



# Personnel

## PERSONNEL and Staffing Problems and the Causes Thereof.

### *The British Museum*

Since the war there have been considerable developments in the more careful grading of library work and in the recruitment and organization of staff in relation to this grading. The British Museum is part of the British Civil Service, and its staff is graded accordingly. This results in certain anomalies, but these anomalies are gradually being removed as the Museum's experience of dealing with the new grades increases. The advantages to the staff of assimilation to general Civil Service grades is that pay and conditions of service can be maintained at a satisfactory level.

The grades employed in the Department of Printed Books of the British Museum are as follows:

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Principal Keeper           | Executive Officers          |
| Keepers                    | Clerical Officers           |
| Deputy Keepers             | Library Assistants Grade I  |
| Assistant Keepers Grade I  | Library Assistants Grade II |
| Assistant Keepers Grade II | Paper Keepers Grade I       |
|                            | Paper Keepers Grade II      |
|                            | Messengers                  |

The administration of the department is in the hands of the principal keeper, assisted by two keepers; sections of the work are controlled by deputy keepers, or, in certain cases, senior assistant keepers; the purchase, cataloging and classification and subject indexing of foreign publications is in the hands of assistant keepers, who also provide controlling staffs in the Reading Rooms and some of the divisions; the cataloging of current English books, and the manning of the Inquiry Desk in the Reading Room is in the hands of the executive grade; the service of books to the readers is in the hands of clerical officers and library assistants; routine operations, such as

stamping the books, are carried on by paper keepers. It must be emphasized that this is not a complete categorization of the duties of the various grades but it indicates broadly the tasks on which they are engaged.

*The National Library of Wales*

The Library has been seriously understaffed for some years. Her Majesty's Treasury, however, relaxed its regulations to the extent of allowing the appointment of three new Cataloging Assistants, with the promise of two more next year. This will ease the situation, but it is far from being a complete solution to the problem. The very substantial annual intake of material in the form of donations, deposits, and accessions under the Copyright Act (not to mention arrears in scheduling and cataloging) makes a further increase in staff indispensable to the proper functioning of the Library.

*Bibliothèque Nationale, France*

Personnel problems have been paramount. The Library is greatly understaffed especially among the library assistants and service groups, and good personnel is difficult to find.

The new statutes establishing the scales for government workers are generally satisfactory except for two groups. The first are those in service categories. The others are the conservateur levels. These, formerly, along with similar staff in the archives, at parity with the teaching staffs of universities, have been reduced.

Major steps have been taken to develop more adequate training for general and special librarians. For many years the official qualification for librarians was the Diplome Technique de Bibliothécaire.

Preparation for the DTB as given at the École des Chartes was anything but satisfactory from the librarians' point of view. The technique and history of the manuscript and book was still heavily emphasized in the three-year curriculum to the almost complete neglect of such modern library subjects as cataloging, classification, and reader psychology. The École des Chartes remained primarily and ineradicably a school for archivists-paleographers. . . .

After the war, and before the reform came into effect, the Direction des Bibliothèques sought to make the program leading to the DTB more closely correspond to the realities of public librarianship, organizing supplementary lectures, introducing practical work, and sponsoring library visits.

The long-awaited reform finally became fact on July 29, 1950, when a ministerial order instituted the "Diplome Supérieur de Bibliothécaire"

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(hereafter referred to as the DSB). The order profoundly changed French library education and the means of access to positions in libraries under the Direction des Bibliothèques.

Candidates wishing to take the examination for the DSB are not bound by age or nationality restrictions. They must, however, possess one of several certificates representing one or more years of higher education. This requirement sets the DSB far above the DTB, for which only the baccalauréat, or an equivalent diploma, was necessary.

The course of studies leading to the DSB is organized under the authority of the director of the Direction des Bibliothèques. He is assisted by a consultative committee made up of other prominent librarians and scholars from the Paris area. . . .

The DSB is a prerequisite for state library positions, with some exceptions, but does not of itself guarantee a position. Recruiting for libraries is accomplished by means of annual competitive examinations. The age limit is thirty-five years, except that candidates with previous service may be considered up to the age of forty. Candidates must have a university degree, at least equivalent to that of the license d'enseignement, as well as the DSB. However, five years service may be substituted for both the DSB and the university degree. . . .

The DSB program was devised to provide professional librarians of high caliber for both research and large public libraries. But the problem of creating a pool of competent technicians, if not professional librarians, for the small libraries, especially the unclassified municipal libraries, was also critical. A ministerial order of November 19, 1948, required mayors to pay a given minimum to any "certified librarian," now those with the DSB, or the old DTB, named to a library post. The not unexpected result in cities where mayors were not bound by law to hire state-certified personnel was a conscientious search for anyone but "certified librarians," who carried so high a price tag.

In order to provide a reserve of people at once possessed of minimal qualifications and receptive to more modest salaries than the DSB's, the Certificate of Aptitude for Library Functions was instituted by a ministerial order of September 17, 1951, then further modified in January 1952 and 1953.

To be eligible for the examination, candidates need only the baccalauréat or the brevet supérieur, both secondary school diplomas, the former meets university entrance requirements. In lieu of these diplomas, a candidate may achieve eligibility by passing an examination demonstrating a cultural level equivalent to that enjoyed by secondary-school graduates. The only preparation for the examination is a six-week period of instruction in an approved library.

The examination includes elementary questions on library organization and administration, history and technique of the book, bibliography and preparation of catalog cards. Special tests are given to candi-

dates who have spent an extra month in a hospital, factory, or children's library. Passing one of these tests entitles the candidate to a certificate bearing added acknowledgment of competence for work in the special field. The Direction des Bibliothèques hopes that the certificate will eventually be accepted by mayors as the minimum professional qualification for municipal library appointments.

Completing the library reform measures is the competitive examination for library assistant positions in the libraries within the Direction's sphere. In order to take the examination, candidates must possess the baccalauréat or brevet supérieur, or have ten years service in one of the state-controlled libraries. The age limit of thirty years may be extended by the number of years the candidate has already served in state libraries. The examination is held in October and covers the book, library administration and finance, preparation of catalog cards and bibliography. There is no official preparation for the examination. . . .

The achievements of the Direction des Bibliothèques since its founding less than ten years ago have been impressive. Library education is measurably improved; the central lending libraries are models of truly democratic library service; the continued progress of French public libraries seems assured. For all of this, the Association of French Librarians deserves a large share of the credit; an early and tenacious proponent of independent library schools, the Association was a leading force behind the creation of the Direction in 1945, and its influence remains strong as it continues to work in close liaison with that agency.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence*

The staff of the Library is employed by the state and as such comes under the Ministry of Public Instruction. Italian libraries are compelled to lament a lack of competent personnel, which is caused by modest salaries, unattractive to young people seeking a career; they, therefore, do not pursue library science courses.

#### *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome*

Professional librarians in Italy are required to have a broad cultural background. Those whose careers are distinguished are promoted through the ranks to higher levels, such as head librarian or keeper of manuscripts. At the top of the library hierarchy is the administrative director.

#### *Bibliothèque Nationale, Luxembourg*

The staff of the Library is seriously reduced and recruitment is ex-

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tremely difficult. This is because there are no laws regulating the entrance conditions and providing for advancement. Legislation for the purpose was drafted in 1947, but it has not yet been enacted.

### *Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Netherlands*

Though the Library is in some respects understaffed, it is difficult to obtain authorization for the employment of additional permanent personnel. Moreover, there would be no point in engaging more desk workers, since it would be impossible to find accommodation for them in the present building. Low salaries make it difficult to get some types of personnel; book-stack attendants, especially, are mainly birds of passage.

### *Kungl. Biblioteket, Sweden*

During the past two years the departmental organization of the Library has been reviewed and as a result a completely new organizational pattern on functional lines is being developed. The traditional division into a Swedish Department and a Foreign Department which both handled all technical and processing routines independently is being replaced by a new set-up which when completed will conform rather closely to the Continental and American model.

### *Schweizerische Landesbibliothek, Switzerland*

The staff has been increased because of the rapidly growing volume of work in all departments. In 1946, it was composed of thirty-one persons, now there are thirty-nine, and a request for five new librarians is now pending in the Finance Department.

As to the problem of personnel, it may be said that the Library, together with Geneva and Basle, is the most instrumental in training young librarians. The Library constantly has from two to three volunteers preparing for the diploma of the Swiss Library Association. With the supply coming from the Library School in Geneva, it cannot be said that there is a shortage in crafts, although a young librarian does not have to look long for a job. Thanks to the efforts of the Library Association, which insists that only trained librarians be engaged, there is a distinctly higher level in the profession than prevailed as recently as ten years ago.

### *Millî Kütüphane, Ankara*

There are two main problems. The first is to find properly trained personnel. This situation will soon be ameliorated because of the

recent establishment of a Library Science School at the University of Ankara. The second problem is to keep librarians. The pay of a librarian at the National Library is very low, about the same as for an ordinary employee in the government, and it is rather easy for a well qualified librarian, especially one able to speak a foreign language, to find much better paid work outside the library field.

*The Jewish National and University Library, Israel*

Personnel and staffing problems are most acute due to the absence of a library school and the lack of sufficient fellowships for the foreign training of young librarians. Some mitigation of this difficulty has been effected by the participation of the staff of the Library in the giving of short courses in librarianship offered by the Cultural Department of the Federation of Jewish Labour. This is done with the support of the Jewish Library Association.

*The National Diet Library, Japan*

The staff of the National Diet Library is organized along three parallel lines, reflecting its services: (1) the librarian, (2) the legislative referencer, and (3) administrative personnel. These must work in the closest cooperation. One assistant chief librarian administers the Library, but the duties are so onerous and heavy that there is urgent need for another. Due to various reasons, such as financial, this has not been feasible up to now. The Library has no retirement and pension system. As a consequence the number of old men on the staff is increasing. This situation is not favorable to the development of the Library, but no early solution of the problem has been found.

High-ranking personnel, other than the directors and chiefs of section, should be treated more handsomely. But because salaries and the system of allowances are limited to those applying to ordinary government employees, nothing can be done about it. There is some in-service training, but the course needs to be planned more systematically.

*The General Assembly Library, New Zealand*

Staffing is still difficult owing to the lack of trained personnel. The opening of the Library School, part of the National Library Service, has alleviated the situation somewhat but there is still a considerable shortage.

*Bibliothèque Publique de la Régence de Tunis*

There is no problem. This Library is conducted by a staff one-third

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European and two-thirds Mohammedan among whom the archivist-bibliographer is the deputy to the conservateur and chief of the Oriental Section.

### *Biblioteca Nacional, Argentina*

The Library has no personnel problems.

### *Biblioteca Nacional, Peru*

In the course of travel abroad, and on the basis of objective and dispassionate comparison, the librarian became convinced of the high degree of competence attained by Peruvian librarians trained by the National Librarians School, functioning within the National Library. The entrance requirements of the school are identical with the requirements for entrance in the universities: a high school diploma and a series of examinations. The course of study covers a two-year period, and is both theoretical and practical. During the first year, instruction is given in cataloging, classification, and the organization of libraries; but in the second year, students work every morning for a month in each of the departments of the Library (except the Department of Cataloging and Classification where they remain for three months). This permits them to familiarize themselves with all the aspects of work in a great library, and complements the training they receive in classes on theory, which they take in the afternoons.

Library salaries in Peru, as in many other countries of the world, are not very high, a circumstance which creates several problems. One of these is the fact that only a small number of men become candidates at the school, and the much smaller number still who succeed in passing the entrance examinations; on the other hand, the number of female candidates is much larger, as is also the proportion of those passing the examinations, because, generally, the quality and cultural level of female candidates is much superior to that of the men.

Another of the inconveniences resulting from the situation is that some employees of the National Library, chiefly those in the middle of their library careers and in the middle of the administrative hierarchy, become separated from the institution in order to take higher paying positions, either in institutional libraries, or in commercial or industrial offices, where their professional library knowledge does not have direct application, but where their general culture and their training in order and classification prove to be useful.

### *Biblioteca Nacional, El Salvador*

The Library does not have internal problems. At present, its per-

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sonnel is being instructed to solve the problems of library science. As a result of this training, the Library is about to complete a dictionary catalog.

### *South African Public Library, Cape Town*

Education in librarianship has been effective in South Africa for a comparatively short time: the first school of librarianship was established only 15 years ago. Formerly, the Library relied on in-training for its recruits. With the rapid development of library services in all parts of South Africa during the post-war years, the shortage of qualified recruits has become acute, and the present facilities for training are insufficient.

The tendency at the South African Library, with its new emphasis on reference and bibliographical functions, is to recruit more specialized staff, particularly in view of the need to reorganize and recatalog the older collections.

### *References*

1. McIntosh, J. C.: *Public Libraries in France*. (University of Illinois Library School Occasional Papers No. 41) Urbana, Ill., The Library School, 1955.