

## In Aid of College Libraries

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THE NAME of Andrew Carnegie is firmly and securely joined in the public mind with libraries. That of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, established in 1911, is perhaps no less closely associated with libraries and librarians, despite manifold activities in other lines. Mr. Carnegie's practice of giving library buildings was for a while continued by the corporation after his death, and not a few colleges and communities owe their library structures to the generosity of one or the other. Of late years the library benefactions—may one call them investments?—of the Carnegie Corporation have been devoted to the improvement of professional training for librarianship, to aiding in the work of the extension and improvement of libraries throughout the country; in general, the aim seems to have been to raise standards of library work and professional morale, rather than to bestow grants on individual libraries either for buildings or books. But it has not escaped the notice of librarians that many grants made by the corporation included a generous provision of books; witness the collections of books on the Fine Arts, given to scores of colleges during the past five years.

In 1928 the president of the corporation recommended to his trustees that they embark on a policy of helping colleges with gifts of suitable books for their libraries. To Doctor Keppelel this meant, one may assume, something more than merely voting certain sums of money. Rather, he saw in the prospect of these grants a means of checking the status of many college libraries, of furnishing at least some minimum standards for judging them, and of stimulating all colleges to think carefully and profitably about their library service. To that end he organized an "Advisory Group" on College Libraries, which has now had several meetings.

This Advisory Group consists of two elements, college executives and librarians, i.e., four college presidents, Aydelotte of Swarthmore, Glass of Sweet Briar, Lewis of Lafayette, and Wilkins of Oberlin; Dean Gildersleeve of Barnard, and Doctor Kelly, Permanent Secretary of the Association of American Colleges. The librarians are Keogh of Yale, Bishop of Michigan, and Milam, Secretary of the A. L. A. Mr. R. M. Lester, Assistant to the President of the Carnegie Corporation, is Secretary of the Group, and Mr. Bishop is Chairman. Professor Amy Reed of Vassar

and Dean Hawkes of Columbia were originally members of the group, but have felt obliged to retire because of other calls upon their time.

At the outset the Advisory Group was told that it should address itself solely to the problems presented by libraries of liberal arts colleges having a four-year course. This at once excluded university libraries and junior college libraries as well as those of professional schools of law, medicine, theology, education, and specialized schools. This definite limitation has great advantages. It not only confines the field of study to a certain type of institution of higher education, but, more, it furnishes a group clearly defined, reasonably homogeneous, offering points of similarity which admit not only comparisons on an equitable basis, but some fairly positive and reasonable statements of underlying principles which apply to the group as a whole. In other words, selection on a fair basis, applicable to practically all this group of colleges, is possible, while one may postulate certain minimum standards of college library service without doing substantial injustice to any considerable number of American colleges.

The first work of the Advisory Group was to determine what information was needed in order to act on a request for a grant in aid of a college library. The group drew up a tentative schedule of points on which it would require data. These preliminary studies were submitted to some colleges whose requests for aid were already on file, and a few others were asked to fill out the questionnaire. From the replies it at once became evident that the questions must be made more definite and that some must be added. The completed form is printed at the end of this article. Over 150 colleges have now submitted answers to these questions, and these answers are being condensed, tabulated, and reduced to common terms so far as possible. The Advisory Group is in process of gathering a very considerable mass of statistics about college libraries, statistics which have never before been available. The American Library Association Committee on Library Revenues, for example, has sought just this information for some years.

The group is anxious, however, to go behind the returns, and to discover the real attitude of the colleges toward their libraries as evidenced by the way in which they are supported with funds, administered by their officers, and used