Introduction

ROBERT B. DOWNS

In launching a new journal upon the library profession, already surfeited and perhaps at times even inundated by existing literature in the field, the University of Illinois Library School has not rushed in rashly. A long period of discussion and serious thought was devoted to the question of, first, whether there was a need and place for another library periodical, and, second, if the answer was affirmative, what kind of journal? Advice was obtained from persons in other institutions with points of view as nearly impartial and objective as possible. Only after being fully convinced that a genuine and worthwhile contribution to librarianship is possible, did the Library School decide to establish Library Trends.

Because of the variety and extent of publishing in the field, it was the consensus of advisers that library science has reached a stage in its growth where synthesis and interpretation are required. Media for reporting original research and current developments are probably adequate. In no existing organ, however, has one been able to secure a well-rounded view of the state of progress of any particular area of librarianship. No source has brought together widely scattered fragments into a coherent and connected whole. It was agreed, accordingly, that this sort of integration should be the primary aim of Library Trends. Initial inspiration for the plan came from observing the notable success of the Annals of the American Academy, the Review of Educational Research, and the Law Forum, which follow similar patterns.

Proceeding on this premise, a further decision was made, namely, to inaugurate publication by a series of issues on major types of libraries. To obtain a broad perspective and to provide a foundation for more specialized treatment later, each of the first several numbers of Library Trends will be concerned with a specific branch of the field, i.e., college and university, public, school, special, and governmental libraries. In substance, the purpose is to offer a general status quo...
statement of social, political, educational, and economic tendencies now affecting libraries, with some forecasts of things to come and attempts to identify areas in need of further investigation. The present issue, dealing with the principal trends in college and university libraries, opens the series.

If anyone questions the desirability of doctoral programs and other research in librarianship, he should be convinced, by a perusal of these papers, that the surface of studies needed has barely been scratched. In virtually every division of the profession considered herein, it is apparent that there are innumerable opportunities, and in many instances an urgent want, for more experimentation and up-to-date research. To illustrate, the following questions are selected, more or less at random, from comments and suggestions offered by contributors to this issue of Library Trends:

What should be the relationship of audio-visual services to the library? What are the educational advantages of separate undergraduate or lower-divisional libraries in universities? Are subject-divisional types of library organization more expensive to administer than traditional forms? How can cataloging be adapted to the specialized needs of subject-divisional organizations? Does the use of library materials vary radically among scholars in different subject fields? How do scholars and research workers use catalogs and other bibliographical aids? Could changes be made in the period of loans or in the collection of fines that would make many circulation records unnecessary? What criteria or principles should be used for withdrawal of material from collections? What form of library catalog is preferable—book or card, divided or whole, etc.? How can the products of the new graduate programs in library education be evaluated? What kind of preparation makes for success in librarianship? Can some types of library material be processed more economically and satisfactorily on a decentralized basis? How can the principles of management be applied most effectively to library problems? What are the potentialities of television for promoting library public relations? What has been the impact of microphotography on library resources? How can scientific bases be devised for evaluating and planning library buildings? How can the contributions of engineering be efficiently utilized in library lighting, heating, air-conditioning, and other mechanical aspects of library architecture? Would it not be desirable to have regional libraries, such as the Midwest Inter-Library Center and the proposed Northeastern Regional Library, fit into some logical national plan?
Introduction

These are representative of a multitude of questions raised by the papers herein presented. They point to the fact that contemporary American librarianship is a dynamic, growing organism, never satisfied with static conditions. As recently as twenty-five years ago, few of these queries would have been asked, for situations to which they apply are themselves new. Even the research approach to library problems is a development no more than a generation old, with perhaps a few scattered exceptions. Here the University of Chicago Graduate Library School played a conspicuous role, and its influence has been profound since about 1930.

The authors of this number of Library Trends by no means limit themselves, however, to propounding questions. One gets, on the contrary, from reading their surveys of various topics, a sense of gratifying, and in some instances spectacular, accomplishments. All along the line, advances are taking place, and it is apparent, at least in some areas, that we are on the threshold of greater things to come.

One dominant impression emerges from the evaluations and syntheses prepared by the several contributors. This is that the college or university library is emphasized as an educational force, and, growing out of that fact, increasing attention is being paid to the needs of individual library users, ranging from the entering college freshman to the established scholar, in all types of institutions from the junior college to the large and complex university. The reader is the focus of interest to Mr. Ellsworth in his review of trends in higher education, to Mr. Swank in his consideration of the educational function of the library, and to Mr. Dunlap and Mr. Orr in their discussions of public services and public relations. The same reader is less directly apparent, perhaps, but is obviously on the minds of Mr. Wright when he writes on technical processes, and of Mr. McAnally and Mr. Coney when they deal with matters of organization and management. He may well have been looking over the shoulders, also, of Mr. Vosper examining resources, Mr. Reece planning buildings and equipment, Mr. Williams raising questions about cooperation, Mr. Thompson preparing librarians for the profession, and Mr. McCarthy trying to find funds to finance the increasing cost of library operations.

It is for the library's clientele, patrons, readers, users, or however we wish to designate them, that we, as college and university librarians, establish divisional and undergraduate libraries, provide unhampered access to book collections, set up special study facilities, bring audiovisual aids into the library, improve the efficiency of lighting and air-
conditioning, arrange buildings conveniently for use, appoint expert
staffs for guidance and reference work, organize operations to insure
prompt and efficient service, try to simplify the library catalog to make
it intelligible to the layman, build up rich resources for research, and
work to maintain good public relations. The more progressive the
library, the more it centers its program around the reader’s needs and
interests.

Many divisions of librarianship are in a state of healthy ferment
today. Those concerned with library buildings and equipment provide
a notable example. An architect of 1925 would scarcely recognize
the most advanced product of his 1952 colleague. Once having re-
covered from the shock, however, the architect and librarian of a gen-
eration ago would probably be delighted with the simple lines, the
flexibility, the pleasing use of color, the convenience of arrangement,
the effective lighting, and the other highly functional aspects of our
newest library structures. They would be no less startled by, but
quickly reconciled to, the equipment and furnishings—scientifically
designed, utilizing new materials, attractive in appearance, and inviting
to the user.

The great pioneers in library cooperation, such as E. C. Richardson,
would be gratified if they could read the chronicles by Mr. Vosper and
Mr. Williams of impressive progress in the development of resources
for research, and of such broad gauged enterprises as the Farmington
Plan and the Midwest Inter-Library Center, though Mr. Williams,
rightly, is inclined to examine these projects with a critical eye. His
questions deserve careful thought.

Another lively area is that of technical processes. For the last decade,
approximately, as Mr. Wright points out, a movement has been gather-
ing momentum towards unification of all technical divisions in larger
library systems, greater simplification of cataloging methods, increas-
ing mechanization, and inauguration of other steps to speed the work
and reduce the cost while at the same time improving the product for
the ultimate consumer. Mr. Coney on management and Mr. McAnally
on organization deal with related aspects of this problem.

The status of personnel in college and university libraries is by no
means standardized. Equally wide open, as Mr. Thompson brings out,
is the question of the best preparation for professional librarians. Per-
haps too much uniformity in either preparation or status is neither
possible nor desirable. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence both of
more highly qualified staffs and of better recognition of the place of librarians in colleges and universities throughout the country.

Concerning the financial support of college and university libraries, Mr. McCarthy shows that the picture is a mixed one. Large institutions are holding their own under inflationary pressures better than small colleges, and publicly supported ones better than private institutions. On the other hand, in terms of expenditure per student, the universities under private control are continuing to set the pace, as they have done in the past.

Altogether, these twelve papers offer a comprehensive view of the state of college and university libraries at mid-century—the advances, present conditions, problems and future prospects. There are many reasons for satisfaction in this over-all look, but few causes for complacency as we tackle the many important tasks ahead.