

to all librarians and amateur collectors who are frequently puzzled by that modern middleman, the "dealer."

It is the emphasis on the practices of book collecting that seems to me to give this book not only its chief interest but also its novelty in the field of otherwise similar books. Who before has put down on paper the motives which guide a dealer in pricing a volume? Who else has told where dealers find their stock and make their profits? Who but a reformed dealer could so clearly and so inclusively describe the dealers' procedures and his guesses right or wrong? We are still waiting for the ripe and learned memoirs of a Lathrop Harper and the "now it can be told" of Charlie Eberstadt, but this is far nearer the bookman's daily fare than the thrilling "kills" in the *Saturday Evening Post* of Dr. Rosenbach. Here at last is an honest attempt, well-considered and well-executed, to give the dealer his due. His are the brains behind most famous collections and his is the pleasant life with plenty of ups and downs. I refer the interested collector or librarian to an impassioned *apologia* for dealers in rare books on pages 190-93.

I should like also to single out a passage further on where a reasoned attack is made

on a recent development in sales by auction where purchasers are invited to bid by mail. I agree that this procedure is quite unjustified as it places the auctioneer in the very unfavorable position of trying to do his best by the consignor and the bidder. It usually results in the bidder getting charged his total bid.

One point needs fuller emphasis than is accorded it in this volume and that is the tendency of prices to rise immediately upon the publication of a definitive bibliography. We have all noticed the rise in prices of volumes included in the original *Short Title Catalogue* and, more recently, the soaring prices for American fiction before 1851, following the publication of Lyle Wright's bibliography. It seems only a matter of a few years before the author's *Seventeenth-Century Books Priced at One Dollar or Two Are Common* will be nostalgically remembered.

It is obviously the pleasant duty of all collectors and librarians to read all the books there are on book-collecting. It will be one of the great pleasures of the season to discover this general handbook, partly for the pleasures, but especially for the practices of this art.—*Donald Wing.*

Two More Surveys

A Report on the Mary Reed Library. By Louis R. Wilson. Denver, University of Denver, 1947. 18p.

"The New York State Library: Report of a Survey." By Keyes D. Metcalf and Andrew D. Osborn. Cambridge, Mass., 1947. 46p. (Mimeographed)

Some reviewers of recent surveys have raised questions as to both the value and the technique of surveys, with the intimation that surveys are probably not as valuable as we like to believe and that the method is faulty. If we assume that both of these observations were true up to a point, this reviewer, who has been a surveyor himself, would still believe that surveys have their place in directing library development. Testimony to this fact may be found in Louis R. Wilson's analysis of the results of some university surveys in his article in the July 1947 issue of *College and Research Libraries*, Part II, 368-75.

There is nothing strikingly unusual in either of the two surveys under review. Dr. Wilson's study of the Denver situation is straightforward and concise and considers such matters as library resources; functions of the library committee, the library staff, and the educational program; preparation of the budget; budgetary allocations; library personnel; development of library collections; building requirements; audio-visual facilities; publications exchange program; library accessions list; and "Friends of the Library." The report, as Dr. Wilson points out, "is not intended to present in detail all the matters covered in the survey." Major observations are pointed out and measures are suggested for improving the service of the library. In a brief introduction President Caleb F. Gates calls attention to these recommendations and suggestions and notes that they "offer a challenge to each one of us concerned with

the future of the University of Denver." One real advantage of the concise report, of course, is the fact that it can be easily and quickly read by the faculty members and others who should be interested in it.

Dr. Wilson clearly points out ways for the university to improve the library service: (1) explain the library resources by issuing a publication and calling attention at staff meetings to the interrelations of the collections in the libraries of the City of Denver; (2) undertake a serious, concerted development of the collections through an active policy of the library committee, which could assist in wise allocation of funds; (3) place the assistant director on committees which are concerned with the instructional and research program of the university; (4) channel annual budgetary requests from the various units of the university through the assistant director, taking into account new courses and new instructors; (5) distribute wisely the funds available for reading materials, supplies, and salaries; (6) add definite positions to the staff; (7) develop the collections so that Denver will assume its proper place among institutions of comparative size and purpose; (8) increase the space for readers (Denver now can seat only 10 or 12 per cent of its students); (9) handle expeditiously such complaints as lack or unavailability of books; (10) consider the library in the development of the program of audio-visual instruction; (11) use the present university publications more effectively in exchange; (12) keep patrons informed by issuing a list of new acquisitions; and (13) reorganize the "Friends" group in an all-university organization which will have as its objective the constant building up of the library collections.

These appear to be procedures which all efficient librarians should know and follow. Too often, however, the administrative officials and faculty members have to be reminded of them so that necessary support will be forthcoming. Dr. Wilson has outlined a program that the University of Denver would do well to support.

In the New York State Library survey, Dr. Metcalf and Dr. Osborn have analyzed some of the problems of one of the really venerable libraries of the country. As the base of operations of Melvil Dewey, it has

had a long record of successful service with which all librarians should be familiar.

One of the important questions facing the surveyors was to arrive at a definition of the functions of the state library. Their conclusion in regard to its place in the governmental pattern is that the state library is not an independent agency like the Library of Congress but a part of the education department and is designed to serve the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the state government efficiently. However, its service extends also to "the citizens at large." Moreover, it should serve as "a leader in the library affairs in New York." They write further, "It should in fact be *the* library of the state. . . . This parallels to some degree the change in philosophy at the Library of Congress which is becoming in fact the National Library, *the* library of the nation." A corollary to these conclusions is that other libraries belonging to the state shall be working and reference libraries only and not be concerned with historical and research library services. These are major observations, for, if followed, they set the pattern of the book-collecting and service policies of the state library.

Recommendations are made for the strengthening of the central administration. A deputy state librarian, to be responsible for personnel and the public service departments, and three other directors are proposed: one in charge of the processing division (order and catalog), the second in charge of a combined law and legislative reference department, and the third in charge of library extension. The present reviewer, who was called in after the Metcalf-Osborn survey by the state librarian to examine in more detail certain problems of the technical services, is inclined to agree that these are necessary positions and should be provided for if the state library is to function effectively.

Other recommendations of the surveyors, if put into effect, should make it possible for the state library to assume the responsible position of which it is worthy. These recommendations are as follows: the personnel of the library should be strengthened; the library extension division should come under the supervision of the state librarian; \$100,000 should be allotted for clearing up the backlog of uncataloged materials; cataloging should be simplified; the reference service should be

extended by adding the history and periodical sections to its responsibility; a new charging system should be introduced; large quantities of duplicates should be removed from the stacks; a legislative reference service program, modeled after that of a similar service in the Library of Congress, should be established; changes should be made in the location of certain units for more effective utilization of space; the medical section should be a working rather than a historical library; a system of approved, permanent methods and records should be set up for the order work and cataloging; superfluous or overlapping catalogs should be eliminated or consolidated; all cataloging work should be centralized in the cataloging department; a positive acquisition program, based on the objectives of the state library, should be inaugurated; the work of the state library should be linked with the state-wide program of library service; and a branch of the state library to serve state agencies should be set up in New York City.

Obviously, each of these recommendations cannot be discussed in detail. Two important matters, however, may receive further brief comment. These are the acquisition procedures and the cataloging problems. Dr. Metcalf and Dr. Osborn devote considerable attention to these matters, since an effective acquisition program and efficient cataloging are basic to effective library service. Coupled with them, of course, is the essential question of qualified personnel. A library is as good as its staff, and the state library will require considerable support so that it can obtain strong professional assistants and able clerical help. A clear definition of duties on professional and clerical levels is needed. As the surveyors point out, the situation in regard to personnel in the order and catalog departments especially requires attention.

The present reviewer found on his trip to Albany that many of the recommendations on technical services made by the surveyors were based on actual needs of the library. It is understandable that in the short time they had at their disposal it was not possible to study all details that are sometimes necessary in clarifying operational questions. It would seem wise, however, that the library adminis-

tration quickly approach the state authorities in an effort to simplify the acquisition procedures. State institutions are sometimes required to go through certain channels which are not necessary in private organizations. But it should not cost the taxpayers money to have unnecessary forms or procedures which only slow up the work of a unit.

Certain statistics used in connection with the holdings of the library and the cataloging of them are open to question. The surveyors state that only one out of five items owned by the library is cataloged. Until it is actually known how many items are really held by the library, the figures are likely to be misleading. Reports indicate holdings of from one million to over two million volumes. Also in question is the amount of cataloging performed. The average cataloging output is stated as 609 titles, or 2.4 books a day per cataloger. Later information discloses the correct figure to be 1218 titles, or 4.8 books a day. Even the larger figure is low, since the majority of titles cataloged at the state library as a rule presents little difficulty.

Occasionally, in published surveys of libraries, surveyors make statements which have general significance. Dr. Metcalf and Dr. Osborn, in the survey of the New York State Library, have approached their problem within the limits they had prescribed for themselves, but they have also set forth a pattern that should be useful to officials in other state libraries. This is especially true in regard to their analysis of the acquisition program, the state-wide program, and library extension. "The Rehabilitation Program for the New York State Library" (Appendix II) has been particularly helpful as a procedure for immediate action. A substantial budget allowance has already been made.

The two surveys under review are valuable additions to the survey literature of libraries. They represent analyses of situations made by librarians who have considerable practical experience in administering libraries. It is not likely that all the recommendations made in both surveys can be put into operation, at least not for some time, but they provide the librarians and their superior administrative officers with positive goals.—*Maurice F. Tauber.*