

# Personally Speaking

## HUNGRY BOYS

There were thousands of hungry boys at the Jamboree, and nothing could be done about it. Just a minute, my Quartermaster friends — it wasn't more food they wanted. *It was books!* This unexpected hunger came to light in the Exhibit tent, where, among other boy-interesting exhibits, there was a display of Scout books — Merit Badge booklets and manuals on different phases of Scouting. Boys crowded around that display in a solid pack, all day long, every day, and nine out of ten of them had one question: "Where can I get these books?"

To the answer, "You can get those in your own town, at your Scout distributor's or the book store, or in your Council office" they came back, a little puzzled; "Our stores don't carry these, and the Council office is in \_\_\_\_\_, sixty miles from our town. This is the first time I ever saw those Merit Badge books. Boy, they're wonderful!"

After you try to answer that question a few hundred times, you feel the urge to do something about the problem. Because you hate to see boys going hungry. There are some simple answers to the problem, successfully used in many places, but apparently not where these boys came from.

For example, it isn't hard to get the local public library to put in a special shelf of Scout books, including the Merit Badge series. This is a good project for your District Advancement Committee to take on, because the availability of Merit Badge pamphlets and research books has a lot to do with advancement. If the library is working on too small a budget, that shelf can be "endowed" by some public spirited citizen.

There is another solution that gets even closer to the boy — a Unit library. This, too, is common practice — but thousands of Jamboree Scouts said their Troops didn't have one. There is no better way to use Troop funds than to have available books which are packed with ideas. Such a library can be self-supporting by using the rental plan. I have known Troops that charge five cents a rental for Merit Badge pamphlets and the boy who "rented" the pamphlet the fifth time was allowed to keep it, and the twenty-five cents was used to buy a new copy for the Troop library. That kept the Troop supplied, and added to the Scouts' libraries, too.

The Troop Librarian badge should be proudly worn by a capable Junior leader, because it's a very important position. The Unit library can be a source of enrichment for the Unit program and for the Scouting experience of every boy. There is really no reason for boys to "go hungry" in Scouting.

  
Managing Editor

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Two United Nations Scouts, two Canadians and two members of our own BSA get together at the Jamboree. (Photo by Philadelphia Inquirer)



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