TRAINING FOR LIBRARY SERVICE IN SWEDEN

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[Possession of a higher University Degree is necessary for appointment to the higher posts of large State, Public and University Libraries. Professional training for these as well as the posts of Library Assistant is got by probationary service. The Royal Library gives a three months' training and holds examinations to prepare candidates for service in special libraries. A four-week training course in documentation is also given at the Royal Institute of Technology once in a year. For service in Public Libraries, training is given by the State School of Librarianship; period six months at present; likely to become one academic year. A Continuation Course of about two months on specialized topics in Library Science is also periodically given jointly for Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. The Stockholm City Library has got its own training school and examination for its staff. Short Correspondence Courses are also given to part-time workers in small local and study-circle libraries.]

1 University and Research Libraries

As far as the Swedish University and research libraries are concerned, centralized and uniform training of personnel exists only on a very limited scale. Upto the present time no definite qualifications have been fixed except in the case of the higher posts of the largest State libraries and the City and University Library of Gothenburg.

11 General Libraries

111 Assistant Librarian

For appointment as an assistant librarian at the Royal Library in Stockholm, the university libraries at Uppsala and Lund and the City and University Library of Gothenburg, a candidate is required—in addition to possessing a knowledge of German, English, French and Latin corresponding to the requirements for the higher school certificate (Swed. student-examen)—to have passed a higher academic examination (licentiatexamen) in one of the four faculties of the Universities, or alternatively to have obtained a first degree in the faculty of philosophy, either filosofie kandidat-examen or filosofisk

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ambetesxamen, (the nearest equivalent in Great Britain is the B.A. examination), and to have passed a similar examination in another faculty. (The second alternative has, however, practically gone out of use and a proposal for its abolition has been put forward). In addition to this, a candidate for a post of this kind must have done at least three months' probationary service in a general research library and have demonstrated his or her suitability for library work. The basic training in librarianship is thus acquired by probationary service under the guidance of the staff of the library.

112 Library Assistant

As regards library assistant and junior staff, although no fixed qualifications have been laid down, it is now generally the practice to engage only persons possessing the higher school certificate and possibly a first degree. As a rule no probationary service or only a short period of such service (from four to six weeks) is required. Thus the specialized training is done in the course of practical library service.

12 Special Libraries

The special libraries in Sweden vary greatly as regards size, organization and tasks, and consequently there is much variation in staff conditions and required qualifications.

121 The Past

The regulations regarding qualifications which apply to the staff of the large general libraries are not adopted in their entirety in the case of this category except at the Library of the Riksdag (Parliament), the Library of the Royal Caroline Medico-Chrurgical Institute and the libraries of the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and the Chalmers Institute of Technology in Gothenburg. Although at the two latter libraries a higher engineering degree may be accepted instead of the licentiatexamen as a requirement for the higher posts, this alternative has so far not come into uses; this is undoubtedly due, at least in part, to the relatively low salary scales for librarians.

In the case of the other special libraries no uniform solution of the problem of qualifications is applied. In practice, however,
the principal posts in the larger special libraries are occupied by persons who have a higher degree and have in most cases acquired practical experience of library work by serving for some time at some of the great general university and research libraries, while the required qualifications for other posts are placed at a lower level.

121 Present Tendency
The greatly increased activity that has in recent times occurred in many of the fields of knowledge for which specialized libraries exist in Sweden has made it increasingly difficult to ensure the necessary supply of new staff, especially for the smaller libraries where the employees are so few that it is difficult for them to find time to look after trainees. As a result of representations made by the Sveriges vetenskapliga specialbiblioteks forening (the Swedish Society of Special Research Libraries) to the Government, the Royal Library, which is the national library of Sweden, has since 1946 arranged a number of courses in elementary library practice. These have been available to candidates possessing the higher school certificate. The instruction, which in each case has lasted for three months and has been undertaken mainly by the staff of the Royal Library, has comprised primarily practical work in various kinds of library activities, partly in combination with lectures on, for example, bibliographies and reference books. At the end of the courses there have been oral examinations and written tests in the most important subjects, after which the participants have had to practise in a special library for another month before being allowed to apply for appointment.

122 Training in Documentation
The need of centralized training has made itself strongly felt also in the increasingly large and important group constituted by industrial and business libraries. On the initiative of the Tekniska Litteratursällskapet (the Swedish Society for Technical Documentation) a four-week course was held in 1949 at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm for the further training of librarians employed at industrial enterprises and at Government offices and institutions concerned with technical matters. Shorter training courses for assistants in industrial and special technical libraries
were held in Stockholm in 1952 and 1953 and will probably be held annually in the future. In these courses the main emphasis was naturally placed on subjects of special interest in libraries of this kind, particularly all forms of technical documentation.

2 State County Libraries

The heads of the State County Libraries (Swed. landsbibliotek), which are concerned both with research and with the adult education movement and which may thus be said to occupy a position midway between research libraries and public libraries must possess the same formal qualifications as are required from assistant librarians at the Royal Library and the university libraries, and must also have an intimate knowledge of public library work.

3 Public Libraries

31 Professional Library Work

The theoretical basis for the training of the public library staff is a first academic degree, generally filosofie kandidatexamen or filosofisk ambetsexamen (see above). This is followed by practical instructions as a trainee at one of the larger municipal libraries. This training lasts for half a year and is followed by at least six months further work in the library. In 1946 the library advisers of the Royal Board of Education laid down standard regulations for the organization of this training with the object of creating uniform conditions at the various libraries which accept library trainees.

32 Theoretical Instruction

The final theoretical instruction is then given at the Statensbibliotakskskola (the State School of Librarianship) which is managed by the library advisers of the Royal Board of Education. This school has been training librarians since 1926, the courses usually being held every other year. The instruction is given chiefly by teachers appointed from among the staffs of the Stockholm libraries. At present, the courses of this school last for six months, but there is a proposal to extend the period to a full academic year (nine months). The school gives instruction in various subjects
connected with library history and library technique, practical exercises in library administration, etc. are also being held. Thus it takes about six years of studies after the higher school certificate (Studentexamen) before a person can be a fullfledged library assistant. The certificate of the State School of Librarianship also qualifies the holder for a post as chief librarian.

33 Continuation Course

It has long been felt as a defect of Swedish education for public librarianship that there has been no training for higher qualifications or for special public librarianship. To meet this disadvantage the Government library authorities in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have arranged joint continuation courses—Copenhagen 1949, Stockholm 1952—where the principal problems in modern public librarianship were treated in lectures and discussions. In 1949 a similar joint course in hospital librarianship was arranged in Denmark. In 1948 a course of two months was held in Stockholm when attention was focussed on problems concerning library work among children and young people. Mention should also be made of the shorter national courses that have been arranged in connection with the annual meetings of the Sveriges allmanna biblioteksforening (the Swedish Library Association) when problems of joint interest for librarians as well as for other professions (e.g., teachers, adult education officers, etc.) have been treated.

34 Stockholm City Library

In the Stockholm City Library, by far the largest public library in Sweden, the work is of course substantially different from that in most other public libraries of the country, and so this library has found it desirable to arrange its own scheme of professional training for its staff, modelled on the training schemes of certain other large libraries, especially in the U.S.A. At the Stockholm City Library the examination for the grade of library assistant is generally passed three years after the higher school certificate. Instruction is given in the form of lectures and practical exercises in the following subjects: cataloguing, bibliography, reference work, literature, administration, library history, adult education and school
libraries. The teachers are chiefly drawn from among the staff of the Stockholm City Library. A higher examination, for the grade of librarian, may be taken by persons who have received basic training, after a further period of study of three years.

4 Training for Part-Time Library Work

The numerous small public libraries as well as the study-circle libraries in the country districts are generally in charge of people who undertake responsibility for the libraries in their leisure time, often with very little remuneration. In order to acquaint them with the library work and to give a certain amount of elementary training there are special arrangements for providing instruction by correspondence and by periodical two-weeks courses, arranged by the library advisers of the Royal Board of Education. The instruction given aims principally at increasing the student's knowledge of books and introducing him or her to the elements of library administration. After instruction, these part-time librarians are also given the opportunity to study the practical details of library work at the larger municipal libraries. The central (county) libraries (Swed centralbibliotek), too, devote some attention to this instruction in connection with their annual county conferences; here details of library routine are often discussed in groups, the study-circle method being applied.

At last, it ought to be mentioned that the whole question of education for librarianship is just now very much debated in Sweden, various proposals as to the future model having been offered.

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