

CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE SUGGESTS APPRAISAL OF ALL BOOKS BEFORE PURCHASING

Board Hears Report On Library Affairs

3-2-1950

The city library board, meeting Wednesday night to hear a committee report on complaints relative to the operation of the library, was given several suggestions by the committee members and then adjourned to meet again in the future for further probing into the matter.

The citizens committee, recently appointed by the city commissioners and headed by Mrs. C. S. Warren, presented a written memorandum on suggestions.

PRINCIPAL SUGGESTION was that the board, with the cooperation of the committee, make a book appraisal of the recently purchased library books, and that in the future such book appraisal be referred to before purchases are made.

The committee further suggested the board hold open meetings at more frequent intervals than has been the custom in the past. The time and place of such meetings should be announced in advance, the committee believes.

Board members suggested that going over the list of purchases of 1949 would be too great a task, but the suggestion of appraisals of future purchases appeared to be looked upon with favor by the board members.

Considerable discussion, pro and con, was held relative to the alleged subversive material contained in at least two periodicals which have been and are used in the library, including "Russia Today" and one other. One or two speakers referred to one or more of the periodicals as being propaganda mediums.

Russell Davis, chairman of the library board who presided at the meeting, said it would be impossible for the members to evaluate the suggestions and arrive at any definite conclusions without further study.

Dick Kane, another board member, gave the meeting a brief outline of the duties, powers and responsibilities of the board.

DARLENE ESSARY, newest of the board members, expressed gratitude to the committee and other citizens for having taken an interest in the affairs of the library and thanked them for their efforts.

Other board members present were George N. Cade, Mrs. W. H. Freiburger and Mrs. C. E. Beecher.

Citizens committee members are Mrs. Warren, Mrs. J. M. Ribble, Mrs. M. J. Kirwan, Mrs. Frank Sissons, Mrs. George Wills, Mrs. Bessie Smyser and W. G. McGinley.

City librarian Ruth Brown attended the meeting.

The statement presented by the committee to the board is as follows:

"This committee has held two meetings since its appointment by Mayor Hudson, and has outlined a tentative program upon which the opinion of the library board is sought.

Before embarking upon any course of action, it would be well to procure and study the ordinance, or section of the city charter governing the functions of the library board.

"The qualifications required for membership on the board, what procedure is adopted for selection of the personnel of the board, and what is the length of the term of office, we believe to be relevant information.

"IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, we would like to suggest that the library board, with the cooperation of this committee make a book appraisal of the recently purchased library books, and that in the future such book appraisal be referred to before purchases are made.

"Since the library is the property of the public, and is main-

tained in the public interest, it would seem advisable that the library board hold open meetings at more frequent intervals than has been the custom in the past. The time and place of these meetings should be announced in advance.

"It is the sincere hope of the members of this committee, that it will not be looked upon by the board members as a complaint department to be shunned or rebuffed. We are seeking only the most friendly relations with the board members, and we hope to co-operate in the continued expansion of the library as a means of serving the public.

"Unfortunately, due to current tensions, personal criticisms have been made. If there is any justification for these criticisms we believe it is the duty of the board to ascertain upon what basis these criticisms were made. This committee seeks to function, solely in the public interest,

and to insure the people of this city the best possible literary coverage for the tax money spent.

"If it would not be too great an imposition upon the librarian, we would like to have a list of the books purchased during 1949, with the names of the authors, the publishing house, and the price of the books. It would simplify our appraisal, if the books were listed under the classifications in which they are catalogued.

"Only in this way will it be possible to discern the approximate apportionment of funds in various fields of literature.

"We hope that the above will be accepted as constructive suggestions, and not as criticisms. We further hope that we may meet again with the board, as willing and co-operative citizens, and that any feelings of antagonism that may have been engendered through inadvertent statements by us, or by the board members, will be relegated to the forgotten past. Unless this relationship can be established and maintained, no progress may be hoped for now, or in the future."