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Carnegie School of Atlanta

Each library will naturally consider Dr. Williamson’s report in terms of its own environment and in relation to the conditions which each must meet in its own “sphere of influence.”

Altogether everyone will agree that there should be differentiation between the professional and the clerical worker and to a greater extent than prevails at present, if Dr. Williamson’s measuring stick for what constitutes both a professional librarian and professional work were absolutely applied, the result would be that many libraries would have to go without any form of trained service, for the type of work would not hold the professional librarian as described and yet the work could not be performed by the clerical worker. In analyzing the positions that this school has been called on to fill in the past nine months, I should say that one-fifth of the number would appeal to those who could qualify as professional librarians under the definition as given in this report, and yet the other four-fifths required persons with technical training in library methods, organization and practice, with training in a knowledge and use of books, with a professional outlook and vision that would enable them to see their relatively small piece of work as part of the larger whole of library service, and with a sense of responsibility for the effectiveness of their contribution to the progress of library development.

The table showing maximum capacity and registration in 1920-21 would probably read very differently for all schools in 1923-1924. This school graduated eighteen students in 1923 and has an enrolment of eighteen for the session 1923-1924. The school estimates a maximum capacity of twenty-five based on class room space. However, at the present time, it has neither equipment nor instructional staff for the maximum.

From Dr. Williamson’s report each school will no doubt be able to draw conclusions relating to it individually which will result in desirable modifications in curriculum, etc., looking toward an elevation of standards all along the line. Whether or not one sees eye to eye with the writer in his conclusions, none would underestimate the importance of the report in setting forth an ideal to be attained and its value in bringing together so complete a body of fact relating to library schools. Apparently library schools are sailing an uncharted course. It is to be hoped that with this report as a starting point the Temporary Training Board of the A. L. A. will be able to work out such sailing directions as will enable library schools to attain a perfection of product as unquestioned as that which seems to be enjoyed by degree conferring institutions.

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Dr. Williamson’s long awaited report can not fail in its mission to provoke careful stock taking and self-examination on the part of all of us who are in any way responsible for the training of librarians. We may not wholly agree with him in every detail but we must admit that many of his charges have come home and have given us food for thought.

In 1921 when Dr. Williamson made his investigation, the Carnegie Library School had an enrollment of twenty-seven, which was about fifty-three per cent of its maximum capacity. This low percentage was due to the fact that the capacity had been doubled in 1917 just at the beginning of the war and very shortly before the period when schools of all types had a decrease in enrollment. Previous to 1917, the registration was practically at capacity. Since 1920 the registration has been steadily increasing until now we have a class of forty-three who are receiving professional training in the Library School. In addition to this a class of eleven high school graduates are receiving under