Book and Serial Union Catalogs: A Symposium

The following three papers were presented at the meeting of the ALA Board on Resources of American Libraries, Los Angeles, California, June 25, 1953.

By C. SUMNER SPALDING

Library of Congress Book Catalogs: Proposed Expansion into Current Author and Subject Catalogs of American Library Resources

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We have all noted with regret the absence of Halsey William Wilson at the meetings of our 72nd Annual Conference. I am informed that there is probably no one of us who can remember an Annual Conference of the ALA at which Mr. Wilson was not present. Just as so many of the great monuments of the American bibliographical scene, the CBI, the many indexes, the card service, and the Union List of Serials mark high the place that Mr. Wilson and the H. W. Wilson Company hold in the realm of library services in this country, so also was it Mr. Wilson’s vision that foresaw not only the development of the LC Catalog but also its potential development into a tool which would hold a key to the resources of American libraries. In his Proposed Plan for Printing Library of Congress Cards in Cumulative Book Form published in 1946, he suggested that this catalog should also show the holdings of other American libraries. From the beginning, the Edwards Brothers catalog and the subsequent LC Catalog have included the entries prepared under the cooperative cataloging program and, by showing the name of the library preparing the copy, have thereby partaken in a limited measure of the nature of a union catalog. In the summer of 1952 the administration of the Library of Congress deemed the time ripe for a serious investigation of the full potentiality of the LC Catalog as a current catalog of national library resources. A committee was appointed to this end and it is largely from the report of this committee that my remarks this afternoon are drawn. This report has been received by the Library administration but has not as yet been given active consideration. It was thought, however, that the profession at large should know its contents and should consider the proposed expansion of the catalog in terms of its desirability, in terms of the particulars of its various features, and in terms of its financial practicability.

The committee approached its assignment pragmatically. That is to say, it concerned itself primarily with the nature, quantity, and quality of the bibliographic raw materials presently available, the characteristics of the bibliographical tools now in existence, and the methods and procedures of demonstrated effectiveness. It sought to reveal what seems to be presently possible with the means at hand in order that a useful beginning might be made in the near future which might, as time goes on, be developed, improved, or expanded in accord with improvements in interlibrary cooperation, methods, bibliographical interrelationships, and the like.

In developing its proposals for the expansion of the LC Catalog into what would in effect be a current national union catalog, the committee felt that the Catalog’s present character as a display of and an index to LC printed cards should in no way be altered. It was recognized that this would mean a composite...
catalog exhibiting one set of criteria for LC cards and another set for other cards but it was felt that this theoretical inconsistency will not have any substantially adverse effect on its usefulness as a tool for serving many varied bibliographical and bibliothecal purposes.

A determinant of many of the characteristics of the publication as proposed was its relationship to the National Union Catalog (NUC) on cards and to the proposed published version of the same. The basis for expanding the present LC Catalog would be the reports received by the NUC of titles held by American libraries. These reports are of two general types: those which represent current cataloging and those which are records of the entries in entire catalogs or regional union catalogs, or of entries in large sections of the same. Since, as will be seen below, the committee is recommending the inclusion of only recent imprints in the expanded catalog, it is proposed that only the group representing current cataloging be searched for eligible titles since the yield of unreported titles of recent imprint from the other group would hardly justify the expense of handling. The present average annual receipts by the NUC of reports of titles currently cataloged by other libraries and of titles cataloged by LC but for which cards are not printed is about 400,000 cards (plus or minus 15 per cent). These would constitute the source from which new titles and locations of titles would be obtained.

The committee did not consider that this proposed expansion of the present LC Catalog should depend in any way on whether or not the NUC is to be published. The base imprint date of the entries to be included in the expansion of the present LC Catalog would, however, provide a convenient imprint termination date for a published NUC. If and when the latter is published the scope of the current catalog as to imprints included should be carefully reconsidered.

SCOPE

Physical Form: The present LC Catalog includes the following types of materials: books, pamphlets, serials, and photocopies of the same (Books: Authors and Books: Subjects); motion pictures and film-strips (Films); Maps and Atlases, and Music and Phonorecords. Reports of holdings of other libraries of any of these materials would be included.1

Bibliographical Form: The only bibliographical categories that would be excluded are telephone directories, talking books for the blind and books in raised characters, current general daily newspapers, reprints of articles appearing in indexed or abstracted periodicals and journals (unless cataloged for LC printed cards), and fiction issued by the standard publishers of the American book trade. The committee rejected telephone directories as a category generally not retained in collections (except for the latest issues). Talking books for the blind and books in raised characters are already under special and well organized controls in this country. Current general daily newspapers are generally not cataloged and are easily locatable. The content of reprinted articles from periodicals and journals is likewise easily available if these publications are covered by general or specific indexing or abstracting services. It was felt that reports of holdings of fiction issued by the standard publishers of the American book trade could be eliminated as a category because: 1. entries for about 95 per cent of these works would be available in the form of LC entries, 2. the receipts of reports of holdings of these works would be available in the extreme, 3. the works in question are normally widely available, and 4. as a category, fiction would have a low rank in research importance as compared with other types of materials.

The committee considered other categories of works which LC would not ordinarily catalog but thought it best not to recommend excluding them. It reasoned that just as LC may waive its general policy and catalog some of this material if it is deemed exceptional, so it may be assumed that cards for such material received from other libraries (which generally observe similar policies in cataloging) have been cataloged and reported only after a screening has found the material to be of some particular consequence. Very little such material is currently reported to the NUC and it would be of only very minor significance so far as workload is concerned. In respect to serials and the implications of New Serial Titles to this publication, it was

1 From this point on all statements of qualification for inclusion will be made on the assumption that other qualifications for inclusion have been met.
felt that it would be premature at this time to adopt a policy of excluding serials.

Language: Entries for works in all languages using the Cyrillic, Greek and Roman alphabets would be included. Entries for works in languages using the Cyrillic alphabet and for which no LC card has been printed, would appear in transliterated form. Entries for works in languages using oriental characters or alphabets would be excluded, at least until such time as satisfactory solutions are found to the personnel, editorial, and typographical problems which they present.

Subject: Although the LC Catalog and the NUC receive entries for works on all subjects, it is especially to be noted that the principal responsibility for acquisitions in the field of agriculture and medicine, so far as the national library complex is concerned, is that of the Department of Agriculture Library and the Armed Forces Medical Library. These two libraries issue the major bibliographical publications in these fields, the Bibliography of Agriculture and the AFML Catalog. The committee was of the opinion that the most effective place to record holdings of American libraries in agriculture and medicine would be in these publications, in which case they should be excluded from an expanded LC Catalog. Until such time as the Bibliography of Agriculture and the AFML Catalog are expanded to include the titles and locations reported by other American libraries, the committee felt that holdings of American libraries in all subject fields should be recorded in the expanded LC Catalog.

Imprint Dates: The committee felt that the only prospect of an expanded catalog which could be self-sustaining or close to self-sustaining would lie in confining the titles and locations to be added to those which are currently being reported to the NUC; and these only if confined to imprints of very recent years.

All reports to the NUC of imprints beginning with 1952 have been segregated from the other cards of the NUC supplement and are therefore ready, so to speak, for processing for inclusion in the proposed expanded catalog. Until such time as the NUC may be published the committee did not feel that even the currently received reports of pre-1952 imprints should go into the expanded catalog; these should more properly be kept for inclusion in such a published NUC. It furthermore seems to be wise to begin the operations involved in an expanded catalog on a scale which would not require an excessive increase in workload and in the cost of the publication. Therefore, the committee recommended that the reports of imprints of 1952 and later be included in the expanded catalog.

If 1954 were to be the first year of expansion of the catalog on the basis outlined above (i.e., to include imprints of 1952-54), more cards, more new titles, and more expense would be involved than in any year for many years to come, due to the fact that in one year a 3-year accumulation of reports would be processed and published. It is estimated that in 1954 200,000 locations would be added to the present catalog. Of these about 97,000 would be new titles. If reports were to continue to be received at present rates it would be another ten years before the volume of locations in any year would equal this total (assuming that 1952 were to continue as a base imprint date) and it is anticipated that the number of new titles would level off by 1960 at around 75,000-80,000. However, it must be borne in mind that if this project were to be undertaken successfully, it is possible that participation in this union catalog endeavor might expand considerably and thereby increase the effectiveness, size, and cost of the catalog.

Two alternatives to retaining 1952 as a base imprint date year after year would be:

1. to limit the coverage to three years by picking up each year the current year and dropping the oldest year. This would result in 1955, for example, in 27,000 fewer locations and 11,000 fewer new titles than if 1952 imprints had not been dropped out. Under this alternative the annual number of locations would run about 113,000 of which about 54,000 would be new titles. This is to be compared with the estimate of about 200,000 locations and about 80,000 titles which could be added about the year 1964 if 1952 were retained as the base imprint date. The cost differential would be roughly proportional;

2. to retain 1952 as a base imprint date but also to pick up, after publication of the NUC, all titles new to the NUC, regardless of imprint date. This alternative would, of course, result in a considerably larger catalog in the years subsequent to publication of the NUC. No estimate of the degree to which it would enlarge the catalog is available at the present time.
EDITORIAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Main and Added Entries: Cards for works within the imprint scope of the expanded catalog would be sorted out from the reports of holdings of other libraries received by the NUC and would be sent to the Cumulative Catalog Section which is responsible for the preparation of the present LC Catalog. They would be searched in the author catalog of the Card Division at the Library of Congress. Those for which LC printed cards are found would be recorded as additional holdings on the card in the Cumulative Catalog Section's file. Those for which no LC printed card is found would be typed on a proportional spacing typewriter with suitable small-sized type in enough copies for author and subject needs. Cross references for necessary added entries would also be made at this time. Whenever necessary, headings would be adapted to conform to ALA rules for choice of entry and established LC headings.

Essential added entries would be made even if not traced on the entries as received. Full descriptive information as contained on the contributing library's card would be given. Editing of description would be confined to standardizing paragraphing, capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviations. Tracing of subject headings and of added entries, both as edited for the expanded catalog, would be given. LC and Dewey Decimal class numbers would appear when available. The minimum requirements for inclusion of any entry would be author (if any), title, date, and location.

Subject Entries: Insofar as possible all new titles would be entered under subject headings in Books: Subjects or in the subject indexes of the parts for nonbook materials. The degree to which subject coverage would be possible is largely a function of the willingness and ability of the contributing libraries to furnish on the cards they send to the NUC the tracing of the assigned subject headings. The cards presently received by the NUC are found to have traced subject headings on only 57 per cent of the cases where such subject headings would be expected. It is not proposed that the editors of the Catalog attempt to subject catalog titles without the aid either of assigned subject headings or of assigned classification numbers. In the absence of the former, however, an effort would be made to convert class numbers into an equivalent subject heading.

Since it is the policy of the present Books: Subjects part of the Catalog to include under suitable headings all works, even those not normally entered under subject headings in card catalogs, the cooperation of contributing libraries must also be enlisted to supply a notation as to literary form, nationality of literature, autobiographical nature of the work, and the like in the case of titles which are not ordinarily assigned subject headings and whose titles do not clearly reveal the information essential to supplying suitable form headings for the purposes of the published catalog.

The committee recommended that the general editorial policy for subject entries be to integrate all such entries as closely as possible with the LC subject heading system. LC forms of subject headings would be used and effort would be made to bring all subject headings into conformance with LC policies of assignment of subject headings. Unless Books: Subjects and the subject indexes for the non-book materials are kept within a unitary system, it is felt that the utility of the subject organization of materials would be seriously diminished. Studies indicate that in 90 per cent of the cases the subject headings supplied by contributing libraries are either in accord with LC form and practice as received, or may be converted to agree with LC form and practice with little difficulty.

Preparation of Entries: There appear to be only two alternatives as to typewriters that will produce cards which will come close to matching the printed cards in point size and in condensation of type, important considerations in the economics of printing. One of these, the Coxhead composing machine, is now used in preparing added entry-cross references for Books: Authors. It has the advantage of matching more closely the type of the printed cards in type style, in point size, and in variety of type face. It has the disadvantage of much greater cost and of considerably slower operation. The second alternative is the IBM 8-point Textype typewriter. Its advantage is a much lower cost and a considerably faster rate of operation.

LOCATIONS

Additional locations of titles reported prior to the closing of an issue would be indicated...
on the entries in the Books: Authors part and in the parts for nonbook material by the standard NUC symbols. In the case of typed cards the first symbol would be that of the library which either first submitted an entry or whose entry was selected as copy. No attempt would be made to keep the locations in alphabetical sequence. Locations received after the first appearance of an entry in the catalog would be published only when the entry comes up for republication in the next stage of the cumulative pattern. The committee did not feel it could recommend inclusion of locations additional to the first one on entries in the Books: Subjects part of the catalog because of the increase in the searching and typing costs that this procedure would involve.\(^2\) It was thought that for most purposes it would suffice that additional locations of desired titles could be obtained from Books: Authors.

Locations for U.S. federal, state, and local government publications were thought to be unnecessary. Federal documents are available at depository libraries, state documents at state libraries, and municipal documents are generally not collected by libraries except the obvious local libraries, the Library of the Bureau of the Census and the New York City Municipal Reference Library. American doctoral dissertations do not require secondary locations since they can be obtained from the libraries of the institutions granting these degrees. Locations of analytical entries for periodical articles would not be included inasmuch as the latter are easily located.

**FREQUENCY**

The present Books: Authors section of the LC Catalog appears each year in nine monthly issues, three quarterly cumulations, and an annual cumulation (except that in every fifth year a quinquennial cumulation is published in lieu of an annual). In considering frequency the problem is to balance the need for up-to-date information about titles against the cost of repetitive printing in cumulations. The committee felt that the best balance would be had if new titles reported by outside libraries were published in the quarterly and larger cumulations. Publication only in annuals seemed to provide an unsatisfactory answer to the demand for up-to-date information. Semi-annual publication was rejected as inefficient. On the other hand, it was questioned that the need for monthly publication was great enough to justify the cost of printing and reprinting.

**Cost:** Present estimates indicate that if the less expensive IBM Textype equipment is used, the Books: Authors section of the Catalog could be expanded as described at a subscription price of about $200 per annum. As compared with the present catalog the expanded catalog would contain roughly twice the number of entries and three times the number of locations at about double the present cost. It would be a remarkably comprehensive list of the current holdings of research interest of American libraries and would thus be a vital tool for the use of scholarship and research; it would have the potentiality of simplifying interlibrary loan work at the borrowing end (by showing what libraries are in possession of desired books) and at the lending end (by cutting down on the number of requests received for books not located in the library), and by making possible a more even geographical spread of interlibrary loans; and it would have still greater value than the present catalog as a tool for cataloging, reference, and acquisitions purposes by virtue of its greatly expanded coverage.

It is more difficult to estimate the probable subscription price of Books: Subjects due to the more uncertain effect of the increase in the price on the number of subscriptions. It is probable, however, that the subscription would have to be at least $250 per annum.\(^3\)

It should be emphasized that the expansion of the author catalog is not dependent on a concurrent expansion of the subject catalog. If the subject were not to be expanded, however, the cost of expanding the author catalog would increase slightly, by about 2 percent. This would be due to the fact that certain costs which could be otherwise shared by the two catalogs would then have to be borne entirely by the author catalog.

This, then, is a plan of what could be done. Many of its features are susceptible to change according to the needs of the potential subscribers, with or without consequent effect on the probable subscription price. More important than the details of the make-up of

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\(^2\) Estimated to be about $9000 in the year 1954. In the following years it would be less in proportion to the smaller number of cards to be processed.

\(^3\) Unless 1. quarterly issues are discontinued, and/or 2. Books: Subjects is converted from a catalog to an index.
the catalog, however, are these basic questions: Is the expansion of the LC Catalog into a current catalog of American library resources a desirable development? If so, is the time ripe for this development? If so, would the present subscribers be willing to pay twice what they now do in order to get this tool? If not, to what extent should subsidy be sought? In what direction? With what prospects of success?

It is up to you and your confreres who are present or potential subscribers to the Catalog to answer these questions. If we are really to expand the Catalog in 1954 we need to know the answers fairly soon.

I hope that you will be willing to give this matter serious thought and that you will bring the proposal to the attention of your local and regional library organizations so that later, when the time comes for the Library of Congress to distribute a prospectus and a questionnaire, opinion may have reached a state of crystallization. In the meantime, the Library of Congress will be glad to receive your comments, questions, suggestions and the like. If you care to write, I suggest that you address your letters to John W. Cronin, Director of the Processing Department.

By CHARLES W. DAVID

The Reproduction of the National Union Catalog

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There is a fascination about the concept of a vast and all-inclusive bibliography of the printed output of the mind of man. We are all familiar with the unsuccessful attempts of some of the earlier bibliographers, who felt themselves adrift on a vast ocean of print, to produce such an index. As an example, though by no means the earliest, I may cite the Mare Magnum of the learned Florentine abbot, Francesco Marucelli, who died in 1703, leaving his work incomplete in 111 manuscript volumes.

In spite of failures the dream persisted, and what was acknowledged to be impossible by individual effort was undertaken by cooperation. Little encouragement is, perhaps, to be derived from the experience of the International Institute of Bibliography (founded in 1895 at Brussels) and its Bibliotheca Universalis. But the Gesamtkatalog der Preussischen Bibliotheken of the Prussian State Library, which got under way in 1898 and began to be printed in 1931, has a much more encouraging record. Though wrecked by World War II, it would in a better world have been an undoubted success. Though at first legally and practically limited to Prussian libraries, it was inspired by the concept of a much broader inclusiveness, and in the end it was expanded to include all the important research libraries of Germany, and even Austria was in process of being drawn into it. Had disaster been averted we would in fact have had a major portion of a manageable world bibliography.

Contemporaneously, American librarianship began to press for an expansion of the Union Catalog at the Library of Congress which would bring it to what was optimistically called "completion," and some minds began to entertain the thought of its publication in this expanded form, so that it could be made generally available to research libraries in various parts of the country. The key to success in such vast operations was of course to be found not only in the magic of cooperative effort but also in the technical revolution in communication with which we are all at least in some degree familiar.

In 1947 two Philadelphia librarians went still further out on a limb and in a brief article in the Journal of Documentation outlined a plan for a Cumulative World Thesaurus to be printed and widely distributed among research libraries all over the world.\(^1\) In the light of the current rise in the cost of every library and publishing operation, the most charitable judgment which could be passed upon that article would seem to be that it may have been far in advance of its time.

But meanwhile, in spite of all difficulties, interest in the possibility of the reproduction and distribution of the Union Catalog at the Library of Congress in some form has persisted. The files of the Library of Congress, to which your reporter has had access, reveal that the subject has been under serious consideration there for more than a decade. As early as July, 1942 there was discussion and correspondence between Mr. Schwegmann and Mr. Boni concerning the possibility of a microprint reproduction which would be subscribed to by research libraries. The thought of a reproduction on microfilm doubtless goes back to an even earlier date; and subsequently consideration has inevitably been given to reproduction by other media such as microcards, miniature photo-offset, and fully legible photo-offset.

The matter was made the subject of a considerable discussion at the Atlantic City regional conference of the ALA in October 1949. Shortly before this there had been published in the LC Information Bulletin an important report by Robert B. Downs which recommended reproduction. Almost simultaneously Fremont Rider had made to the Librarian of Congress a rather definite proposal for a microcard reproduction which was appealing enough to induce Mr. Evans to ask the executive secretary of the ARL to find out whether the member libraries would be likely to be interested in such a reproduction to the extent of creating a market for it.

In all of the discussions of 1949 two objectives were kept in mind, viz., the need to have the Catalog reproduced for security reasons (lest the original be wiped out in some disaster), and the need to make it available to research libraries outside of Washington for a variety of bibliographic uses. The many difficulties (apart from sheer cost) surrounding any form of reproduction were also emphasized. The Library of Congress has lacked the resources to edit the Catalog as it ought to be edited before publication. It has even lacked the resources to keep it filed up-to-date, and therefore there is a large backlog of unfiled cards. Resources have also been wanting to bring the Catalog to an acceptable degree of completeness. Also many of the cards in the Catalog are of such a character as to require retyping before they can be successfully reproduced by a mass photographic operation.

While these matters were under serious discussion the deterioration of our foreign relations produced one important development: as a security measure the Library of Congress was provided with funds to have the Union Catalog microfilmed, and it was in fact microfilmed in the spring of 1952—microfilmed "as is," without further expansion, without the filing of the backlog, without editing, and even without the retyping of unsatisfactory cards.

The effect of this has undoubtedly been to take some steam out of the boiler so far as the movement for the publication of the Catalog is concerned. The security argument is no longer seriously important. Also the existence of the microfilm negative and the willingness of the Library of Congress to provide positive copies at a fair price has given an opportunity to make a practical test of the attitude of American librarianship toward one form of reproduction. And it has to be reported that so far only one library has indicated an interest in obtaining a positive film copy, and even here no decision has yet been made. I fear, it must, therefore, be concluded that, except as a security measure, the filming of our national Union Catalog in its present condition is not the great forward step which it seems to a good many librarians and others to be required.

It is to this far greater enterprise that the remainder of this paper is devoted.

In the spring of 1952 a sub-committee of the ALA Board on Resources, chairmanned by your reporter, undertook a serious investigation of the possibility of the reproduction and publication of the National Union Catalog (NUC) in an expanded, well-edited, and legible form. The Library of Congress was approached and found to be highly sympathetic and willing to give every possible assistance. The method proposed for the investigation was essentially that of sampling. That is to say, the Library of Congress was asked to select a small segment of the alphabet and then to carry through (while keeping careful records) the actual operations of editing, preparing copy, and printing—with a view to displaying specimen pages of the finished work

3 Letter of George Schwegmann to the present writer, June 1, 1953.
4 Ibid.
and of compiling cost statistics. It was also believed (and this did indeed prove to be the case) that this method would reveal in concrete form problems which might otherwise have been overlooked. The Library of Congress has been beyond praise in the patience, intelligence and industry with which it has gone about this assignment; and if the results achieved have not always appeared convincing, that has not been because of want of effort, but because of the difficulties of the problems under attack and the necessity, on numerous occasions, of relying on approximate estimates rather than upon established data.

Two meetings of the sub-committee with LC representatives were held at the New York Public Library, one in June, 1952, and the other in January, 1953. At first, there was pretty general, though not quite unanimous, agreement that the contemplated reproduction would be highly desirable and of great value, particularly for use in acquisitions, cataloging, the handling of interlibrary loans, and in reference and research work.

As to the scope and plan of the reproduction, it was agreed that it would be very desirable to have the Library of Congress Author Catalog expanded as of an agreed date, say 1950 or 1952, to include all imprints currently reported to the NUC for the first time, thereby making it no longer necessary to enter such imprints in the existing NUC. This proposal for an expanded Author Catalog is still under very sympathetic investigation at the Library of Congress. An ad hoc committee there has held frequent meetings on the subject over a period of many months and has drafted an extended report. It is to be hoped that in due course the report will be found acceptable and the expanded Author Catalog will become a reality.

As for the retrospective NUC, the sub-committee considered various possible expedients for breaking down so vast an enterprise into more manageable parts, e.g. a division by century of imprint, on the theory that this would permit the application of varying standards of description in accordance with bibliographical difficulties; but in the end it was decided that it would be best to try to go forward without subdivision. It was, however, decided that the magnitude of the enterprise might be reduced somewhat by the exclusion, subject to certain limitations, of serial publications (including government serials, federal, state and local), newspapers, music scores, manuscripts, paged analytics, and probably also atlases; also that it might be further reduced by the inclusion of LC cards only in short-title form, and by the inclusion of textbooks and multiple editions of standard works, such as Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, only in extremely compressed form. It was hoped that by such exclusion and compression the total number of entries in the proposed printed Catalog could be reduced to perhaps 6,000,000, of which roughly 3,200,000 would be in shortened form.

Though the Library of Congress had, as requested, experimented with such a legible printed catalog for a short section of the alphabet and had attempted to make cost estimates, it was felt that the data so far obtained were inadequate and that further study was necessary. It was therefore requested that these experiments be repeated, due account being taken of the exclusions and compressions which the sub-committee had proposed, and that care be taken to make a clear distinction between routine or clerical operations, which could be performed by sub-professional labor, and editorial work which would have to be handled by experts. The Library of Congress was also requested to make an estimate of the cost of "completing" the NUC as a preliminary to the contemplated reproduction.

During the next six months the Library of Congress undertook to carry out these two assignments. The results were presented in documents which were considered by the sub-committee at its second meeting last January. The documents are too complex and statistical for presentation in such a paper as this, but they may perhaps be summarized. First, an estimate was given of the cost of "completing" the NUC in accordance with the proposals made by Robert B. Downs in July, 1949. It was calculated that such a procedure would result in the addition of 1,500,000 new entries in the Catalog (plus a great number of new locations) but that the cost would amount to $1,212,318. It was further estimated that the addition of these 1,500,000 new entries would result in added editorial and publication costs for the contemplated reproduction amounting to $675,000.

As for its other and more important assign-

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6 Reports of these meetings, though not published, were reproduced for information as Appendices in the minutes of the 39th and 40th meetings of the ARL (June, 1952 and February, 1953).

7 The documents were reproduced in the Appendix to the 40th meeting of ARL referred to in note 6.

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ment, the Library of Congress explained in some detail what it had done, and then presented a number of specimen pages which illustrated the results achieved. Finally it presented in some detail an estimate of the cost of editing and publishing the NUC. The total mounted up to the staggering figure of $4,458,955 for an edition of 1000 sets of 89 volumes each, or to a price of $4,458.95 per set if the entire edition could be sold.

The documents submitted by the Library of Congress were considered at some length by the sub-committee at its January meeting. It was realized at once that the magnitude of the enterprise of “completing” the NUC as envisioned by Mr. Downs was so great and costly as to seem out of the question as a preliminary to the reproduction which the sub-committee had in mind. Little further attention, therefore, was given to it.

On the other hand, in its estimate of the cost of editing and publishing the NUC, the Library of Congress had been encouraged by the sub-committee to include as “preliminary operations” a partial “completion” of the Catalog. These preliminary operations and the estimates for them were discussed at some length. It was pointed out that it would be of much importance to include a great number of cards not yet reported from Harvard, and that therefore the estimated cost of these preliminary operations would in all probability have to be increased. On the other hand, the view was taken that these preliminary operations, however desirable, were not properly a part of the reproduction enterprise then under consideration and ought not to be permitted to stand as a financial obstacle in the way of its success. Rather it was felt that the “completion” of the NUC, particularly such an item of it as the filing of a large arrearage of unfiled cards, was really the business of the Library of Congress and an obligation of the federal government. However, the Library of Congress spokesmen pointed out that appropriations for this work had been repeatedly refused by Congress over the past ten years and that it had never been clearly established as a principle that the federal government has an obligation to provide for such work. One member of the sub-committee observed, on the other hand, that no plan had ever yet been implemented for the libraries of the country to support the NUC.

Perhaps the most serious matter brought to light during the discussion of “preliminary operations” was the estimate of 9,000,000 entries which would remain in the NUC to be published after all the contemplated exclusions and compressions—a figure which is to be compared with the 6,000,000 estimate which the sub-committee had made at its meeting six months earlier. This figure was regarded as staggering but nevertheless valid in the light of the most recent calculations which the Library of Congress had made.

Attention was then directed to a great item of $2,800,000 which the Library of Congress had calculated for “editing for publication.” The view was expressed that this figure, which was based on an estimate of 32 cents per entry, was excessive. Some members of the sub-committee mentioned figures as low as ten cents an entry, though these were thought to be pretty certainly too low. Mention was made of the possibility of organizing the enterprise less expensively by placing it under an independent management which would cooperate closely with the Library of Congress but be separate from it, and therefore would escape some of the costliness which seems inherent in the operations of a government agency. Finally, as a kind of “wild guess,” the view was expressed that the editorial cost might conceivably be got down to as little as $1,200,000.

But even at this reduced figure, would there really be any hope of finding a subsidy adequate to make it possible to carry this project through to successful completion? If one were to eliminate entirely the cost of “preliminary operations” and to reduce editorial costs from $2,800,00 to $1,200,000, the cost of the total enterprise for an edition of 1000 sets would still be in the nature of $2,200,000. Foundations were considered as possible sources of a subsidy, but no one appeared to believe that support on a large enough scale could be found in that quarter. An adequate federal subsidy was also not to be thought of in the present temper of Washington.

The final conclusion, therefore, was that while the sub-committee was of the opinion that the publication of the NUC in a convenient legible form would be highly desirable, the cost appeared to be prohibitive, there being no present prospect of finding the amount of money which the project would require.

Some thought was then given to the possi-
DALLET, LOUIS ALEXIS.

DALLDORF, GILBERT, 1900. Joint author see Eddy, Walter Hollis, 1877. The avitaminoses.

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— The Dalles, Oregon. (The Dalles, nd.) 481 p.

— The Dalles, Oregon. (The Dalles, nd.) 481 p.

— The Dalles, Oregon. (The Dalles, nd.) 481 p.

— The Dalles, Oregon. (The Dalles, nd.) 481 p.

— The Dalles, Oregon. (The Dalles, nd.) 481 p.
bility of attempting something on a much smaller scale which would still be of value. It might, for example, be useful and manageable to attempt a catalog of personal names and titles only, leaving the complex problems of corporate entries for some other solution. Also author and title entries which pose very complex editorial problems might be omitted or postponed. But such partial or makeshift solutions were clearly not a part of the sub-committee’s assignment, and they were therefore not pursued.

The meeting of the sub-committee ended on a somber note. Its chairman was directed to present a final report to the Board on Resources and to ask that it be dismissed. This has in due course been accomplished, and the present paper has been in large part based on the final report.

Yet, experienced librarians will hardly be willing to write finis upon this project and condemn it to the musty files of the forgotten. There is real hope that the expanded Author Catalog (which would constitute a landmark in the Union Catalog’s development) will in the not distant future become a reality. As for the retrospective Catalog, there are certainly influential librarians both on the LC staff and elsewhere who, in spite of the difficulties, do not believe that the ambition to publish this great instrument in an improved and readable form must be finally abandoned.

In the opinion of your reporter it is an obligation of the federal government (though this may require considerable persuasion) to provide the Library of Congress with adequate funds to “complete” the NUC, to file the cards into it, and to edit it to the extent of making it a far better bibliographical instrument than it has ever been before. To accomplish this, he feels, ought not to be an obligation of American librarianship. If this much could be achieved at federal expense, then the cost of publishing the NUC in readable form for the use of research libraries and scholars everywhere, while still a gigantic task, would certainly be less formidable. It would doubtless still, with present methods, not be practical as a commercial or self-liquidating venture; some form of subsidy would presumably still be necessary, though it is to be hoped that it would not be impossibly great. It is the conviction of your reporter that the dream of an expanded, improved, and properly legible NUC will persist and that in a better day the means will be found to make this dream a reality—thus providing in the research libraries of this country a manageable thesaurus of approximately our total bibliographical resources, which, like the Gesamtkatalog in Germany (had it not been wrecked by the Second World War), would constitute a major portion of the bibliography of the printed output of the human mind. The work of the sub-committee of the ALA Board on Resources should not, therefore, it is hoped, be regarded as having recorded a failure, but rather as having established a bench-mark for the guidance of the more successful explorers and surveyors of a later time.

APPENDIX

Estimated Cost of Editing and Publishing the National Union Catalog

SUMMARY

A. PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS

1. Microfilming and photo-enlarging 2,600,000 cards from University of California and University of Washington Libraries and the Denver and Seattle Union Catalogs .................................................. $ 58,500

2. Filing into National Union Catalog a total of 4,800,000 cards representing above and supplements on hand (at $.027 each) ........................................................... 129,600

3. Pre-editing of gross National Union Catalog of 15,000,000 cards to result in the elimination of 4,500,000 duplicates (at $.025 each) ....................................................... 375,000

Pre-edited National Union Catalog ........................................... 10,500,000

Less 1,500,000 entries for government publications, serials, music scores, manuscripts, paged analytics ................................ 1,500,000

Net entries to be published ................................................. 9,000,000

JANUARY, 1954
B. EDITING FOR PUBLICATION
   i. Pre-typing, editing copy and final typing (at $.32 per entry) 2,880,000
C. LAYOUT OF COPY FOR PHOTOGRAPHING 32,400
D. ADMINISTRATIVE AND OVERHEAD COSTS 375,955
   Total Preparatory Costs 3,791,455
E. PRINTING AND BINDING
   Format: Same as Armed Forces Medical Library Catalog, 4 columns, approx. 60% reduction, 90 entries to page, 1000 pages per volume. (See sample pages 1-6)
   1000 sets of 89 volumes each ($7.50 per volume) 667,500
   Total cost of 1000 copies of 4-column publication 4,458,955
   For 500 sets at $9 per vol., deduct $267,000.
   For 200 sets at $10 per vol., deduct $489,500.
   Alternative Format: 3 columns, approx. 40% reduction, 50 entries to page, 1000 pages to volume. (See sample page 7)
   1000 sets of 164 volumes each ($7.50 per volume) 1,230,000
   Preparatory costs 379,955
   Total cost of 1000 copies of 3-column publication 5,021,455
   For 500 sets at $9 per vol., deduct $492,000.
   For 200 sets at $10 per vol., deduct $902,000.

By ANDREW D. OSBORN

The Future of the Union List of Serials

Dr. Osborn is assistant librarian, Harvard University Library.

The Union List of Serials (ULS) is one of the greatest landmarks of American librarianship. After nearly thirty years of constant use it has come to be recognized as a tool of proven and indispensable value. It is a monument to Harry Miller Lydenberg and others for its promotion and planning; to Winifred Gregory Gerould for its compilation and editing on a realistic basis; and to the H. W. Wilson Company for its successful publication in the face of tremendous difficulties. Great and lasting credit attaches to all who have been associated with the work.

A thirty-year program is coming to completion this fall with the publication of the second and final supplement to the second edition of the ULS. Together with its supplements, the second edition records, for more than five hundred libraries in the United States and Canada, the holdings of periodicals and periodical-like publications whose first issue appeared previous to 1950. The second supplement rounds out the ULS as we have known it. This supplement should be bought by libraries because it will not be superseded by anything now being planned and because it has the record of wartime and postwar publications.

Impressive as the record of the ULS is, the full story is not told until the three complementary union lists are added: for the serial publications of foreign governments (1932), American newspapers (1937), and the publications of international congresses (1938). None of these other lists went into a second edition or a supplement, so it has been a matter of concern to librarians to realize that the union-list program has not gone ahead uniformly. Nevertheless the various lists repre-
sent a solid accomplishment, and the next generation of librarians must find the way and the means to continue a task so excellently started.

**NO THIRD EDITION**

The Joint Committee on the Union List of Serials, which for a number of years has been responsible for the union-list program, has decided that there will be no new edition of the **ULS** as such; likewise that there will be no more supplements. The committee realized that the breaking point had been reached, in terms of both editorial costs and the burden to contributing libraries, particularly the larger ones which have been called upon to assist the editorial work by providing much bibliographical aid in addition to the cost of checking. It was also realized that the old program involved much repetitive work, since libraries that checked for the first edition generally had to do all the work over again for the second: so a program should be sought which would permit the reporting of a title once and for all.

Accordingly the Joint Committee on the Union List of Serials has recommended that the first phase of union-list activities be concluded with the second supplement to the second edition, and that a new phase should be instituted forthwith. In this new phase the Joint Committee is lending its weight to two developments, both of which are possible through Library of Congress statesmanship and leadership. The first of these is a monthly list, cumulated at least annually, of serials that began publication on or after January 1, 1950. This work, called **New Serial Titles (NST)**, began publication in January, 1953, although a good many months had to elapse before its true nature as a union list could be realized. The second development is a punched-card file, under active discussion at the Library of Congress but still to be realized, of virtually all serial titles, new and old, in American and Canadian libraries. Once this program is well under way repetitive work should to a large extent be eliminated, and there should be adequate control over serial resources in the two countries.

**NEW SERIAL TITLES**

The **ULS** was conceived primarily as a reference tool for the location of sets. It is true that the smaller bulk of the individual supplements gave them added though limited value as an acquisition tool. But it was left for ____ to provide real book-selection value through the relatively small monthly issues. So the new publication is designed to serve both acquisition and location purposes: the former through the individual numbers, the latter through the cumulations. The plan is to supply at least one holding for each original listing, and to add further locations in the annual cumulations.

The scope of **NST** reflects the universal outlook that characterizes the new phase of union-list activities. Some types formerly excluded (e.g., annual reports and house organs) will now be comprised. But newspapers, certain categories of municipal documents as yet to be defined, and some minor types, such as comics, will still be excluded. Moreover there will be limited listing of United States government documents and United Nations documents. The Library of Congress will supply the entries for these two classes of serials and will specify that complete sets are usually found in depository libraries. One other qualification: titles which began publication prior to January 1, 1950, will be excluded, even though they were not included in any previous union list.

The Joint Committee on the Union List of Serials has introduced a new concept into the picture of serial control, namely that of primary bibliographical responsibility. As libraries report new serial holdings to the Library of Congress, one or preferably two of them will be asked to undertake the primary responsibility for maintaining a complete file and for reporting to the Library of Congress, whenever desirable, essential data relating to the file (cessation of publication, change of title, etc.). Consideration is being given to the possibility of publishing such data in **NST**. If a library accepts primary bibliographical responsibility for a given title, it should follow up more strictly than otherwise to see that its set is complete. It should have in its files some distinguishing mark for the titles it has assumed responsibility for; a distinctive color for the relevant cards on the visible index, a tab, or a tickler system of some kind. In this way work for **NST** can at the same time constitute a contribution to follow-up work, an area in which libraries have generally been notoriously weak. If a library cannot find the means to do thorough follow-up work on all its serials, it can help by paying
proper attention to the files it undertakes to maintain complete.

So the introduction of the idea of primary bibliographical responsibility is an attempt to guarantee the completeness of one or two files per title, and at the same time to have the history of an item made generally available through the cooperative interest of no more than two libraries. Since the Library of Congress is very much concerned with the problem of serial control, and since it has—very roughly speaking—about one serial title out of every two held by libraries in the United States and Canada, it naturally would be one of the two libraries accepting bibliographical responsibility in a high proportion of the cases. The other would be chosen from among the institutions that are ready to cooperate; especially a library closely connected with the issuance of a serial (e.g., a state library for the serial documents issued by its own state, or a university library for the serial publications of its own university.)

NST then has immense possibilities for extending to serials a larger measure of control than ever before. It is in effect a current union list of wide scope. And in addition it is a long awaited book-selection tool that should be checked regularly to see what new titles should be acquired by gift, purchase, or exchange. Contributing libraries must provide the entries to supplement those of the Library of Congress so the success of NST will be guaranteed.

THE FULL PROGRAM

Now to take stock. NST is gradually taking shape. Further, we have the four bibliographies produced during the first phase of ULS activity. These tools must be husbanded to serve libraries for many years to come. It may not be possible to replace an out-of-print volume, and it may be a number of years before the introduction of the punched-card system can provide an adequate substitute. So we find ourselves in a transition period during which we must safeguard the values we hold and actively plan for the still better years ahead when the critical problem of serial control will have been reduced to more manageable proportions.

The essence of the new program is the establishment and maintenance at the Library of Congress of a national union list of serials on IBM cards or a similar control method. This consummation must await the procurement of the necessary funds, approximately $1,000,000. In the formative stages contributing libraries will be asked to go through their official catalogs to report all serials they hold. That will be a less expensive process than the preparation and checking of preliminary checklists such as were used in the compilation of the ULS.

With such an inclusive tool in existence, libraries will still make use of the bibliographies provided in the first phase of union-list work. They may well have recourse to local and regional lists, too, before they call on the national union list in Washington. But, over and beyond this the punched-card records can and must lead to an active publication program. Probably there will never be a published alphabetical list of all titles, though it is possible to think of a number of centers in the United States and Canada where copies of the punched cards can be housed and serviced, provided these centers are ready to finance the operation. Instead of an alphabetical list, we should look forward to the continuous publication of topical, country, and regional lists, plus lists of the holdings of individual libraries. The possibilities in this direction are enormous.

A TIMELY DEVELOPMENT

Future historians may well refer to the next fifty years of library work as the age of serials. The latest annual report of the Library of Congress lends support to this possibility by saying that we are now in an era of serial publication. It says:

In the three-quarters of a century since 1876, the flood of serial publications has continued unabated. We now find ourselves in an era of serial rather than book publication. This mushrooming of serial publication may be attributed, in large measure, to the rise of popular education, the increase in the number of scholars, scientists, and technicians, all desiring to communicate with one another, and the growth of democracy with its concept of reporting at least annually to the people the progress and activities of a government, an institution, or a society.¹

Moreover, the Library of Congress estimates that 75 per cent of the publications it

(Continued on page 118)

receives are serial in form, truly a staggering figure. And Charles H. Brown has indicated the prominent role that serials play in the field of science, by his samplings, which show that from 90 to 95 per cent of the bibliographical footnotes in scientific publications refer to articles in serial publications. More than ever, serials can be called the backbone of the research library. Harry Miller Lydenberg was right when he wanted to collect serials and current pamphlets for the New York Public Library, for he knew that out of such publications would come the monographs of the future.

In the comparatively near future we can anticipate the application of television facsimile reproduction machines to library purposes. The research libraries of the country should before too long be linked up in a network of these machines, so the resources of one can without delay be made available for all, and at a reasonable cost. When that day comes there should be a larger measure of bibliographical control over serial publications than we now enjoy, since we can fairly anticipate that the greatest demand will fall on serials. And herein too lies part of the reason for developing the idea of primary bibliographical responsibility in the collecting of serials.

So we can see the ever-increasing significance of the union-list program. In the years that lie ahead, with their emphasis on the cooperative collecting and utilization of serials, we are fortunate in having the enterprise and leadership of the National Library in Washington to guide us. But the Library of Congress needs the full cooperation and support of the contributing libraries, for the burden is very great. We must not rest on our laurels. We must not sit back and say that the back of the union-list problem has been broken, no matter how proud we may be of past accomplishments. As far as the ULS is concerned our philosophy must be that the reward of good work is more work.

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