

Review Articles

Government Publications

United States Government Publications. By Anne M. Boyd. 3rd. ed. rev. by Rae Elizabeth Rips. New York, H. W. Wilson Co., 1949. xx, 627p. \$6.50.

Manual of Government Publications: United States and Foreign. By Everett S. Brown. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950, ix, 121p. \$2.50.

During the past few years many librarians have fervently wished that they might have a new edition of Miss Boyd's indispensable textbook with each new issue of the *United States Government Manual*, so rapidly did the publications as well as the agencies of the federal government change. In recognition of the continuing importance of many of the wartime publications, this revision departs from the previous policy of including only governmental agencies in existence at the time of publication and in Chapter XXIV gives a very useful outline in retrospect of 12 of the emergency agencies with their publications.

Otherwise, this new edition follows very closely the original plan as to scope and arrangement. One minor typographical change, the use of varied types for subheadings within chapters, has added noticeably to the already admirable clarity of the arrangement. Revisions consist mainly of changes within sections in order to bring up to date the information about agencies, and to cite important new publications, more recent examples of different types of publications and additions to the bibliographies. The National Military Establishment necessitates a completely new chapter; the independent agencies have increased from 24 to 31; and several departments, such as the Department of Commerce, receive expanded treatment. The list of types of publications given in Chapter I has been expanded as increased production justifies identification of new groups; of these, "Statistical Reports" and "Films and Other Visual Materials" are of particular interest.

More important than specific changes or additions, however, is the continued development of the features which have made this

handbook so valuable from the appearance of the first edition. The plan of arrangement, by department and by issuing agency within each department, has made it possible not only to give a clear picture of the structure and functioning of the federal government, but also to relate the literature produced by the agency to its own activities and objectives. The various lists, indexes, bibliographies and handbooks are described in connection with the body of literature to which they are guides and the whole is related to the purposes of an operating agency.

I like the statement (new to this edition): "Probably most publications issued today . . . stem from the fact that the collection and dissemination of information is generally accepted as an important duty of government."¹ That this responsibility is being recognized is apparent in the activities of many federal agencies but nowhere is it better exemplified than in the description of the Department of Agriculture. This chapter amounts almost to a microcosmic case study of the institutional arrangements and types of publications needed to carry out the research, educational, operational and popularization functions of a literate society. The value to the student librarian of gaining such an integrated picture can not be overestimated. The many suggestions as to selection policy and reference use in various types of libraries, research, special, school and popular, take full advantage of the many levels of government publications, and examples are given of the various levels as well as of different types.

The new edition still carries the older material on the processing of documents within the library, including the outline of the Superintendent of Documents classification, and some material on the publicizing of government publications has been added.

Miss Rips, who is a former student of Miss Boyd's and at present chief of the History and Travel Department of the Detroit Public Library, is to be congratulated upon this excellent and welcome revision of an important tool. Many librarians will join in the

¹ Page 13.

hope that her interest in keeping it up to date will continue through many more revisions.

In the absence of guides to the public documents of other nations and of international organizations as easily accessible and as comprehensive as Boyd's *United States Government Publications*, librarians will find Brown's *Manual of Government Publications* very useful. The author, a professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan, has designed his handbook for the use of research workers or those interested in politics and it emphasizes tools for locating publications of use to these groups.

Of the 17 chapters, nine are devoted to the United States, the ninth covering publications of state, municipal and local units of government—the great uncharted wilderness of our public documents domain. Four chapters cover Great Britain and the British Com-

monwealth of Nations; one chapter covers Europe, including France, Germany, Austria, Soviet Russia, Italy and Ireland; and another single chapter is allotted to Latin America, the Near and Middle East, Japan and China. The international organizations whose publications are discussed are the League of Nations, the Permanent Court of International Justice, the International Court of Justice and the United Nations.

Obviously, in a handbook so slim as this with a scope so wide, only a few of the major series of publications can be mentioned specifically. Most of the references are to other bibliographic guides, but since these are frequently difficult to locate readily this little handbook will be a very welcome addition to librarians as well as to political scientists.—*Margaret E. Egan, Graduate Library School, University of Chicago.*

Old and New Scientific Works

A Catalogue of Incunabula and Manuscripts in the Army Medical Library. By Dorothy M. Schullian and Francis E. Sommer. Published for The Honorary Consultants to the Army Medical Library by Henry Schuman, Inc. New York, 1950, 361p. \$15.

Scientific, Medical and Technical Books, Published in the United States of America. A Selected List of Titles in Print with Annotations. Supplement of Books published 1945-1948. Edited by R. R. Hawkins. Prepared under the direction of the National Research Council's Committee on Bibliography of American Scientific and Technical Books. Washington (N.Y., R. R. Bowker Co.), 1950, 526p. \$10.

Here is a new reference tool for the historian of science, and for those interested in fifteenth century books. It occupies a well-deserved place beside its illustrious predecessors in this field, Klebs, Osler, Sudhoff and Ballard.

A Catalogue of Incunabula and Manuscripts in the Army Medical Library represents another example of the superb bibliographic enterprises which we have come to expect from our National Medical Library. Instructors in the graphic arts will be happy to learn that lantern slides have been made

of historically significant illustrations, title pages, printers' marks and other materials suitable for lectures based on the collection. The record of incunabula is of particular interest to scholars and librarians, for each has been microfilmed and is available for loan in that form.

Young scholars in the history of science and civilization, following in the footsteps of Sarton and Thorndike, will have accessibility denied to their predecessors. It is a pious hope that the disciples will utilize the material.

The incunabula portion of the work is equipped with two concordances, Klebs and Stillwell. In addition, there is a general index of printers, places, owners, incidental names, variant forms of author names and dates.

This volume has also a record of the western manuscripts in possession of the library. Part 2 of the work contains a record of their oriental manuscripts, predominantly Arabic. An index of names and titles enhances the checklist.

This volume is one which every American library boasting a Rare Book Room will wish to have on its reference shelf. Printed by the Anthoensen Press, published by Schuman for the Honorary Consultants to the Army Medical Library, the volume is a fine example of book making.