

# REGIONAL LIBRARY INTEREST CONTINUES TO SPREAD

*1. Vanguard. March 6/68.*  
A valuable and productive meeting of citizens and councillors who are interested in promoting a Regional Library for the three Western Nova Scotia counties was held recently in Yarmouth under the chairmanship of Mr. Fraser Mooney.

Miss Alberta Letts, Director of Libraries for the Province, was in attendance to explain the proposed budget and to answer many questions. As well as talking to people in Yarmouth, Miss Letts mentioned she had already spoken to a meeting in Shelburne and that the proposal had gone before Shelburne Municipal Council, and that next month she will speak to Shelburne and Lockport Town Councils, which are to consider Regional Library service. Also, in March she is to speak to interested people in Weymouth and in Digby.

Since the Province recently increased its grant for Regional Library service, the total amount paid to Councils has gone up \$1,000,000.

## BRANCH LIBRARIES

Miss Letts said that a Regional Library in southwestern Nova Scotia would have Branch Libraries in the towns and two bookmobiles to serve the remainder of the area. The central Regional Library offices and bookstock would be in the basement of the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Library here, which is set up to operate a Regional Library. It would employ a chief librarian trained in library science, with two assistants, two bookmobile drivers and two bookmobile librarians, and two clerk typists. There would also be local Branch librarians to serve in the Branch Libraries. If the Municipalities of Clare and Argyle come into the system one of the librarians would be

French or bilingual. The Branch Library for Yarmouth would be where our Library now is, in the Killam Memorial Library.

The first year a library is in operation as much of the budget as possible is spent on books. This would result in a greatly improved bookstock, as there would be more money available to spend on books (\$30,000 to \$45,000 as against the present book budget of \$1,000). A strong resource collection would be built up here.

## FOR SERIOUS STUDENTS

Regarding the service, anyone may request books from any other Libraries. Anyone in an area served by a Regional Library may use any Branch or any bookmobile. Halifax has lists of all the books in all the Libraries in the Province. For serious students books may also be obtained from the National Library in Ottawa, from London, England, from the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. If a book is requested in a hurry, and it is not available immediately from a Branch or a bookmobile, it will be located and mailed as soon as possible.

Councillor Huskison, who is the Chairman of the Town Council Regional Library committee, remarked that a Regional Library here would be a small industry for Yarmouth. For an investment of \$12,000 (shares for Yarmouth Town, Yarmouth and Argyle Municipalities) there would be a return in salaries, services and purchases of approximately \$60,000. Indeed, by paying the share of \$7,620, Yar-

mouthisans can have a service worth up to \$100,000 through co-operation with other Councils and with the grants from the Province.

## SPECIAL SERVICES

Regarding a question as to whether hospitals and other institutions would be served by a bookmobile, Miss Letts said this varies from place to place and must be decided by the Library Board. Special services have to be investigated in each community. In the city of Halifax one of the service clubs has recently started a door-to-door service for shut-ins. There are special services to schools either by special hours at a Branch if it is close to a school or by the bookmobile.

When asked if the Federal Government makes any grant where a Regional Library serves a branch of the armed forces, Miss Letts said it is difficult to get the Federal Government to commit funds for such projects.

## SCHOOL CHILDREN

It was mentioned that teachers complain now that children are not studying enough; if they had all these books to read would this not cut further into their study time? Miss Letts said that this question is frequently asked before Library service is established. It is never heard afterwards. In fact the level of general knowledge and information is far greater where library service is available, and the children do better in their school work. The teachers themselves send the children to the bookmobile of a Branch, and they use these books

in addition to their school books. Things change so rapidly that often a teacher cannot get a good text book on a subject, and the Library is able to provide a good up-to-date book.

## MOST ARE INTERESTED

It seems difficult to get all the Councils to agree to accept the Service at the same time. Miss Letts felt that if half the Councils would agree, the Service could be started and the others would come in as they are able. The cost is higher for a smaller number of people, but with fewer Councils the Service would be limited somewhat in the beginning. Most of

the Councils are interested now, as are Mahone Bay, Bridgewater and Liverpool.

When questioned as to who should be chosen to speak to Councils, Miss Letts said she will go with and in support of any local group to answer questions, but the local taxpayers should really be the people to speak to their Councilors.

## WAIT AND SEE

It seems now that all the Councils are waiting to see what the other Councils will do, and leadership of one strong Council is needed to get the project rolling.

A decision was reached to ask Miss Letts to come to Yarmouth again in the late spring to meet with the Mayors, Wardens and Councilors of the three Western Counties when they meet to arrange resolutions to present to the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, and thus to contact at one time all those principally concerned with approving Regional Library Service for the citizens of southwestern Nova Scotia.

V. Soilows, Sect'y,  
Regional Library Committee

## Discussion Regional Library Meeting Proved Useful

Miss Alberta Letts was in Yarmouth for the meeting of the Town Committee with other Committees when the Regional Library was discussed. Miss Letts, who is Director of Libraries for Nova Scotia, writes that the meeting proved useful. In her talk she used the material which had appeared in the Yarmouth papers.

Now the Halifax Chronicle-Herald, in an editorial in its February 29 issue, speaks of "Renewed interest . . . being shown in Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne counties which logically could form another unit" of Regional Libraries. This appears in the article describing the opening of the new Regional Library for the Colchester East-Hants unit, an "example (to) inspire citizens of those areas still without regional library service to work harder to bring this useful programme to their districts."