the Ford Foundation of the Council on Library Resources. Well financed and ably directed, this agency is charged with the responsibility for stimulating developments which will improve the methods and mechanisms for the effective operation and management of large research libraries. A reasonable assumption would be that as a result of this program inroads may be made into areas which relate to the central issues of library administration.

Another important development has been the award by the Carnegie Corporation to the School of Library Service of Western Reserve University where Dean Shera is directing a study to "undertake a thorough examination of education for librarians, and, on the basis of this research, develop a model curriculum at Western Reserve." Presumably, in this study attention may, in some measure, be directed to the issue of educational preparation for library administration.

The recent organizational revision of the American Library Association giving rise to the new Library Administration Division is another hopeful factor. The central focus of this group will almost certainly be those theoretical and practical issues facing all of library administration, regardless of type. Undoubtedly, this body will aid in creating a better climate of understanding, and

may also prove to be influential in stimulating study, research, and writing on management issues.

Finally, there is the proposal advanced by Keyes Metcalf in his final Harvard report, for providing special training for administration.¹⁹ Metcalf indicates that one of the pressing problems of American librarianship is the shortage of leaders qualified for the major administrative posts in the large research libraries of the country, and suggests a limited program of fellowships for students who hold advanced degrees in subject fields and the basic professional degree in librarianship who have demonstrated aptitude in administrative library positions. His projected program of instruction calls for a carefully directed plan of internship in the Harvard University Library, formal training in substantive areas making use of the following professional schools at Harvard—Graduate School of Business, Graduate School of Education, and Graduate School of Public Administration—and advanced study in one of the departments of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The outline calls for two and one-half years of academic study (one-half year of which would be in bibliography and library administration) and another academic year of internship in conjunction with the usual language examinations and dissertation leading to the Ph.D. In a somewhat modified form the program would lead to an M.A. Such a course would provide the student with advanced scholarly work while at the same time exposing him to the problems faced by the practicing administrator. While this plan is particularly earmarked for research library administrators, it conceivably could have implications for administration of other types of libraries. The program for library administrators under Metcalf at the Graduate School of Library Service at Rutgers University represents a step in the training of potential leaders. It is different, of course, from the proposal of Metcalf for Harvard.

¹⁸ Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 1955* (New York, 1956), p. 32.

¹⁹ K. D. Metcalf, *Report on the Harvard University Library: A Study of Present and Prospective Problems* (Cambridge: Harvard University Library, 1955), pp. 120-123.

SUGGESTED AVENUES FOR
ADVANCING LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

The material presented up to this point has been based upon empirical observation flavored by the author's personal reactions to the facts. So much for the diagnosis. What of the prognosis? As is probably true of most of the deep-seated problems facing all the professions, the real answers are not yet known and may only be learned after considerable research effort of a fundamental order. The crucial issue, really, is where, how, and by whom this research in administration in librarianship is to be done. As has been indicated, seldom is the practitioner equipped to distill theory and principles from practice. Library administration must profit from the same insights and techniques which are being brought to bear upon other fields of administrative activity. In effect, this means that the barriers must be lowered and the host of social and behavioral sciences invited, even urged, to bring their conceptual tools to bear upon the problems of library administration.

An excellent precedent has been set. In the Public Library Inquiry a team of trained social scientists (including librarians), pooled their skills, insights, and ideas and studied the major issues facing the public library. The sum total was an essential and perceptive assessment of American public library service at mid-century. A number of philanthropic foundations have over the years evidenced a sympathetic interest in the problems of librarianship. It should not be unduly optimistic to anticipate a well-conceived research design in library administration using the talents of a range of behavioral and technical administrative disciplines. While it is abundantly clear that the answers to all the questions may not be expected to spring from one large-scale undertaking, it is equally clear that a forceful first-wave assault could be made by this means.

If, as has been suggested, programs in other fields have been fertilized by advances in the social sciences while library administration has remained insulated and isolated, perhaps an expedient for training in administration would result from exposing library students to such courses in other professional schools. This device would capitalize on the close geographical and intellectual

proximity to other professional schools which library schools enjoy. Perhaps an even more effective device would be to cross over into other disciplines and to bring their instructional personnel into the library school where they might offer the course or courses in administration. One important advantage would be to provide such instructors with a direct and conscious focus upon the library as the central institution of administrative concern. As a matter of fact, in such diverse fields as business, public administration, education, social service, law and medicine, personnel trained in such behavioral disciplines as sociology, anthropology, and psychology are being added to professional school faculties in increasing numbers. The use of these specialists introduces new orientations in teaching and provides a new stimulus to the study of administrative and organizational problems in these fields. It also makes possible the blending of behavioral concepts and techniques in planning for, and research in, these applied fields. Might the library field not profit by this type of exposure?

If there continues to be little or no basic research conducted in library schools, professional training programs will continue to be primarily technical or vocational. Exactly this criticism has often been lodged at the schools of business administration. The case could undoubtedly be made with equal vigor against library education. Unless there is more fundamental study and the subsequent understanding of basic issues which grows out of research study, there will continue to be little more to feed into the library curriculum than the limited contributions contained in the periodical literature.

If administration of libraries is to profit from developments in parallel fields, a need exists for comparative studies drawing contracts and comparisons between library administration and administration of other institutions. A model of this type is Paul Allen's recent study of educational and business administration.²⁰ Allen's observations point up corollary ideas for library administration: (1) There is a basic, universal process of administration applicable in the fields

²⁰ P. M. Allen, *The Administrative Process; A Comparative Study of Educational and Business Administration*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1956. 147pp. (Available in microfilm from University Microfilm, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 56-3750.)

of educational and business administration regardless of the type of enterprise to be administered, (2) the principles or integrants of the process of administration may be defined and delimited, (3) these integrants are consistent and tenable regardless of the area of administration, and (4) the obvious dissimilarities in educational and business administration are a result of structural or situational expediency and not a difference in the process of administration per se. Allen suggests further that training in both business and education places primary emphasis on technical subject matter and little or none on administration, and points to the need for further comparative studies where administration is of concern.

A host of comparative questions suggest themselves—how do the skills and characteristics of library administrators compare and differ from those of their counterparts in business, public, and educational administration; what criteria are used in selection of administrators; what are the avenues leading to administrative posts; what standards are there by which performance is measured in the different fields; what is the degree of mobility of the executive group; how does the formal and informal decision-making apparatus compare; what is the power structure of the library and how does it differ from, or compare with, other institutional types? These are but a sprinkling of unstudied and researchable comparative issues.

It is time to put to empirical test some of the classic doctrines, or perhaps, myths, and to hold up for examination such statements as "the professional equipment required by the college librarian is different from that required by the public librarian, the high school librarian, even the university librarian,"²¹ and "the motivations which bring people into shoe stores, markets, and libraries are not the same, and [that] the satisfactions of the mind and spirit, which are derived from books, make libraries akin to schools and churches."²²

To stimulate and direct research is a clear and proper function and responsibility of the professional school, for research and teaching should be inseparable if effective

practice and instruction are to result. This does not imply that only research and research-founded instruction is important. Technical courses are, of course, needed, but it is in some of the technical areas that research may aid understanding most. Without the transfer of ideas and theories from research to instruction, for most students library education will continue to be a far less stimulating exposure than it might or could be. What is needed is not more schools (in 1953 there were forty-five schools awarding graduate degrees with an average student body of sixty)²³ but schools peopled with faculties and advanced graduate students with the insights, skills, and motivation to improve the educational product.

Research in library administration is equally necessary at the applied level. This need was recognized and discussed as far back as 1939 by Joeckel.²⁴ The use of applied research as an active management tool in libraries, as it is in industry and government service, is still far too restricted. Several large libraries have experimented here. The Brooklyn Public Library, for example, has carried on a management improvement program for some time.²⁵ Where applied research has been used by large-scale organizations, the experience has proved many times over that economics are produced which more than offset the personnel costs.

Libraries are nothing more than organizations of people enlisted in a common objective. The larger the library, the more complex the organization and the consequent management problems. What is crucially needed is increased knowledge and understanding of how to accomplish objectives through people. There may well be important differences between books and groceries. But if administration in libraries hopes to rival the administration of supermarkets, there must be more than a better knowledge of books. There must be a more widespread understanding of the issues underlying the ways in which complex organizations, including libraries, function effectively.

²¹ W. M. Randall and Francis L. D. Goodrich, *Principles of College Library Administration*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936). Introduction.

²² Powell, *op. cit.*, 314.

²³ U. S. Office of Education, *Education for the Professions* (1955), pp. 128-129.

²⁴ Joeckel, *op. cit.*, Introduction.

²⁵ F. R. St. John, "Management Improvement in Libraries," *CRL*, XIV (1953), 174-177.