THE MECHANICS OF BOOK ORDERING

Harold Sander

The tasks which the ordering agency of a library performs and the methods used in performing these tasks are determined by the functions and responsibilities assigned to that agency, the place of the agency in the library’s organization structure, and the legal restrictions which it must observe. Translated into more specific terms, the activities and procedures of the ordering agency will be dictated by its relations to the book selection processes of the library, its part in budget control, the laws of the state or municipality which affect its purchasing procedures, and the reports which it is required to make to the library’s governing board, to the library administrator, and to other library agencies.

With the purpose of expediting the work of ordering and receiving library materials, the function of the Order Division of the Indianapolis Public Library has been limited to that of a purchasing agency for the library, responsible in addition for making certain reports, for processing materials received, and for financial records related to these materials.

Book Selection and Bibliographical Data

As the Indianapolis Public Library is organized, the responsibility for book selection, for the preparation of bibliographical data, and for checking to ascertain that the book is in print and is not already in the library’s collection resides with the agency administrators and the Coordinators of Adult and Children’s Services. Many acquisitions departments, however, especially among academic libraries, are responsible for such bibliographical work and, to varying extents, for the library’s book collection. A survey published several years ago,1 based upon a questionnaire answered by 31 American university libraries, showed that in only four of these institutions does the acquisitions department have no part in the selection process. Those acquisitions departments which have such responsibilities also maintain, of necessity, desiderata files, consisting of titles unobtainable immediately because they are out of print and those which cannot be purchased because they are too expensive and/or which the librarian hopes to obtain through gifts or exchanges. In such libraries the acquisitions librarian is responsible for watching dealers’ catalogs, for submitting

Harold Sander is Director, Indianapolis (Ind.) Public Library.
want lists of out-of-print titles, and for maintaining the lists, records, and correspondence involved in exchanges. In the Indianapolis Public Library, however, where desiderata files are not extensive, the responsibility for maintaining them and for checking dealers' catalogs rests with the individual agencies.

**Budget Control**

As a consequence of the policy of relieving the Order Division of any book selection responsibility, that of budget control is also placed upon the agency administrators, the Coordinators of Adult and Children's Services, and the Supervisors of Central, Extension, and School Services. At the beginning of the fiscal year, each agency is assigned a materials budget and an estimated discount based upon the record of discounts during the previous year. The Order Division reports monthly to each agency an estimate of the amount of its budget which has been obligated to date and the approximate balance, taking into account the estimated discount allotted to the agency.

Some libraries, among them the Chicago Public Library and the Enoch Pratt Free Library, keep a record of and report the actual cost of materials. At Pratt, where the cost of materials charged to each agency is recorded on ledger cards, the Underwood Model C bookkeeping machine is employed to make all the computations and notations directly onto the cards. The entry for each agency shows the sum charged against the agency account and the accumulated amount charged since the last report. A monthly report is made to the agency. In the Chicago Public Library each agency is given a semimonthly authorization card showing the amount of money authorized to be spent during the next semimonthly period and the average discount to be used by the agency. After the books have been received and processed, the order cards are attached to the invoice and routed to the bookkeeping unit of the department. Here the actual cost of each item appearing on the invoice is distributed on tally sheets and charged to the appropriate agency. Once a month a report is made showing the cost of materials charged to each agency during the month and the total to date.

Among those libraries which employ the "unit" system of budget allocation are the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Circulation Department of the New York Public Library. In this system each agency is assigned a designated number of "units," each equal to an approximate amount in dollars and cents; the records of expenditures kept by each agency and reported monthly by the order department are in terms of "units." Presumably the libraries using this method feel that an estimated account is sufficient and that an estimated account is more easily kept when expressed in units than in dollars and cents. (Something of the same method is used in the Indianapolis Public Library in binding budget allocations, where each agency is
allotted a certain number of volumes rather than a stated amount of
money.)

The Cleveland Public Library\(^4\) employs an interesting procedu-
ral variant in its book of quota sheets which is issued quarterly to
each agency. Each sheet consists of identical halves, separated by a
perforation. The agency is responsible for recording on both halves
the information concerning the total quota, the amount already ex-
pended, the amount obligated by the current order, and the present
balance. One half of the quota sheet accompanies the order, while the
other remains in the book as the agency record.

Choice of Vendor

The Indianapolis Public Library places the major portion of its
book orders (for the year 1962-63 approximately $90,000 of a ma-
terials budget of $190,000) with a jobber, for several reasons, most of
which are recognized by public libraries doing a large volume of busi-
ness: a jobber usually gives discounts as good as, or better than,
those offered by publishers; the placing of orders with one vendor in-
stead of several simplifies ordering procedures and reduces the
amount of paper work necessary; a reliable jobber is often more ef-
cient and prompt in filling orders than are publishers. Furthermore,
since this library operates under the jurisdiction of the Indianapolis
Board of School Commissioners, purchases of $500 or more must,
according to state law, be submitted to competitive bidding. To avoid,
therefore, the necessity of curtailing the library’s book orders to
amounts less than $500 or, alternatively, of submitting each purchase
of $500 or more for bids, the Board of School Commissioners adver-
tises annually for bids on a contract to supply the greatest portion of
the book requirements at a given discount for certain classes of books.

Besides the major contract, the Board also has a contract with
one publishing firm and its affiliates guaranteeing a given discount on
all books, including reprints, issued by these companies. In addition
to the orders placed under these contracts, the Board reserves the
right to place orders with publishers offering better discounts than
does the jobber and to order direct from the publisher materials not
falling under the terms of the contracts and/or not available from
these two sources. Among the materials ordered directly are pam-
phlets, continuations, films, and phonodiscs. An annual periodical
subscription list is submitted for bids by periodicals brokers. In addi-
tion, the Board has contracts with several publishers under the “Pre-
view” or “Greenaway” plan and a $12,000 annual contract with a book
lending company for the rental of current titles.

According to a survey made by Fleming Bennett\(^5\) of 25 public
libraries and 42 college and university libraries, it is the more usual
practice of both public and academic libraries to place the major por-
tion of their book orders with jobbers. The survey shows, however,
that academic libraries as a rule place a much larger percentage of their orders with publishers than do public libraries, no doubt because they purchase a greater proportion of materials not ordinarily handled by jobbers.

The extent to which books are purchased from local bookstores is determined by various factors. A major consideration is the easy accessibility of a bookstore with a large and varied book stock. As the Indianapolis Public Library learned in the past in dealing with a local bookstore, not many have the stock available to supply the orders of large public libraries requiring multiple copies of many of the titles requested. Such libraries usually prefer placing their entire order with a jobber rather than filling it partially at a local source and then sending the remainder to the jobber. Another consideration, as Bennett points out, is the location of the library in relation to book distribution centers. He notes particularly that libraries in the Southwest are impelled by their distance from dealers to buy more from local sources than they might otherwise choose to do.

An interesting experiment in purchasing from local bookstores has been reported by two universities in California. Dorothy Keller, of the University of California at Berkeley, reports the results of several weeks' trial of bookstores situated conveniently near the library. Each week a list of in-print British and American titles wanted by the library was taken to each of a group of five bookstores situated in a relatively small area. Those not in stock at the first bookstore were submitted to the second store on the list, and so on. Since each title had been previously assigned an order number, those titles procurable in this manner could be billed and sent immediately. She reports that 50 to 70 per cent of titles were thus obtained in the local area and were received by the library in two to five days after being ordered. The initial procurement cost per title was 67 cents, later reduced to 53 cents, as compared to 28 cents per title when ordering was done in the conventional way. The greater cost, she felt, was justified by the promptness of delivery and the reduction in the order department's work of keeping records, making claims, etc.

A similar experiment, inspired by the University of California experience, was made by A. S. Pickett of the San Francisco State College. Previously, he reports, the library had been using about 800 vendors to procure its books. The principal suppliers had been a local branch of a national textbook wholesaler which offered good discounts but slow service, and a branch store of a textbook jobber which gave satisfactory service but had a limited book stock and offered small discounts. Although this library discontinued the experiment after 15 weeks, Pickett reports that the trial enabled the library to select as suppliers two or three bookstores which maintained good stocks and offered good discounts.
Preparing the Order
Under the system followed in the Indianapolis Public Library, requisitions forwarded to the Order Division from the offices of the Coordinators of Adult and Children’s Services show the combined requests of all agencies and, when necessary, the special fund to which the item is to be charged. The first step which the Order Division takes is to sort the requisitions, grouping those which are to be charged to appropriated tax funds, gift funds, or trust funds. Those items which fall into the last two classifications are handled separately, since they must be ordered and billed separately.

The requisitions for titles to be charged to tax funds are then sorted according to the sources from which they will be ordered: the principal jobber with whom the Board of School Commissioners has a contract; the publisher with whom the Board has a contract; firms selling prebound copies of juvenile titles; government documents for which coupons will be sent; pamphlet material priced under one dollar which will be ordered from their individual sources and paid for in stamps; films and phonodiscs, which will be ordered direct from their source or distributor; and nontrade items amounting to less than five dollars, which will be ordered direct from their source and paid for by check by the library business office before the bill is forwarded to the Board of School Commissioners.

After this preliminary sorting, the Order Division follows the procedures enumerated below. (Although the processes described are those followed in preparing an order for the jobber, they are carried out with only minor modifications for orders from all sources.)

1. The total list price of items in the order is tabulated for each requisitioning agency.
2. The total list price of the order is determined.
3. The order is typed on multiple order forms.

On each order form is indicated the number of copies desired by each agency requisitioning the title. When the order has been typed, the requisitions, stamped with the date and the word “Ordered,” are returned to the original authority agencies (those authorized to requisition first copies); no notification is sent to the duplicate authority agencies (those restricted to requisitioning added copies of titles requisitioned by original authority agencies) whose orders are combined on the requisitions from the original authority agencies. Single requisitions from duplicate authority agencies for titles already in the library collection are similarly stamped and returned to the requesting agency.

Order Forms
The order form used by the Indianapolis Public Library is a multiple copy order form commercially printed according to the
library's specifications. On each, in addition to the necessary bibliographical information, the Order Division records all agencies requisitioning the title, the total number of copies desired, the name of the vendor, and the purchase order number. Like other city agencies, the library must submit its orders on a purchase order form prescribed by the state; we are, however, permitted to attach our order slips to the purchase order, instead of listing the titles directly on that form. Spaces are provided for the Order Division to enter the invoice number and the date upon which the title is released to the Catalog Division.

The Indianapolis Library's multiple order form consists of four copies: the original, to be retained in the outstanding order file; the vendor's copy; the process copy, which accompanies the item to the Catalog Division; and the "pack slip," which with the corresponding copies of the entire order is retained in the "pack file" until such time as all the titles in that order have been either received or finally canceled.

In many libraries additional copies of the multiple order form are used, often as many as nine or ten. Two university libraries, for example, have been reported as using copies for ordering Library of Congress cards as a temporary card in the public catalog, as a temporary shelf list card, as a second copy to the vendor to be returned with the book, as a record for department accounting in the order department, and as a notification to the individual requesting the book of its arrival.

Since each copy of the order forms means added cost both in the purchase price and in the expense of maintaining an added routine or another file, each library must balance these costs against the convenience or operational efficiency afforded by these added files or routines. These gains will not all be found in the order department itself, but in other departments of the library as well; in addition to the obvious correlation between the procedures of the order and the processing departments, the efficiency of the staff dealing with library users may be enhanced and the convenience of the patrons served by routines which entail added costs in time, materials, and personnel in the order department.

The Indianapolis Public Library, for example, does not use LC cards and therefore has no need for an extra copy of the order form to be used in the process of ordering LC cards. Because the Order Division finds it convenient to check in books with the invoice, it does not send to the vendor a second copy of the order form to be returned with the book. Since each agency files a copy of requisitions submitted and since the Order Division places orders as soon as it receives the requisitions, the agency has a record of what has been (or in the immediate future will be) ordered. Though no doubt both staff and library users would find it convenient to have on file in each
agency, as well as at the Information Desk or in the public catalog, a record of the exact date upon which orders have been placed, or of the receipt of materials by the Order Division, this added convenience has not been judged sufficiently urgent to warrant the addition of the processes necessary to perform such routines of notification.

In the effort to improve the speed and accuracy of their ordering and book budget accounting routines, some libraries make use of data processing equipment. When this equipment is employed, a "unit card" for each item is prepared by a keypunch operator. On this card are recorded the bibliographical data, vendor, list number, and agency. If known and readily obtainable, classification number and subject heading are added; otherwise, they are added after receipt and examination of the material.

Cards are duplicated, arranged as agreed upon by the vendor and the library, and listed. One set of cards and the list is forwarded to the vendor for his use; the cards are returned to the library by the vendor in each item which the vendor furnishes. In the meantime, the other set of cards is posted to the agency budget allocations in order to encumber the funds. Upon receipt of the items, the vendor's invoice, and the returned "unit card," the cost price is punched into the latter card. Agency budgets are debited or credited as necessary to reflect expenditures. These "unit cards" are then matched with the duplicate copy on hand and both are made identical. One accompanies the item through processing and becomes the main entry card for bibliographical control. The other is retained in the data processing or order department for additional manipulation as desired (e.g., the number of items, the unit cost and total cost by publisher, cost and/or items by class number). As noted by Wulfekoetter,\textsuperscript{11} the public libraries of Boston and of Montclair, New Jersey, where IBM cards are used, employ the "unit cards" in the preparation of information pertinent to budget planning, departmental allocation of funds, purchases for adults and children, and additions to special collections.

Some users acquire and control all periodical subscriptions on data processing equipment. In these cases each card indicates title, list price, vendor, length of subscription, expiration date, number of copies, and agency. Lists submitted to jobbers may be accompanied by a duplicate set of cards if useful to the jobber. Also, the cards are used to encumber budgets and show expenditures in a manner similar to the procedure in book acquisition.

The use of such equipment in the acquisition procedures is strongly advocated by Catherine MacQuarrie of the Los Angeles Public Library, who urges: "Some business methods can be applied to books as well as groceries. Then the many files and cross files now kept in order departments could be eliminated and machines used . . . . Can book ordering be systematized so that machines can be used? Can record keeping in order departments be reduced to tabulating cards so
that lists... can be made without the endless typing that now goes on in order work? Can invoices, bill payments, and the clearing of records be reduced to machine processes? Can order librarians and vendors solve their mutual problems if they consult more?"12

As long ago as 1953 the Milwaukee Public Library13 was using machine punched cards, in combination with a multiple order form, in the acquisition procedures, as well as in their shelflisting, circulation, registration, and other routines. Of the information to be obtained from punched cards, the Chief of Processing and the Head of the Tabulating Division wrote: "These studies give a basis of facts so we can improve purchasing techniques, know better the character... of acquisitions, get the most for our money, and smooth the peaks and valleys of our incoming orders, so that we can better organize the continuous flow of work. The necessity for the use of off-hand judgments is minimized." Of the role assumed by the Tabulating Division in the handling of payment for materials, they wrote: "Formerly our office kept four ledger books, but we now need only two typings and one of these is a punched card with many uses;... and the number of checks issued is being reduced more than 50 per cent."

The University of California Library at Berkeley employs machine punched cards, in combination with multiple order forms and a hectograph master form, to supply necessary order, notification, and cataloging forms for both books and serials and for punched cards to be used for bookkeeping procedures in the acquisitions department.14

The cost of data processing equipment, Wulfekoetter15 points out, has prevented its general adoption by libraries. Those libraries which have adopted it are those which are connected with a larger institution or governmental unit which already possesses the necessary equipment or whose operations are large enough to justify economically the installation of such equipment, and/or which, like the Milwaukee and the Decatur,16 Illinois, Public Libraries, are able to exploit fully its possibilities throughout the library system. In order to keep to the minimum investment, some libraries have begun with only the card punching machine by means of which the essential order information can be transferred to punched cards. In such cases, Wulfekoetter suggests, the punched cards can be taken to the manufacturer’s service bureau to be run through the sorting machine for a fixed charge, or possibly a machine in a conveniently located office may be shared.

Some libraries have used marginal punched cards, such as Key-sort, which require no expensive punching or sorting equipment. To eliminate the necessity of typing multiple order forms from the punched cards, marginal punched cards especially designed for acquisition work have been included as part of the multiple order form. If the punched card is carefully planned, Wulfekoetter claims, this "combination can give the library data to be obtained from IBM
cards plus multiple forms without the need of any machine or copying from one form to another.\textsuperscript{17} Over 30 classifications which can be coded on this type of card are listed by McGaw.\textsuperscript{18}

In their efforts to reduce the amount of typing necessary, a number of libraries utilize Addressograph plates and Multigraph or Multilith stencils in the preparation of orders and other order and catalog records.\textsuperscript{19} Using these devices effectively means that before the orders are prepared the full cataloging information should be acquired and the decision as to how the book will be cataloged must be made. Further considerations relative to the adoption of the Addressograph for this purpose are that the typing of metal plates is a noisy operation and that the limited size of the Addressograph plate permits only simple cataloging.

Some libraries, for various reasons of internal economy, have preferred to retain the use of order blanks instead of replacing them with multiple order forms.\textsuperscript{20} Some are not permitted to discontinue the use of order blanks because of the requirements of the institution or the governmental unit with which they are connected. However, that the regulations imposed by such governing bodies may be modified to allow the use of multiple order forms is evidenced by the practice of the Indianapolis Public Library. This library has worked out procedures by which the Order Division transmits to the governing body, the Board of School Commissioners, the purchase order required by law, upon which are entered the name of the vendor, the number of items ordered, and the price, without the necessity of listing each separate item.

Whereas the procedures described in the foregoing pages have consisted of the adaptation of forms and equipment for the purpose of accelerating acquisition routines, those employed by W. B. Ready,\textsuperscript{21} of the Libraries of Marquette University, and recommended by him as potentially profitable and timesaving for any library, aim at elimination of many of the files and processes considered normal in an acquisitions department. Using the seasonal publishing lists of Publishers' Weekly, he checks forthcoming titles to be ordered. Three duplicate copies are then checked, one to be sent to the book dealer, one to remain in the acquisitions department, and one to be sent to the catalog department, where it will be used to order LC cards. Books are shipped by the dealer accompanied by an invoice, and once a month a bill is presented for payment.

In recommending this method of ordering, Ready writes: "The process of ordering can become exceedingly intricate and expensive, it would seem, of its own volition. When that volition is added to the proper tendency of order librarians to keep control of their expenditures, a very complicated enterprise can result. The more complicated does that enterprise grow, the more it
tends to become tedious and time-consuming . . . any means that can overcome that malaise in the technical processes needs to be prosecuted."

As he indicates, although in extremely passing fashion, this method of ordering would not be readily acceptable in a library desiring to maintain a strict and accurate accounting of funds committed and funds expended. Furthermore, in libraries such as the Indianapolis Public Library, where each agency requisitions its own materials and is responsible for remaining within its budget, the adoption of this plan would be difficult. However, it is conceivable that if order routines become unbearably burdensome, libraries may seek some simplification such as Ready suggests even though it would entail radical changes in procedures.

Another expedient by which the preparation of book orders might be accelerated is proposed by Harrer and Ladenson.23 Pointing out that all articles in a Sears and Roebuck catalog may be ordered by number, and further, that many publishers already use for their own convenience code numbers for their own books, they recommend that a system be evolved by which each publisher in the United States be assigned a code number and that each book brought out by these publishers be assigned such a number - the two numbers used together serving to identify volume and publisher for both the library and the vendor. Such a system, the authors believe, would not only lessen the clerical work of the library and simplify the work of the vendor, but would also prevent confusion about editions and publication dates.

Hard-to-Get and Out-of-Print Books; Foreign Language Books

For many libraries, especially academic, materials in the above categories constitute a major problem. For the Indianapolis Public Library, however, where the larger portion of book purchases are current titles, the relatively few out-of-print and foreign language books which we purchase are acquired through checking dealers' catalogs and by ordering direct from the dealer. To the acquisitions department requiring many out-of-print titles, J. E. Skipper24 suggests that want lists be sent to such periodicals as the Antiquarian Bookman, which circulates to a large number of dealers, or that a mimeographed list be placed with a group of several dealers, asking that they report on the items in stock. Either method will allow the acquisitions librarian to compare prices on some of the items. Skipper further suggests that if both these methods fail to bring all desired items, the library may then place a list of the remaining titles exclusively with one dealer for a given period of time; at the end of that period those titles not produced may be placed with another dealer. If the dealer is known to be dependable, he may be commissioned to send any titles
priced under a certain amount, and thus eliminate the time and paper work involved in correspondence about them.

A service offered to libraries wanting both out-of-print titles and in-print items not handled by the conventional jobber is that of Superbooks (White Plains, N.Y.), which, according to the Library Journal, is used with satisfaction by many libraries, including the New York Public Library. This service offers to locate out-of-print books and to supply those advertised at reasonable prices and to quote, before supplying, those which appear at questionably high prices. In-print titles not handled by the library’s regular jobber will be ordered direct from their sources. According to the Library Journal, Superbooks pays directly to the source for the items ordered and bills the library monthly; thus the jobber assumes much of the burden of correspondence and paper work involved in this type of work and is often able to obtain a much greater discount than could the library. The jobber’s charge for this service is 20 per cent of the wholesale price plus postage, or a minimum of 75 cents per item.

Checking-in Books

The contract made by the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners with vendors specifies that each shipment of books be accompanied, or immediately followed, by an invoice in duplicate. Upon the arrival of the invoice, the order forms for items listed on it are matched with the invoice and the books received. After the books have been examined for their physical condition, the order and process forms for those items which have checked out satisfactorily are dated, the process forms are attached to the books, and the books are forwarded to the Catalog Division. Any adjustments necessary because of price changes are made in the estimated record; and the original order forms are filed in the received file, where they are retained for approximately one month, chiefly as a source of information concerning items about which requisitioning agencies may inquire.

Reports, Cancellations, and Claims

Under terms of our contract, the vendor is required to report in writing any title in the order which is temporarily out of stock, which is issued by a publisher whose books he cannot handle, which is not yet published, or which is out of print and therefore unavailable. The vendor will order books temporarily out of stock, will hold orders for titles not yet published, and will cancel orders for books which he cannot furnish or which are out of print. Cancellation of orders for items not obtainable either from the jobber or from the publisher is recorded on the process copy of the order form, the form is forwarded to the Coordinator of Adult or Children’s Services as notification, and the necessary amount is credited to the agency’s account in the
estimated record. The original copy of the order form is filed in the cancellation file.

The extent to which forms are employed by any library to communicate with the vendor concerning reports, cancellations, necessary adjustments, and other unfinished business is determined by the frequency and number of such inquiries. These factors, in turn, are determined by the volume of materials purchased by the library and the percentage of materials ordered which it is difficult to procure or which must be ordered from vendors unaccustomed to dealing with libraries. The Indianapolis Public Library has not found it necessary to prepare forms for such communications. Many acquisitions departments, however, have found it useful to employ added copies of the multiple order form and/or form letters for this purpose.26

Payment of Bills

When all corrections and adjustments in the invoice have been satisfactorily made, the next step is to present them for payment. In the Indianapolis Public Library, those bills which are under five dollars are forwarded to the library business office, where they are paid by check from the petty cash account. Bills of five dollars or more must be forwarded to the Board of School Commissioners for payment. Since by law these bills must be accompanied by an affidavit signed by the vendor, each order of five dollars or more, when sent, is accompanied by an affidavit, or a “Vendor’s Invoice Claim Blank,” with the request that the vendor supply the information requested on the form: the date of the invoice, the vendor’s invoice number, and the amount of the invoice. This certificate of nonpayment of money due is returned with the invoice, checked with the invoice by the Order Librarian, and approved by the Director. Twice a month a bill list is made up and forwarded to the Board for payment, accompanied by one copy of each invoice and by the certified affidavits. The duplicate and triplicate copies of the bill list are filed in the Order Division and in the library business office.

At the end of the month all expenditures for materials are entered on the cash record showing the amount actually spent for each of the adult Central agencies and the totals for the juvenile agencies, the adult extension agencies, and the School Services Department. Since the cash record is one of the tools used to determine the average discount received on materials purchased for each agency, the list price of materials as well as the actual cost is recorded here.

Conclusion

While each library has its own procedures, based upon its own needs, obligations, and resources, a backward glance over this paper serves to remind library administrators that equipment and procedures may be altered in the interests of economy and efficiency; that no
library has, as yet, discovered the only possible nor probably the best possible procedures, forms, and division of work to accomplish the task of ordering and receiving library materials; and that the library's decision concerning the investment of funds in labor-and time-saving equipment and forms will have to be based upon an exact knowledge of the balance between these costs and those of employing a larger work force needed when these items are not acquired—plus an assessment of the availability to the library of qualified employees. Certainly it is to be expected that the present trend among libraries to set up regional centers and to foster cooperation among individual libraries in their buying and cataloging, by increasing the volume of order work to be done in any one center, may make more economically sound the use of bookkeeping and data processing equipment and various pre-printed forms for ordering, claiming, listing, and notification.

The vagaries, however, of libraries' individualistic purchasing practices in relation to vendors and their effect upon the cost of procuring materials need to be considered carefully. Publishers and dealers complain of the lack of uniform practices among libraries and point to the special processing which these variations require as an important cost factor. Daniel Melcher,27 in discussing the proposal of the R. R. Bowker Company to add a charge of one dollar to every order processed which requires the processing of an affidavit, or voucher, of nonpayment, points out that this one extra routine adds to the publisher's or dealer's cost in filling the library's order and so ultimately to that of filling all orders. Other special demands by some libraries—that extra copies of invoices be furnished or that all back-ordered titles in any one order be filled before payment is made for any of the books included in that order—have made service slower and costs higher.

Most of the special requirements cited in the foregoing paragraph are those imposed upon libraries by the purchasing regulations of the institutions, governmental units, or other authorities under which they operate. What effect the rigid application of such regulations may have upon the ordering procedures of a library is pointed up by the case history of an industrial library reported in Special Libraries.28 This library, among other absurdities, was required by central purchasing office regulations to submit the requisition for each item on a separate purchase order. As a result, the cost of processing one purchase request was estimated to be seven dollars.

To libraries bound to rigid adherence to purchasing procedures unsuitable to library materials purchasing operations, Melcher says, "In many public institutions it has been necessary to do no more than discuss with the city financial fathers the important distinction between procedures set up for procuring carloads of coal and those more suitable for procuring books. Often it has been easy to agree on special procedures for books . . . to the considerable advantage both
of the city and the library." That it is possible to secure modification of such regulations is borne out by the experience of at least one university library, as reported by S. E. Matthews.

H. R. Galvin, a librarian turned vendor when his library became distributor for a local history of the county which the library serves, submits the following complaints concerning special requirements of libraries: requests to submit invoices in duplicate, triplicate, quadruplicate, and quintuplicate; requests to enclose specified color of order slip in book with shipment; stating that labels and packing must bear purchase order number; asking that invoices be submitted to one address and books shipped to another; special invoice forms for supplier to complete; special affidavits supplied for vendor to sign and supply with invoice; notices that orders are automatically canceled if shipment is not received by specified date (often a date in advance of the announced date of publication); and a variety of demands about shipping charges.

Both Melcher and Galvin suggest that studies be made which would result in the establishment of standards of desirable ordering procedures. Such standards, established with the backing of the American Library Association, would encourage libraries to examine their own practices and would assist those handicapped by legal or institutional requirements to bring pressure to have these requirements modified in the interests of economy and efficiency. As Galvin writes, "Even laws are written by men . . ."

REFERENCES


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.


15. Ibid., pp. 187-189.


20. Ibid., pp. 198-199.


22. Ibid., p. 85.


29. Melcher, op. cit.


32. Ibid.