

MEMORANDUM ON PROPOSED TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS OF
THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY

For Presentation to the Governor and Committee on Reorganization, February 17, 1938.

By Howard F. Ohm, Chief, Legislative Reference Library.

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As a result of the transfer of two of the three principal functions of the Free Library Commission (the proposed transfer of the Library School and Traveling Library functions to the University having been approved), the only remaining function under the Free Library Commission is the Legislative Reference Library. This presented the question of the advisability of continuing the Free Library Commission as a separate agency with supervision only of the Legislative Reference Library.

In considering a plan of integrating all capitol library services in a central library agency, consideration was narrowed down to one of two possible plans: either transferring the State Library functions to the Free Library Commission with resulting abolition of the trustees of the State Library, or transferring the Legislative Reference Library functions to the trustees of the State Library with resulting abolition of the Free Library Commission.

The latter alternative was adopted at a conference of the trustees, Mr. Glasier, and myself. I have accepted it not because I believe it is an adequate or the most desirable arrangement for an integrating plan, but because, in my judgment, it is probably the most feasible plan available at this time.

The Legislative Reference Library in reality is not a library as that term is understood. It is essentially a reference, research, and

bill drafting service. As conceived and developed in Wisconsin, the Legislative Reference Library is a service primarily for members of the legislature. That important fact must, of course, be taken into consideration in working out a plan of integration. An adequate plan can and should be worked out for presentation to the next session of the legislature. In the meantime it is our understanding that the functions and services of the Legislative Reference Library are to continue unimpaired.