

Book Reviews

Reference Work and Its Tools. By A. K. Mukherjee. Calcutta: World Press Private Ltd., 1964. 335p. Rs 20.00; 30s. 6d.

The chief librarian of Jadavpur University has endorsed the liberal or maximum theory of reference work in an introduction which combines a discussion of its philosophy, concepts and principles, nature and techniques, and organization, with a guide to a selected list of useful reference tools. This theory, according to Mr. Mukherjee, "takes its stand on the delectable doctrine of direct provision of information and unavoidable obligation of the library, and obviously develops as a corollary of the original concept."

The proliferation of the literature of science, social sciences, and the humanities, and the increased amount of research requires more extensive reference service, made more difficult because of the inadequacy of abstracting journals, indexes and bibliographies, the varied forms of publication, and the increase in interdisciplinary approaches in modern research. Within this setting the author outlines fourteen categories of work which include not only answering inquiries, preparing bibliographies, assisting readers in the use of the library and interlibrary loan, but also maintaining special indexing and abstracting services, providing a translation service, collecting information regarding library resources, and cooperating with bibliographical centers and union catalogs. Documentation work and documentation service are further discussed and their processes briefly outlined. The nature of reference service in different types of libraries—public, college, university, school and special—is summarized.

One chapter on library organization gives instruction on building the reference collection, evaluation of reference tools, qualifications of the reference librarian, interlibrary loan, and organization of material. The latter visualizes a centralized reference department, "which is in a more favorable position to offer reference service than a decentralized and scattered network of sectional or departmental ones." Mr. Mukherjee recommends that the reference books be shelved according to the categories under

which he has treated them in his chapter on reference tools: "Dictionary, Encyclopedia, Geographical Reference, Year Book & Almanacs, Biographical Dictionary, Educational Reference, Directory, Handbook and Manual, Bibliography, Serials' Reference, and Government Documents." With this arrangement there may be some disagreement, especially among American librarians whose reference collections are classified according to the scheme used for the rest of their collections.

Nor will American librarians find the chapter on 643 reference tools particularly useful, since it is unfortunately marred by inconsistencies in bibliographic form, typographical errors in names of authors and publishers, failure to note the most recent editions, and in a few cases, questionable assignment of a title to a particular form. General characteristics and uses are given for each category, but descriptions of individual titles must be sought in a separate chapter which gives descriptive annotations of 265 titles, most but not all of which are included in the classified section.

It is difficult to defend the alphabetical title arrangement of the annotated list of Western reference books, and equally difficult to defend the two alphabetically arranged appended lists, one entitled *Indian Reference Tools (Conventional)*, the other, *Indological Source Materials*. All three would be more useful if prefaced by a clear statement of the criteria for their selection, which are not readily apparent from an examination of the lists.

A short bibliography lists twenty standard guides to reference materials and reference work, which may be used by the student to augment the highly condensed text. The author is to be commended for covering such a wide range of topics in such a small volume.—*Frances Neel Cheney, George Peabody College.*

Libraries and Universities; Addresses and Reports. By Paul Buck. Edited by Edwin E. Williams. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964. 172p. \$3.95.

Paul Buck has had a distinguished career