

Winnipeggers Cannot Hold Library Books for Years-Vancouverite Did

Borrowers from the Winnipeg public library who show a disposition to keep books have as much chance of holding the volumes as a butterfly in the present cold snap. The much publicized Mounted Police are just a bunch of amateurs compared with the way the vigilantes of the library "get their books."

A. F. Jamieson, chief librarian of the Winnipeg public library, wondered, Friday morning, just how W. A. Tucker, internal audit clerk at Vancouver, managed to retain books from the library in that city for four years. Tucker was suspended by Mayor G. G. McGeer after it had been brought out during an inquiry that he had held books for that period without returning them.

"We would have phoned the mayor long ago if such a thing happened in Winnipeg," Mr. Jamieson smiled. "Anybody in Winnipeg who tries to hold books finds it pretty difficult."

Here is what happens when books are kept by tardy Winnipeg borrowers. After the books have been overdue two weeks a notice is sent out informing the guilty party of his or her omission and asking that they be returned. If this does not bring results they are phoned several times during the next four weeks, at the end of which time a letter goes out. The next month the book sleuths get down to real business. A messenger calls and demands the books. If, by this time, the borrower's resistance is not worn down, he or she gets a letter from the city solicitor's office. Should the party be ultra-determined to get away with the books and still decide to hold out against the library, his employers are notified of the situation and are asked to assist.

The library has another ace card to play, even after that. When a

party takes out books he has to supply the names of two references. These references are called by the library regarding his trustworthiness and if they turn thumbs down the party does not get library privileges. When books are not returned the library phones the references and asks them to see that the books are returned.

The final fly in the tardy borrower's ointment is the little matter of a fine. Overdue books are charged at the rate of two cents a day—and tolls mount as the weeks go by.

The man who does not bring back books is, figuratively speaking, a man without a country. He is "blacklisted" by the library and cannot borrow again.

About 50 Winnipeg citizens who have had books since last November are due to get solicitor's letters any day now. Many of them have moved and will be difficult to locate, but the library will do its best.

A bigger pest, Mr. Jamieson told the Free Press is the person who comes into the library and steals books. It is hard to check this menace and this evil is responsible for more lost books than the people who do not return them.

The two-cents-a-day fine might look small, Mr. Jamieson told a reporter—but the coppers have a habit of mounting up into four figures. The library gets approximately \$2,000 a year from this source, the figure for last year being \$1,808. At \$2 a book the library could, if it wanted to, purchase 904 books each year from this revenue.

