

(7) At what level of efficiency is scanning of journals done?, etc.

The other functions, covered in Chapter III, are review of the state of the art, establishing reliability of a source, redirecting attention to different approaches or aspects, eliciting feedback from other scientists, helping to assess the position of a topic within the current research market. The topics for research suggested in this chapter are: (1) What is incidence of communications serving the function? (2) How many of these involve forms of communication that are problematical? (3) How important to science were these experiences? (4) How did they come about? and (5) What are the corresponding experiences of those who lacked easy access to these sources?

Chapter IV, which provides supplementary comments on the main channels of communication, points out that the average number of journals read is thirteen, that biochemical and chemical literature is dispersed less than zoological literature. Similar miscellaneous notes are included on reviews, abstract journals, conferences, and personal contacts.

This study is interesting in that it represents an attempt by trained social scientists to develop a clearer statement of the nature of the problems of scientific communication and to isolate those that might profitably be studied. Unfortunately, despite the stress laid on isolating non-conventional forms of communication, there is little exposed here that is not common knowledge among the practitioners in the field of special library work or documentation, and the program of investigation might have profited from using the current management engineering technique of including in the survey team at least one person who is competent in the discipline being investigated. The fundamental problem in this type of approach to the problem of scientific communication is that it attempts to derive reliable data from the consensus of a group that does not include specialists in the field in which they are being queried. This, like asking visiting bankers what they think of the cooking on railway dining cars, may elicit consensus but may not necessarily point to valid action. This is best exemplified in the discussion of review journals

(p. 140-145) in which of fifty-three men asked to list the distinguishing features of good and bad reviews, twenty-nine failed to give any and those that did give features for identifying bad reviews couched them in such general language as to be meaningless in operational terms.

Probably one of the most important features of this report is its recognition of the limitations of the method, or perhaps even the questions, in view of "the nature of specialization among the basic researchers. . . ."—*Ralph R. Shaw, Graduate School of Library Service, Rutgers University.*

Dorking Conference

Proceedings of the International Study Conference on Classification for Information Retrieval. Held at Beatrice Webb House, Dorking, England, 13th-17th May, 1957. London: Aslib; New York: Pergamon Press, 1957. 147p.

The *Proceedings* of the International Study Conference on Classification for Information Retrieval, held at Beatrice Webb House, Dorking, England, May 13-17, 1957, makes widely available the principal addresses, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations of the Conference. The forty invited participants represented a broad national spectrum including France, Germany, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Unesco, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Invited representatives from the Soviet sphere did not attend.

It seems possible that the long-range significance of the Dorking Conference will not emanate so much from its own substantive achievements. The limitations of conferences of this kind in terms of valid research achievement are obvious. But as pragmatic devices to create a more conducive mental environment for cooperative research in needed areas, conferences of this kind find a level of reality and usefulness. In this sense, the addresses themselves at Dorking may be regarded as a kind of "busy" embroidery-work around this deeper, pragmatic function. They cover a wide range from pious generalities, to "chauvinism" concerning a particular system, to highly specialized

dissertations on classification technique. However, it is in terms of the depth and maturity of its deeper function—as a collective focus and appeal for research—that the Dorking Conference will either prove viable or wanting in the years ahead.

As a crystallizing medium for needed research, the Dorking Conference may prove limited to a certain extent by its inferential definition of research. To be sure, if all of the successive recommendations were fulfilled, applied knowledge and technological know-how in classification and information retrieval would unquestionably be enriched. Research, for example, is called for in the area of analysis (facet, relational, codifying, semantic, synthetic, and linguistic). Research is also proposed in the development of classification schedules, and in the designing of a universal scheme. Upon review, these recommendations, given great weight and detail at Dorking, would appear to gravitate more about classification engineering than classification research, and to lend themselves more to mechanical and technological in-

ventiveness than to the objective methods of academic research.

Much less emphasis is placed upon logically researchable areas such as quantitative and qualitative usage studies, and comparative analysis of internal characteristics of information systems, such as relative efficiency or cost. These vital areas, awaiting fuller research, are defined in the Dorking recommendations but with detectably lowered enthusiasm and reduced detail. It is interesting, for example, to compare the maturity and foresight which accompanies their description at Dorking, with the research prospectus of the Washington International Conference on Scientific Information, 1958, which de-emphasizes application and technique in order to isolate, in a highly detailed manner, those areas lending themselves to a variety of objective research methods. It is quite possible that the ideas expressed at the Washington Conference may have some influence in accelerating research in areas of classification and information retrieval.—*Frederic D. Weinstein, New Haven State Teachers College.*

Comment

“Human Relations Training for Librarians? Yes, But—”

The suggestion that library schools offer courses in interpersonal relations, as set out in the article, “Human Relations Training for Librarians?” (*CRL*, XIX (1958), 227-29) at first found this reader in agreement.

Then he found himself resisting the proposal. Or at least doubting its efficacy.

The proposition—that there is a definite need for librarians to study and understand the dynamics of human behavior—is beyond dispute. That point was well made by Mr. Anderson and Dr. Kell. It is true that library work is a service occupation-profession: essentially, we help others carry out their purposes in pursuing the use of library materials (and in so doing seek our own fulfillment). And it follows that we ought to work hard at comprehending the wondrous workings of the human mind and

the complex of emotional responses which combine to produce motivation, attitudes, action, and reaction.

Still, the writer wonders about the proposal that courses adapted specifically to human behavior in the library field be taught in library schools, or as part of library school curriculum. In fairness to authors Anderson and Kell he freely acknowledges that it is easier to render critiques of others' proposals than construct a recommendation of one's own. What follows is not intended as a rebuttal, but only a summation of the reasons for the doubt in his mind about the proposal.

The proper study of man (in the sense under discussion) would seem to rest with the behavioral or social science faculty offering basic undergraduate instruction in sociology, psychology, philosophy, cultural anthropology (and perhaps a graduate course in human dynamics).

Few persons probably would disagree with