

Conference of Eastern College Librarians

Robert B. Downs is director of libraries, New York University. He was chairman of the Program Committee for the conference.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH annual Conference of Eastern College Librarians met at Columbia University on Saturday, November 25. More than 300 college and university librarians were present from an area as far south as Tennessee and as far west as Chicago. This conference has long since established itself as one of the highlights of the year for college librarians, particularly those of the middle Atlantic states.

The morning session was largely given over to technical library matters. Papers included an examination of reclassification questions, serials procedures, and library equipment. These several talks are scheduled for publication in *College and Research Libraries*, hence will be summarized here only briefly.

Dr. Harriet D. MacPherson, of the Columbia School of Library Service faculty, discussed "The Reclassification of Libraries with Some Reference to Special Collections." Out of her extensive experience, supplemented by interviews and correspondence with librarians whose institutions have undertaken partial or complete reclassification, she summed up the case for and against switching from obsolescent or unsatisfactory classification

schemes to more scientific systems. Emphasis was placed on the administrative aspects of reclassification and their effects on normal routines, rather than on the technical problems likely to be encountered.

On the basis of a survey of serials procedures prepared for the A.L.A. Serials Section, Fred B. Rothman, supervisor of the Serials Division, Washington Square Library, New York University, reported "Prevailing Practices in the Handling and Care of Serials." Approximately 150 libraries replied to a questionnaire on the subject. So widely do existing methods vary for serials work that few generalizations are possible. In some instances virtually everything relating to serials is concentrated in a single department; in others, a high degree of decentralization is found, with acquisition, binding, exchanges, cataloging, reference, and other activities scattered among many divisions of the library. The speaker noted a trend in the direction of centralization and cited evidence to show that consolidation of serials functions makes for greater economy and efficiency.

"New Devices and Equipment for Libraries" were described by Ethel M. Fair, director of the New Jersey College for Women Library School. Her discussion covered recent "gadgets" and mechanical innovations for library lighting, exhibitions, shelving, floors, book conveyors, recording and duplicating work, and various

lesser items. Names and addresses of manufacturers together with the names of libraries where the equipment is in actual use are given in the list to be published by Professor Fair.

The first portion of the conference's afternoon session was devoted to topics of immediate news interest. Dr. A. F. Kuhlman, as editor of *College and Research Libraries*, considered the factors which had made desirable the establishment of another library periodical, and, insofar as they have been formulated, outlined the new journal's policies and aims. Ernest J. Reece, of the Columbia School of Library Service, read by title his annual review of college and university library news, to be published shortly in the *Library Journal*. Professor Reece observed, by way of summary, that 1938-39 was marked by an unusual number of deaths in the library profession, comparatively few major appointments had been made during the year, library building activity was normal, and it was apparently a lean period for the acquisition of outstanding collections by libraries. Harry Miller Lydenberg, director of the New York Public Library and chairman of the A.L.A. Joint Committee on Foreign Importations, reported on the current situation abroad in its relation to the acquisition of library materials. He referred to a similar A.L.A. committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. M. Llewellyn Raney, which had functioned actively in 1917-18. The present committee represents the principal national library associations, both general and special. The committee has not attempted to pass on questions involving relations between individual libraries and their agents, regarding such matters as outside its province. It has maintained constant contact with the U. S. Department of State, the

librarian of Congress, the British Library of Information, and others in a position to give information and assistance. Up to the date of Dr. Lydenberg's report conditions were reasonably satisfactory. Delays in the delivery of foreign publications did not ordinarily exceed ten days or two weeks. There were indications that transportation difficulties would increase. German material was coming through more promptly than the French. The British embargo on German exports had just been announced, however, and at the time of the conference it was impossible to predict the effect of this blockade on the shipment of German publications to American libraries.

Reports Success of Yale Library Associates

One of the oldest and most successful friends of the library societies in the country is at Yale University. Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis, editor of the Yale Edition of Horace Walpole and one of the founders of the Yale Library Associates, gave an entertaining account of the formation of the Yale group, and described its present organization. In the course of its career considerable sums of money have been presented for library purposes, together with collections valued at approximately \$2,000,000. Many gifts have come through bequests and a number of memorial funds have been set up. From funds provided by the associates rare books have been the principal purchases. Manuscripts of modern authors, especially those with Yale connections, have been sought, and a collection is now being developed on the present European War. An annual meeting of the Yale Library Associates is held, usually to celebrate the gift of some outstanding collection. An un-

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Post-Professional Education and Training

THE POST-PROFESSIONAL education of librarians was treated in an illuminating paper by Helen Frances Pierce, librarian, Junior College Library, Modesto, Calif., before the Junior College Libraries Subsection at the San Francisco meeting. Her paper will be published in the *A.L.A. Bulletin*. It complements the foregoing papers.

Miss Pierce pointed out that in recent years increasing provision has been made by the professions to assist the practitioner in growing. There has also been, as was shown by a summary of what has been attempted, a considerable stirring in the library field. But the efforts and programs on the graduate level thus far are

deficient in one or more of the following respects: (1) relatively few librarians have been reached; (2) the supply of capable teachers is not equal to the demand; (3) problems of content versus methodology and technique have been only partially solved; and (4) there is not agreement upon the amount of specialization in a single field that is desirable.

Miss Pierce is convinced that librarians must overcome the complacency that has characterized them in the past and that each must ferret out such knowledge and methods as will increase his professional stature, unless librarians are content to be merely mediators or handmaidens to the learned scholars. A. F. K.

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usual feature of the organization is some twenty regional alumni groups distributed over the country. These alumni members have proved particularly useful in discovering and procuring local imprints for the Yale library.

Advocate A.C.R.L. Membership

At the suggestion of Charles C. Williamson, dean of the School of Library Service, Columbia University, the question of the future status and conduct of the Conference of Eastern College Librarians was opened for discussion by Wil-

lard P. Lewis, librarian of Pennsylvania State College. The conference has always been an informal organization, without officers or dues, meeting under the auspices of Columbia University. Mr. Lewis pointed out the advantages of a closer affiliation with the A.L.A. and the A.C.R.L. The sentiment of the group did not favor any change in the informal character of the conference but adopted a resolution, offered by Henry Bartlett Van Hoesen, librarian, Brown University Library, supporting individual membership in the A.C.R.L.