

Shortage of Books in Public Library Feature Of Expenditure Survey

The shortage of books in the public library is stressed in the ninth of the series on civic expenditures. Library appropriations of the past two decades are also compared.

By G. H. McPHERSON

Although its expenditures in 1934 were greater by \$19,438 than in 1913, the library can rightfully be placed in the same class as several

other civic departments which suffered from city council's desire to economize in the past decade and make a dollar stretch to its maximum.

By charter, the library is entitled to the equivalent of half a mill, but never in the history of Winnipeg has it ever received the full allowance. Its largest appropriation of \$81,584 was passed in 1930, when the mill was \$236.614.

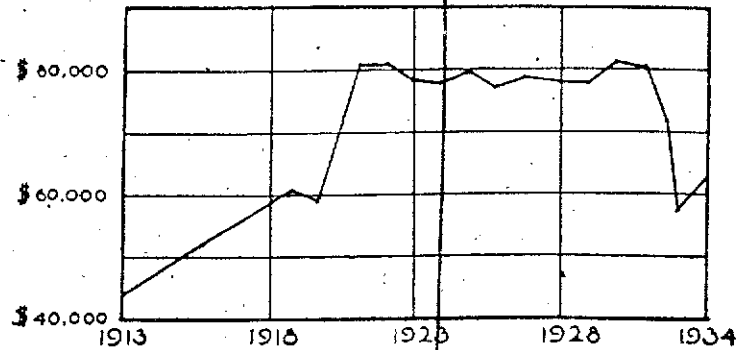
In 15 short years, lack of funds and the increasing circulation with resultant wear and tear on books, have combined to reduce the number of volumes in the library and its two branches from 134,700 to \$3,680. All this might seem rather unbelievable, but figures don't lie.

The increase in the book stock in 1934, after allowances for discards, was 2,910, of which 2,382 were donated by citizens in the health committee campaign. The net boost through purchases made by city funds was \$28.

The standard approved by the American Library association is one and a half volumes per capita. This would give the Winnipeg library 334,500 books, or more than four times as many as are on the shelves today. A. F. Jamieson, librarian, in his last annual report, stated the number of books is still far short of being adequate for a city of this size.

More than 50,000 persons are registered as borrowers, and 61,853 books are available for circulation, the remainder belonging to the reference department. If everyone of these people decided in any one week to take the two books to which they were entitled, there would not be enough to go around. Fortunately, such a situation has never confronted Mr. Jamieson or his staff, although the library shelves, at times, look very bare.

Turning to expenditures, an analysis will show the increase in library costs over 21 years has not kept pace with that of many other civic departments during the same period. In 1913, the expenditure on the library was \$43,265, of which



Library Expenditures

Little fluctuation is shown in library expenditures in the period, 1920 to 1930. Prior to 1915, the library spent less money because there were no branches or auxiliary services to tax the department's budget. Economies instituted by city council in 1932 and 1933 forced down the expenditures of practically all civic departments.

\$17,933 was for books and periodicals.

In 1930, the peak year for practically all departmental appropriations, the library spent \$81,584, although only \$18,000 of this amount was for books. Thereafter expenditures slumped to \$57,551 in 1933 and then rose to \$62,703 in 1934.

The 1913 appropriation was low in comparison with other years because there was only one library building at that time. In 1915 the city opened the St. John's and Cornish branches, which meant a heavier drain on the resources of the department, both in circulation and wear and tear of books.

Another comparison shows the library expenditures were 23.9 cents per capita in 1913, as against 38.9 in 1930 and 40.9 in 1921. Civic costs as a whole during this 21 year span were up more than 100 per cent.

The solution of the book shortage is to give the library more money. The average spent on books and periodicals over the past 16 years has been \$18,000. Obviously the council could give the department an additional \$10,000 without being accused of undue extravagance.

The dwindling shelves in recent years have set up a cry for a library board composed principally of independent citizens who could give more time to library matters than the aldermen. No doubt such a body would do creditable work, but how far would it get without more money?

Its success would depend, largely on its ability to extract a larger appropriation out of council, and if it failed the library would continue to give inadequate service in spite of brilliant ideas and possible innovations in administration.

by the growers has fallen to unprecedentedly low levels."

"No other canning company can secure containers from the largest company on a fair competitive basis.

"In view of the fact the two largest users of cans are tied up with the two largest suppliers of cans, it is difficult, if not impossible, for any smaller can manufacturing establishment to extend its business sufficiently to act as a competitive brake on the operations of the large can companies."

The commissioners are "satisfied there is some international control of competition" in tin-plate and that Welsh tin-plate interests prevented a free market and restricted Canadian Can manufacturers to a single source of supply.

"We feel also that the tariff should not be used in any way to facilitate such restriction," observed the commissioners.

"Whatever may be the exact causes of this situation in respect to tin-plate the implications are clear. At the one end there is a huge international arrangement to control prices, and maintain profits; at the other, thousands of growers of fruits and vegetables in this country, helpless in the face of these superimposed corporate organizations, the combined weight of which is crushing them to a level where they can make little or no return for long hours of arduous and productive labor."

The growers' share of prices received from Canadian Canners over a five-year period was 21 per cent. of the company's sales. In 1933, the year in which Canadian Canners paid the lowest price recorded for tomatoes, 25 cents a bushel, it also

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