EDUCATIONAL development in Georgia cannot be complete until free public library service is provided for all citizens on the same basis as our free public schools. Schools can only give the tools of knowledge, and the desire to use them to our coming citizens. The formal education of children and young people from six to eighteen free public schools is provided, boys and girls stay in school until they graduate, and four more years of college education for the fortunate few, is not sufficient to insure an educated citizenry and a voting population in the United States of sufficient intelligence to solve the problems facing the nation today. There must be a continuation of education all through life before our ideal of citizenship is realized and the free public library must provide this opportunity for continuing education at whatever point the individual's formal schooling may have stopped, be it at the fourth grade or with a college diploma in hand. Today the public library is playing an increasingly important part in adult education as well as providing a sound leisure time occupation, to young and old, so much services should be made available to all the people of Georgia on the same basis to insure that equalization of opportunity toward which the educational forces of the state are working.

Legal provisions for the support of municipal libraries in cities and towns was made in 1901 by the passage of the public library law. In 1935 a similar law authorizing the support of libraries for county taxes for county and regional libraries was passed. However our towns and counties have not taken advantage of these laws as they should. Only forty-nine towns and cities in the state maintain public libraries, supported from municipal funds and none of these libraries are given enough money to make it possible for them to give adequate service. The standard for library support set by the American Library Association is $1.00 per capita; no library in Georgia gets this much. Fifty cents per capita has been accepted as a minimum amount of support for county libraries in the South taking into consideration the Negro population with a large percentage of illiteracy, but none of the sixteen libraries giving countywide service get sufficient funds from all sources to meet this standard, the highest being Atlanta with thirty-seven cents per capita.

WPA Stimulates Development

During the past year a great stimulus to library development in Georgia has come through the Works Progress Administration, in promoting one of its activities, a state-wide library project in cooperation with the State Library Commission. Five trained librarians are employed by WPA as district library supervisors, each one traveling over a certain part of the state to promote, direct and supervise the work of local persons on relief, who are given employment in already established libraries to increase and extend the services of these libraries in various ways, or to start new libraries in counties which have no public libraries within their borders. Several hundred WPA workers and NYA workers are now employed on one hundred and twenty-five such "library projects" operating in ninety-seven counties. The constant presence of these trained library supervisors in these rural sections, talking libraries all the time before Women's Clubs, Parent-Teacher Associations, Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, Chambers of Commerce as well as local and county Boards of Education, County Commissioners, City Councils and other officials has been the means of spreading the gospel of free public library service over wide areas of the state for the first time in its history and results are gratifying indeed. Some of the library projects are very small, all are greatly limited in quality and quantity of books, but we look upon these projects as demonstrations of free library service on a very simple scale and hope for permanent results of a more substantial nature in the way of necessary financial support from local sources, when the WPA aid ceases. A very small amount of local support is necessary for any community to have a "library project" and this has been forthcoming largely from public funds, which is encouraging for we must get away from the old-fashioned idea that libraries can or should be supported by women's clubs giving rummage sales or pink teas to raise a little money now and then for the library.

State Library Commission

In 1920 the state legislature provided a small appropriation to finance a State Library Commission, which had been created in 1897 but without appropriation, to provide trained library leadership in the state for the promotion and development of local libraries and also to give limited book service by mail to persons without access to public libraries as well as to supplement the book collections of the smaller libraries.

During the seventeen years that the State Library Commission has been functioning books have been sent into every county in the state to individuals in need of information on some special subject and to schools, clubs, libraries and organizations of all kinds to provide reading matter for these rural people. A book collection of twenty-one thousand volumes has been accumulated and in 1936 60,824 volumes went out from the State Capitol in answer to 12,786 requests for book loans.

At the recent Legislative session, a substantial increase in appropriation was voted with which to buy new books, so we shall look forward to greatly increased services during the next biennium.

The first survey of library resources made by the Library Commission in 1920 showed 30 libraries functioning in 29 counties, 25 of which were giving free services. Records as of March 1, 1937 show only 54 counties now left in the state in which some gesture of free library service has not been made, through expansion of these libraries, starting new libraries during these years and most recently by means of the WPA library projects.

School Libraries Grow

Libraries in high schools and colleges have developed much more rapidly and have reached a higher standard of efficiency than the public libraries. This is largely due to the standards for libraries in the institution set up by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and put into effect last year. These standards require certain qualifications and training for the librarians in charge of such libraries, and as a result practically all of the colleges in the state and a large majority of the high schools now have qualified librarians.

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LIBRARY PROGRESS

(Continued from Page 68)

rarians with degrees in library science or the necessary amount of professional library training.

A law providing for the certification of librarians of public libraries and of the state institutions has just been enacted by the 1937 Legislature, so when this law begins to function we shall look forward to a decided improvement in the personnel of librarians and likewise to improvement in the services rendered, as standards will be set up for librarians, holding positions in these libraries, and in the future, only librarians with certain educational qualifications and professional library training will be eligible to receive certificates and fill vacancies in these libraries.

In May 1936 the first Citizen's Library Conference in Georgia was held at the University of Georgia, upon invitation of President Harmon Caldwell, in cooperation with the Georgia Library Association. The purpose of this conference was to arouse public interest in libraries and to inform the citizens of the state about present library conditions. About one hundred persons attended this conference and a day was spent in formal and informal discussion. Those present expressed a keen interest in the library situation and proposed to make the Athens conference an annual affair. A similar conference was held in Waycross in December, 1936 attended by about fifty citizens from the southeastern part of the state and a third conference in Vienna is planned for the near future.

Plan For Development

During 1935 a committee from the Georgia Library Association drew up a plan for library development in Georgia which was officially adopted at the biennial meeting of the Association in Columbus in the fall of that year and committees appointed to put the plan into operation. This plan provides a systematic and well thought out program of library development for the state as a whole, taking into consideration present conditions and needs in all fields of service, public, high school, and college libraries, state library departments and unserved groups and areas, as well as qualifications and standards of professional training for librarians and indicates the most economical and efficient library units for covering the entire state. This plan has been put into print in pamphlet form for free distribution and may be procured from the Georgia Library Commission, State Capitol, Atlanta.

Librarians in the state are confident that when the people at large realize the need for more adequate libraries to serve the entire population, and not just a small percent of it, as at present, and present these needs to appropriating bodies, funds will be provided to set up and maintain a system of county and regional libraries, to reach all parts of the state with free books, conveyed by means of book trucks, branch libraries and stations, so that boys and girls, and men and women wherever they may live, may have access to free library service, which is no longer looked upon as something of a luxury just for city people, but a necessity in order to live the more abundant life which everyone is seeking nowadays.

In financing such library service it is not unreasonable to expect the state to do its part in this as is rapidly being done for other public service of a state wide nature, and we may even look forward to federal aid as a means of equalizing library opportunity since the states vary so much in wealth, resources and population.