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Current Trends in Special Libraries

HERMAN H. HENKLE, Issue Editor

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OCTOBER, 1952

Current Trends in Special Libraries

HERMAN H. HENKLE, Issue Editor

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Introduction: What is Special?

HERMAN H. HENKLE

A library, in our best professional use of the term, is a planned collection of books, manuscripts, and other records, i.e., a collection selected and organized to meet the reading, study, or research needs of a specific clientele. Types of libraries, then, it would seem, may be distinguished by two principal characteristics, the clientele served and the nature of the collection, the former being the primary determinant of the latter.

College libraries, public libraries, and school libraries are types of libraries for which definitions written by different librarians would be in agreement in most respects. For special libraries this is not true, possibly because the generic meaning of the term “special” does not carry over into its specific use. One standard definition obviously does not apply, “special” being defined as “designed for or assigned to a specific purpose; limited or specific in range, aim or purpose.” Under this meaning, the college library and the school library are special libraries. In this sense, most libraries are special in greater or lesser degrees.

Twice before, the writer has allowed himself to be caught in the question, “What is special?”1,2 The first attempt at an answer was feeble; and the obscurity of the medium of publication will, fortunately, assure that it will not be widely read. In the decade which elapsed before the second attempt, his thoughts had clarified somewhat; and what was then written appears to be still worth reading. The basis for this probably lies in the fact that the writer had finally caught up with John Cotton Dana, who fathered the special library movement.

What has already been written will not be repeated here; but it is desirable to look briefly at the question as a preface to the papers which follow. The key word in the answer is “service.” This is pointed up by the opening sentence in Rose Vormelker’s paper on “Special Mr. Henkle is Librarian of The John Crerar Library.

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Library Potential in Public Libraries." It is necessary, however, to qualify the term "service," for service is a prime objective of all (or nearly all) libraries and librarians. So we say, "special service"; but what is meant by that? We have quoted before one of the best definitions, which bears repeating. It is Moriarty's definition of the function of a special library. "Typically it is sustained and continued service of securing assessed information, not limited to print, for one group, often in one field of knowledge, but equally often in several fields." 3

Stated another way, special library service involves participation by the librarian in the seeking and organization of information for specific purposes. As a matter of fact, the librarian in many special libraries is the principal user of the libraries' collections. The ultimate form of such service is completion of the total library research job for the client, be he the officer of a company receiving the exclusive attention of the library or a general reader drawing upon the resources of a public library. Perhaps we can crystallize this line of thought by stating that when any librarian does some of a reader's library work for him, the librarian is giving "special service"; and when a primary part of his job is doing library research for readers, he is a special librarian, regardless of the subject matter of the search or the type of library in which the search is made.

Perhaps for many this discussion has only added to existing confusion of terms. This may be true for those who think of special libraries as being identified primarily with the literature of particular subjects. It may be true, especially, for those who view the special library as being identified primarily with private libraries in business or industrial corporations or other organizations. For these we will try to clarify the position taken, by brief comments on each of the two divergent points of view.

To the first point it can be said that normally there is subject limitation in most special library situations. This is true, especially, for librarians doing the total job of information analysis from library sources. A degree of subject specialization is an inherent requirement of such service. On the other hand, there are many library situations where, although there may be a primary subject field, there are many collateral subjects due to the nature of the clientele interest. Libraries of banks, insurance companies, and advertising firms are good examples.

The very large number of libraries in companies as compared with the number of subject departments in public libraries is undoubtedly
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the reason for the common acceptance of the company library as the *typical* special library. In the sense that typical is determined by the commonest characteristics of that which exists, the company library is the typical special library. Functionally, however, this is not necessarily so. It will be noted in Miss Vormelker's paper that first interest in an association for special librarians sprang from the interest of librarians doing "special work" in public libraries. There are numerous indications that the thesis of Miss Vormelker's paper may indicate a new trend in the interest of public libraries in special library service; in any case we can hope it will serve to incite one. The possibilities of such development are illustrated even more sharply by such institutions as The John Crerar Library, which can be described as a public special library in all connotations of the term.

The other papers in this issue of *Library Trends* throw additional light on the nature of special librarianship and present some of the problems of current importance. Mrs. Strieby's paper on "Organizational Relations of Special Librarians" demonstrates the extent to which principles of modern management have direct application to special libraries in industrial organizations. Of special note are the illustrations of the intimate relation of the company's library to its research activities and the close integration of the library into the total administrative organization of the company.

In Mr. Shera's paper on "Special Librarianship and Documentation" lies the heart of our answer to the question about what is "special"—historical, contemporary, and in future projection. Here we find an analysis of essential elements in the dynamics of library service which should dispel much of the confusion of terms. From this analysis we should be able to extract, more clearly than many of us have heretofore been able to formulate, a philosophy of special librarianship freed from uncertainty of purpose.

Dr. Taube's paper on "Specificity in Subject Headings and Coordinate Indexing" deals with one of the most perplexing technical problems of the special library, namely, the subject analysis of publications. It throws a revealing side light on the problem of applying general principles of library techniques to special library problems, as well as attacking directly the validity of a long accepted principle of subject cataloging.

Of special interest to American librarians is the group of three papers by Messrs. Carter, Collison, and Izant on special librarianship abroad. Mr. Carter portrays the international activities, especially in
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the program of Unesco. Mr. Collison relates some of the ways in which British librarians are coming to grips with the present-day problems of disseminating scientific information. And Mr. Izant shows how a special international group is mobilizing library service to the organization and distribution of medical information. It is interesting to note the lack of limiting factors in each of their papers, on the activities of special libraries.

The final paper by Mr. Waters on “Special Library Education” develops most fully the areas of uncertainty in the concepts librarians have of special libraries, especially with respect to the educational requirements of the profession. The most hopeful aspect of the paper is the informal report on studies now in progress about what the special librarian should know in order to perform adequately his full share of responsibility in the intellectual community. This is a trend of great potential significance, and one to whose results our professional educators should be particularly alert.

Closely related to this problem of professional education is the lack of general understanding of the role, potential as well as real, of the librarian in dissemination of information. Mrs. Strieby joins Mr. Waters in wondering whether “the term ‘special librarian’ has been a misnomer from the beginning,” and whether some more descriptive title might be substituted. Miss Vormelker, too, makes reference to the same question. The problem is accented with particular sharpness by Mr. Shera in the final paragraph of his discussion of the historic development of special librarianship and documentation, in which he points out the danger that librarianship may “lose control of its very substance” in the divergence of special librarianship and documentation.

Read as a group, these papers can clarify the concept of special librarianship and make a constructive and timely contribution to this vital aspect of the profession of librarianship as a whole. Certainly, we special librarians have a vital stake in nurturing our own professional inheritance.

References

Organizational Relations of Special Librarians

IRENE M. STRIEBY

Why should the special librarian be interested in an examination of his relations existing within the framework of managerial activities in his organization? Obviously it is because he is a part of management and therefore participates in the activities designed to aid in procuring effective, concerted operation of a business enterprise. Business and industrial librarians have in common certain bonds of organization to recognize and to safeguard. The term “organization” has a dual meaning; it signifies a business entity as well as structural and functional relationships existing among its personnel.

Special libraries are no more alike than the firms they serve, which may be manufacturing, merchandising, or service corporations. Manufacturing companies vary from small units, making one specific item, to large ones, decentralized by type of product. Service and merchandising organizations may also be small, operating entirely within one location, or they may be large and broken down by geographical area. Even the largest of these may operate in a completely decentralized manner or perhaps through subsidiaries. Many of these organizations maintain libraries. The emphasis of this discussion is placed upon industrial libraries with occasional reference to those in other types of profit-making institutions.

Libraries maintained by business, each created to meet a definite need, likewise fall into any number of organizational patterns. Some are limited in scope; they may serve only the industrial relations division, perhaps even a segment of it such as the training department. Others may be attached to the market analysis, engineering, or patent departments, existing, in each instance, to expedite the work of a specific group. When this situation obtains, other libraries may exist in the same organization. Library service is also offered on a company-
wide basis, possibly departmentalized by subject interest. In the multi-
plant, multiproduct, multidivision companies, one is likely to find
libraries in any or all locations, each operating under one of the var-
iouis self-contained units of the parent corporation.

The Industrial Research Institute included these questions in a mem-
ber survey: “Is your scientific library a part of the Patent Department?
If not, of what department is it a part?” Practically all members re-
ported it a part of the research division. While this finding does not
reveal the existence of other libraries in the companies queried, a sur-
vey made by members of the Science-Technology Division of the Spe-
cial Libraries Association indicated 76.3% of the libraries reporting
served the entire organization, and 23.7% served only one department.
With this information, as well as personal observation, as a guide,
library service herein is conceived in terms of a plant-wide function.

**The Industrial Climate**

The librarian, concerned with the information needs of his organiza-
tion, is a professional employee insofar as his technics of acquiring,
organizing, and disseminating information are concerned. In adapting
himself to this phase of work, he may need to study, among other
things, the corporation’s annual reports, its products, and the com-

munity in which it is located. In his relations with management he is
a businessman; he understands that libraries exist to provide service,
therefore they must justify operational costs. He realizes that he has
staff, i.e., advisory, functions and, at the same time, is responsible for
the operation of his own department. Therefore, there are certain prin-
ciples of business organization which must be observed.

In considering this subject, many difficulties present themselves.
One is the dearth of literature contributed by special librarians on the
concept of their organizational relations, consequently a review of the
subject is exceedingly difficult to document. Identifying only a mini-
mum number of these relationships, Goff pioneered in stressing their
importance to the attainment of library objectives. By far the most
philosophical discussion is that by Shera, who emphasized the small-
ness of the special library unit when compared to its parent organiza-
tion, suggesting the librarian would do well to disregard, for the most
part, administrative doctrine applicable to public and university li-

braries and to choose, as his polestar, the particular objectives of his
supporting enterprise.

Another handicap is the absence of standardized terminology. The
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literature of business administration has developed few terms that mean the same in every organization, hence these may be inadequate for comparative purposes. For example, the term “group leader” in many organizations is used for the lowest rung on the administrative ladder, while in others the term is either nonexistent or is confined to the laboratory area where the group leader may even head a team cutting across divisional lines over which he has no administrative authority. Occasionally the group leader may be a person with considerable responsibility and authority, answering to a department head. Even “department” and “division” do not always carry the same connotation; either term may be used to indicate major functions, one subordinate to the other. In one company, the engineering division may be charged with research, whereas in another company, it may be concerned solely with plant maintenance or production tooling.

Corporate organization, furthermore, may be meaningless to those who have never come into contact with it. This fact, together with difficulties mentioned above, make it imperative for the librarian first, to regard his organization as an individual situation, by obtaining a clear picture of its structure in order to identify his efforts with its main objectives; second, to gain thorough understanding of company policies in order to operate within, and never in conflict with, them; and third, to establish harmonious relationships, with clear perception as to how much depends upon individual contribution. It is taken for granted that his professional and educational preparation equip him for this adaptation process.

To Whom Does the Librarian Report?

Everyone in a supervisory position wishes to report to someone as high in the chain of command as is possible since he feels he can do more effective work with fewer hurdles to negotiate in securing approval for his ideas. There was a time when one heard: “The librarian must report to the president of the company in order to maintain a position of objectivity toward all.” In order to learn actual practices in industry, the American Management Association recently surveyed the number of executives supervised by the president in 141 corporations. One of the questions covered was “Who reports to the president?” Many of the companies queried may not have libraries, but it is significant that the librarian was mentioned not once in the replies.

It is altogether possible that when companies were less complex in their operations, many librarians did report to the president, who, at

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the time, may have had many others doing the same. While authorities differ on the ideal number of subordinates who can be supervised effectively by a single person, there is general agreement that the higher the executive, the fewer persons he should have reporting directly to him. This principle of “span of control” renders it unlikely that the librarian will be found among top management in a manufacturing corporation large enough to utilize formal organization structure for effective administration.

To whom, then, does the librarian report? The answer to this is no indication of standard practice; one can never do more than compile a list indicating titles of various officials of business concerns, among which might be the Secretary, Vice-President in charge of Industrial Relations, Office Manager, or Director of Market Analysis. Regardless of his supervisor’s position in the hierarchy and his administrative title, the real basis of rapport is the cooperation fostered and maintained by this relationship. Librarians, like others, accept direction graciously from persons of superior ability; they do resent reporting to persons whose abilities do not exceed or equal their own.

The pattern most often observed is one wherein the librarian reports to the head of the research division or to his executive assistant. Mees and Leermakers\(^6\) recommend departmental grouping of library service along with reports, patents, and editing, the Director of Research delegating its operation to Head of Technical Information, still retaining for himself responsibility for some laboratory-company relationships. Since company practices are not standardized, one would not expect librarians to answer to the same official in every organization nor to find the library always connected with research. For example, the business librarian of the Hercules Powder Company reports to an officer of the company, while the librarian of its research division reports to the manager of the experiment station.

**Place on the Organization Chart**

In depicting anatomy of corporate structure, the organization chart will indicate to whom the librarian reports. It is an indispensable administrative tool in showing channels of authority. It may also indicate management’s concept of the relative importance of the library’s function in relation to all other units. The fact that there is no uniform place for the library on such a chart is but a reflection of the fact that there is no mutually exclusive field for the operations of an industrial library. Two charts are presented here both of which illustrate the role
Organizational Relations of Special Librarians

of the library in company structure and the closeness of its relation to those who make company policies in these two well-known firms (Figures 1 and 2).

In comparison to the number of charts of industrial firms examined, the number for merchandising and service corporations was small. Safeway Stores, Inc., with 2,125 retail outlets, is organized in three major divisions—distribution, supply, and service. The librarian is the manager of Lansing Library Service, answering to the president's staff member in charge of one of the seven major service units. In this particular business concern the library appears to be in a good position to carry out its company-wide service effectively. The library is found in an unusual place on the chart of another organization, namely, under the Supervisor of Office and Building Services, who reports to the Manager of the Administrative Planning Department, who reports to the Controller's Division which, in turn, answers to the president of the company. One would need to know exactly how this library serves its organization if he is to understand why it is placed here. However, it is top management's prerogative to decide where component units are to be placed.

Recent examination of several collections of general organization charts failed, with only a few exceptions, to reveal the position of the library. Unfortunately, libraries do not exist in all of these companies, and, unfortunately too, the library may be placed at a level so low that it cannot be included in the general chart. Even the latest authoritative book on developing the company organization structure does not have the word "library" in its index. One has better luck in examining charts of specific segments of companies wherein the library is known to function. These, too, may be disappointing, but, on the whole, the library occupies a satisfactory "box" on the chart.

Formal organization charts do not tell us specifically how and where library policy is initiated. Library service may antedate the institution of formal organization charts by many years and the library may continue to operate in traditional fashion. Policies are usually promulgated one at a time in answer to specific problems; more often than not it is the librarian who initiates and perhaps formulates them. It is known that some librarians receive direction from a library committee. Replies were received from seventy-four well-known special librarians in a survey which included a question on administration. Twelve of this number report to library committees. In no instance, however, was there found on a company organization chart an example of a librar-
FIGURE 1

Research and Engineering Division—A. O. Smith Corporation.

The Technical Library is in the Research and Engineering Division but serves the entire organization. Full lines show direct channels of responsibility and authority; dotted lines show indirect channels. The darkened section emphasizes the area of cooperation necessary, in addition to lines of responsibility and authority, to develop the team approach to the fundamental objectives of research. Library policies are subject to the approval of the Director of Research and Engineering, who answers to the Officer-in-Charge. The librarian attends research meetings and is thus a recognized member of the research team.

Courtesy of Mary I. Williams, Librarian, A. O. Smith Corporation.
Secretary's Department—E. I. duPont de Nemours & Company.

The Technical Library is a division of the Secretary's Department, the latter being one of fifteen "auxiliary" departments; the Secretary is a member of the Board of Directors. The home office librarian is a division manager to whom is delegated adequate authority and attendant responsibilities for operating the library. The librarian is also responsible for a branch library in the new company office building. There are also libraries in the Legal Department and at the Experiment Station, as well as thirty others attached to various industrial divisions scattered over at least twelve states. The Technical Library in Wilmington maintains a catalog of the holdings in all duPont libraries.

Courtesy of Marie S. Goff, Librarian, E. I. duPont de Nemours and Company.
ian's reporting to a library committee; presumably such a relationship would be spelled out in the organization manual.

**Status of the Librarian**

Due to rapid growth of corporations, resulting in the addition of more echelons of supervision all along the line, a librarian has occasionally found himself in an ineffective position, in that his administrative problems were not handled expeditiously. This change in status, on the other hand, could work to his advantage in that it might give him direct access to line authority specifically concerned with auxiliary departments, of which the library may be one. This is in contrast to the possibility that many times in the past library problems had to give way to projects demanding immediate attention of the top executive to whom the librarian formerly reported.

There has been no evidence of a struggle for higher status among librarians in industry such as there has been among those in the university field. This may be due to a number of reasons, the chief of which is that the librarian's status has seemed reasonably satisfactory to him as he interprets his job in terms of the entire organization as well as in relation to the other types of library positions available. Moreover, results of his work give a librarian certain prestige which does not lend itself to correlation with any level of supervision. He has chosen a career of librarianship rather than one in administration; he centers his efforts on group activity, less and less concerned with individual goals. If he feels it is necessary to seek improvement in status, his action is probably related to library development rather than an end in itself.

Another less obvious reason for apparent disinclination to attempt ascent via the administrative ladder is the unwritten social code of some organizations which frowns upon striving for administrative prestige even though personnel policies dictate encouragement of growth of the individual on the job. The fact that women hold the majority of industrial library positions may have some bearing on this question. As more men are attracted to these positions, a quiet but noticeable change may take place. The observation should also be made that librarianship, interesting though it is, is sometimes a dead-end road for the person who wants to "get to the top," not of his profession, but of the business organization he serves.

There have been notable exceptions to the observation made above. Two of them are women, one of whom has been made an officer of the
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largest bank between Chicago and the West Coast, the other, coordinator of twenty-three navy libraries in the Washington area. Two are men, one of whom has been made personnel manager of a Pittsburgh company and the other, sales manager of a St. Paul firm, at the same time retaining the title of librarian! It is significant that all four have held important offices in the Special Libraries Association—an indication, perhaps, of the value of professional contacts in the development of an individual. What is still more important is the fact that administrative experience, coupled with the ability to find and to interpret facts, has been recognized as a necessary qualification for positions of higher rank, and that special librarians have been promoted to these positions.

Title of the Librarian

The title Librarian is subject to a variety of interpretations from company to company. It may designate a person whose functional title may be anything from Chief File Clerk to Research Analyst to Head of the Intelligence Division. In fact, there are two types of titles with which the librarian is concerned; one is this functional title, which may or may not indicate his supervisory authority, and the other is his professional designation. The majority of librarians prefer the latter. Just as the term “librarian” is variously interpreted and sometimes loosely applied, there are wide variations in the title itself, whether it be professional or functional.

In government offices as well as in England the title of Information Officer has come into general usage. Simons recently said, “I do not like the term. . . . We are so snobbish to-day that we cannot bear to be ‘rankers’, and this means that, whatever our jobs, we must put the word ‘officer’ after them, as though that took us out of the horde of ordinary people, paid to work for a living.” He explains that the information officer need not be a librarian but the library should be under the direct supervision of the one responsible for bringing the book and the client together. The old controversy of subject specialization versus library training is likewise indirectly related to this question of title.

To variations of professional titles such as Company Librarian and Technical Librarian must be added the more recent one of Reports Librarian. The term Documentalist is another that is scarcely calculated to enhance the incumbent’s good organizational relations. Management will wonder if it must now provide a Documents Room as the
seat of his activities. To librarians, Documentalist is as unwelcome an appellation as is Archivist. Briet said, “The designation reference librarian seems, in the absence of an alternative, to correspond to the English title of information officer and the French documentaliste.” 13

As a matter of fact, documentation is only one of the facets of activity carried on successfully in a number of special libraries in the United States.

For a variety of reasons, one of which may be to gain vertical motility in the industrial hierarchy, the title of Librarian is occasionally laid upon the sacrificial altar. Other reasons for this may be that a librarian is thought of only as a custodian of books by the top level of supervision whereas the terms Chief, Division of Research Information and Head of Technical Information Services may be better management terms for positions encompassing a broad scope of duties. This question of terminology has been the subject of recent discussion. 14, 15 Who can discount its possibilities as a clearly defined trend of tomorrow? Perhaps it should be hailed as a step forward; perhaps the term “special librarian” has been a misnomer from the very beginning.

The Library as an Operating Department

Since the library functions as an operating department it has, of necessity, certain internal and external relationships inherent in its line duties. Not all libraries come within this category, for there are many so-called “one-man” libraries where the librarian functions within a framework of general policies and an occasional conference with the person to whom he is responsible. However, in this discussion, the library is conceived as one with a staff of not less than six, with individual efforts grouped around such line functions as service to the clientele and making materials available, with the librarian always in a position to delegate some responsibility.

First of all, relationships with library personnel make it necessary for the librarian to foster an esprit de corps—this intangible factor that is responsible for the will to collaborate in group effort, for loyalty to the organization, for compliance with company rules and regulations, for taking good care of library quarters and equipment, for self-development, and for professional growth. When this spirit is present, the staff takes pride in the accomplishment of both individual and organized effort. Thus the librarian can make constant use of managerial skills in handling human relationships and interpreting the organization to the library staff. The satisfying relationships created are, in turn, reflected toward the whole organization.

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Since the success of a business enterprise is directly related to the productivity of its employees, the librarian has responsibilities calling for interdepartmental relationships such as aid to the industrial relations group in studies of absenteeism, or examination of the library by a methods engineer who is called in to look at a problem objectively and suggest short cuts resulting in efficiency. It is also conceivable that the librarian might cooperate over a period of time with representatives of various departments in making a cost study of the library's abstracting procedure or in evaluating the efficiency of the periodical routing system. He must also maintain good relations with the personnel department in choosing employees whose training and abilities will contribute to the total output.

Related to the above but somewhat more specific, are external relationships due to financial operations. The librarian expects to be consulted in determining budget estimates, and he also expects monthly or quarterly reports of expenditures if this custom prevails throughout his organization. He works with his line supervision in suggesting reductions in expenditures, as well as in keeping expenditures within budget limits. Operating within the framework of general company purchasing policies, he follows purchasing procedures calculated to effect savings. The librarian also concerns himself with the salaries, perquisites, promotions, and replacements of staff—all having personal as well as financial angles which call for understanding relationships with others.

The Librarian as a Staff Specialist

The responsibilities of the library may also include services such as consultation with clientele about how the library staff may assist in a project, advice in respect to purchase of informational material contemplated by an individual, orientation of new employees, and assistance in control of expenditures occasioned by duplication of books and periodicals throughout the organization. These are usually referred to as staff functions of the library. Some confusion exists in the use of the terms "line duties" and "staff service." For aid in clarification the reader is referred to discussions by Reeves and Dimock as well as to the many excellent texts on management such as the one by Brown. He can then segregate the duties in accordance with his own interpretation.

No organization chart can portray the close working relationships among librarians and the clientele they serve. No organization manual can anticipate problems and resolve them into written policies which
will give more than general guidance to the librarian in his day to day relationships with those who call upon the library for service. The library belongs to everyone. Its maximum potential cannot be reached if this feeling is not prevalent in a business concern. The very nature of the librarian’s work demands that it not be circumscribed by lines on the organization chart indicating with whom he can and cannot communicate. The library is a communications center!

The librarian’s relationships are vertical, horizontal, and diagonal and thus cover diverse parts of the enterprise. It should be possible for him to “plug into” this resulting network at any specific spot in order to work efficiently. Likewise there should be direct access to the library from every level. If the president wants advice in planning for care and disposition of company archives, he will not route the question through “channels” nor will anything but a direct reply be acceptable to him. Even the mail boy would be irritated if it were necessary to ask his supervisor to secure, from the library, suggestions of colleges having good schools on business administration since he can consult the catalogs himself on the next mail delivery.

There are times, of course, when it is both judicious and necessary to use the formal channels of communication. Suppose, for example, the library is requested to advise with the continuous indexing of company publications. Acceptance of this responsibility could mean additional personnel, hence extra budget appropriations, as well as close interdepartmental relationships over a period of time. Depending on the amount of power delegated down the line, it may be imperative for the librarian to protect himself with approval from the person to whom he reports, who, in turn, may need to invoke a still higher authority in making the decision. Likewise the librarian attempts to maintain sound working relationships with individuals who make use of the library or from whom he seeks information for the benefit of others, taking care that neither company nor ethical policies are violated in the releasing of information.

Standards and Controls

In assessing total relationships, the librarian often feels at a distinct disadvantage because results obtained do not lend themselves to measurement in terms of dollars and cents. The library is usually regarded as an expense item of uncertain value in the over-all company budget. However, when library service, by producing facts at the right time, enables others to avoid costly errors, supplies facts that prevent duplic-
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cation of effort, initiates lines of inquiry through timely reporting of information, cooperates in instituting savings in operating costs not injurious to good service—in short, when it aids any member of the organization in doing more effective or more creative work—the library has a direct share in the making of profits, intangible as the process may seem.

It would be next to impossible to locate studies of company-wide library service in terms of specific costs because such information does not appear in print. No objective evaluative criteria have been developed. They would be difficult to produce because of variations in accounting practices, lack of standard terminology, and differences in services offered, both qualitative and quantitative. It is much easier, perhaps, to study certain phases of library costs if the library serves one specific section of a manufacturing corporation. This has been done by Anthony in his study of research operating costs based on 423 returned questionnaires. Tables are presented for expenditures of books and periodicals purchased per professional technical man, as defined by the author, and for the number of library and technical information service personnel equated to the total manpower employed.

In adapting himself to the industrial climate, the librarian learns to use the usual management tools of job description, job evaluation, and job classification. Special librarians have not published specific analyses designed to aid in relationships with the plant job analysis committee except for a formula recently devised which gives a practical approach to the problem in lieu of formal time study. Chaffee has recently spent some time with this problem, producing, within a specific frame of reference, a job evaluation study which gives the librarian a total of 450 job points out of a possible 1,200; this calls for a salary of $6,669, a sum he states is less than several competent librarians now receive. His salary figure is, of course, based on arbitrary assumptions of the dollar value at various levels in the point scale. If librarians are not satisfied with Chaffee’s conclusions, his efforts may serve to challenge them to produce a study based on actual practices.

Size of the company, its products or service, its competition, top management’s attitude, in addition to the competency of the library staff, are decisive factors in determining the breadth of library service. Additional duties may outstrip the growth of the staff, quarters, and budget. Southern compiled a checklist of activities in pharmaceutical libraries against which the librarian in this field is enabled to measure the quantity but not the quality of service. There are no established
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control procedures to offer, but the library clientele is small enough to enable the librarian to find out quickly what kind of job he is doing; therefore the librarian must depend upon his relations with management, from the top to the bottom, to guide him.

Trends and Conclusions

Trends in organizational relationships appear to be closely related to (1) increasing emphasis on the library as a communications center, supplementing its traditional functions of acquisition, organization, and dissemination of information; (2) company-wide library service in contrast to former practice of appending libraries to various departments; (3) tendency for autonomous divisions of decentralized companies to develop libraries rather than depend upon the library of the parent company for service; (4) more attention to a combination of subject specialization and library training as a job qualification; (5) changes in functional and professional titles of the librarian; and (6) the inclusion of the library as a part of a larger unit of technical literature service, such as the one at the Dow Chemical Company, soon to move into its new library building. The latter points are not general, but may be viewed as significant straws in the wind.

Business and industrial libraries, as units of management, are involved indirectly in all sorts of relationships—with government, with unions, with the community, with the library profession—but most important to the librarian are his organizational relations, inseparable from his position, as well as the human relationships underlying every other relationship, formal or informal. Although he has been motivated to make few contributions on this subject to the professional literature, who can say how much better he could have functioned had he had such tools? There are few yardsticks available for standards of performance, so, with the help of specialists within his firm, he must devise his own. When measurement is attempted, he must make sure that the units of measurement and their interpretation do, in fact, evaluate.

The librarian strives to handle both his staff and his line duties successfully, although a complete segregation of the two seldom exists. He does need to be informed of plans and decisions rather than be compelled to learn them by devious methods. In fact, it would be ideal, provided such information were available, if the librarian could know what will be concentrated upon for the next six months, the goal to be reached within the year, and what will receive emphasis the following
Organizational Relations of Special Librarians

year. The librarian who derives the utmost in professional satisfaction is one who has an understanding of his organization, who has a definite knowledge of his job and its limitations, and who maintains an open attitude toward progress, as can be said for any good employee.

The questions of title, of status, of authority, of organization charts, as well as the reciprocal relationships inherent in them, have not particularly concerned the librarian even though he studies them objectively. Sometimes it might seem as if he functions in spite of them rather than with them, possibly because he has taken too much for granted. If these managerial activities, however, provide known objectives and policies, support by an adequate budget, clearly defined responsibilities and authority, good working conditions and equipment, competent staff, and information on intramural events, he is a satisfied member of the organization and in a good position to contribute to the success of the business team.

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1. Personal communication to the author from the Assistant to Secretary, Industrial Research Institute, dated April 16, 1952.

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Special Librarianship and Documentation

JESSE H. SHERA

For half a century special librarianship and documentation have coexisted as separate, even disparate, manifestations of general library practice. At times their paths have crossed and recrossed, run parallel, or diverged sharply, yet every attempt to describe or define their relation to each other or to identify their place in the parent discipline of librarianship itself has been conspicuously unsuccessful. In large measure this failure to comprehend the essential unity of documentation and special librarianship as the focus of more general library objectives may be explained in terms of historic development, of nationality of origin, or of excessive restriction in the definition of function.

Admittedly, there have been many who have maintained that documentation was no more than a European term for a form of librarianship that on this side of the Atlantic has been called special librarianship; and there have been a few, like Ernest A. Savage,¹ who have stoutly insisted that the future of the general public library lies in intensive subject specialization and departmentalization. But the great majority of practicing librarians have not as yet grasped the true meaning and importance of this holistic point of view.

Specialization of library collections began at a surprisingly early date. The social libraries that spread so rapidly throughout the eastern half of the United States during the eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth, and were the first manifestations of a public library movement in America, had not long been in existence before a degree of specialization of function began to emerge. Certainly among the first to appear were those of the historical societies, the theological libraries, the legal collections for the use of the early bar associations and legislative bodies, and the agricultural libraries supported mainly

¹ Mr. Shera is Dean of the School of Library Science, Western Reserve University.
by local agricultural organizations. But perhaps the nearest parallel of the modern special library is to be found in the mechanics' and apprentices' libraries and the mercantile libraries that were so prevalent in the industrial and commercial urban centers during the 1830's and the 1940's. Even Benjamin Franklin's Junto and its descendant, the Philadelphia Library Company, began with the pragmatic need of the young artisans for materials that would improve their technical efficiency. The special library is deeply rooted in American library history.

Furthermore, there is ample evidence that the early advocates of the modern public library regarded bibliography, or more precisely, bibliographic organization, as the central problem of general librarianship even though they did not specifically state that the public library of the future should become a nucleus of integrated specializations. Men of the stature of Edward Everett and George Ticknor, especially the former, though they paid lip service to an assumed demand for "popular" reading materials, clearly envisaged the incipient Boston Public Library as an instrument that would serve the bibliographic needs of contemporary scholarship.

The Reverend John B. Wight, in urging library legislation, argued before the Massachusetts General Court, that one of the primary objectives of the bibliographic resources and services of public libraries was to increase the efficiency of farmers, mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, physicians, teachers, lawyers, and the other professional classes. Charles Coffin Jewett, the first American to lay the groundwork for a great national union library catalog, wanted to make of the newly-founded Smithsonian Institution a great national bibliographic and documentation center; and under his leadership the general problems of bibliography and bibliographic organization received a major share of the attention of those present at the first conference of American librarians. With like earnestness, William F. Poole believed that one of the major tasks of the professional librarian was to develop an adequate subject index to periodical publications; and again, largely through his leadership, when the American Library Association was founded in 1876 the deliberations of the group were dominantly concerned with bibliographic operations.

But by the close of the nineteenth century American librarianship had largely turned away from this original emphasis on the more effective bibliographic organization of its resources and had begun to think of the library as being almost exclusively an agency for popular edu-
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cation. This diversion, though unfortunate in its effect upon the future of American librarianship as a profession, was perhaps a natural consequence of the growing belief that in universal education was to be found the key to social progress. But however meritorious the objective, it had the disastrous effect of diverting librarianship from its proper concern with the analysis and organization of recorded knowledge, and instead directed most of its energies into activities which were alien to its institutional nature and could not be effectively translated into successful library operation. This diversion not only weakened the profession of librarianship by splitting it into two opposing factions, it created a barrier between the two that, even to this day, has prevented a common bond of understanding and a unanimity of action that have made it almost impossible for librarians to think clearly about the functions of the library in contemporary society.

At the very time that librarians were beginning to be lured by the will-of-the-wisp of "self-improvement," or "adult education," into the marsh-lands of popular culture, important events were taking place on the continent of Europe. In 1892 Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine, both of whom were engaged in assembling documentary materials in the social sciences, laid the foundation in Brussels for the International Institute of Bibliography (now the International Federation for Documentation) with its world bibliography and bibliographic center. Quite naturally they turned to the librarians for their techniques; they adopted, but extensively modified and expanded, the Dewey Decimal System of library classification to create their own Universal Decimal System; they adopted the standard library card for their bibliographic operations; and they turned to the catalogs of the great libraries of the world for the nucleus of their world bibliography.

Apart from these techniques, however, their point of view, their philosophy, had almost nothing in common with the practicing and professionally conscious librarians on this side of the Atlantic. In a real sense the work of these two men and their associates was a reversion to an earlier philosophy of librarianship, but because, in practice, it differed so markedly from the current vogue it came to be known as "documentation." This "new" discipline of documentation enlisted considerable support in England and on the continent, but for almost half a century American librarians remained largely oblivious to it.

But even in America, during these years, there was some dissension in the library ranks. Early in the twentieth century John Cotton Dana, librarian of the Newark Public Library, and a small group of like-
minded associates, became aware that there was a large group of potential library patrons, mainly among the commercial and industrial interests in society, whose "special" library needs were being neglected. The immediate result of this awareness was the creation of special departments in certain of the larger public library systems to specialize in service to this particular clientele; and in 1909 the Special Libraries Association was formed. It was not Dana's intent that this should be a schism from the ranks of the American Library Association. At the Mackinac Island Conference of the A.L.A. in 1910 he made a last desperate attempt to secure the incorporation of the Special Libraries Association into the older organization; but his efforts resulted only in keen personal disappointment and he was compelled to report: "My suggestions to the Executive Board in this line were as definitely ignored by the Board as have been many other suggestions from me. That there is a very active library organization, affiliated but not a definite part of the American Library Association is a fact which is not due to me but to shortcomings elsewhere." 8 He saw the rise of the special library as an almost inevitable consequence of the fact that the "library idea" had been "more or less academic, monastic, classic" while "the rapid development of special libraries managed by experts . . . is simply an outward manifestation that the man of affairs has come to realize that printed things form the most useful and most important tools of his business, no matter what that business may be." 9 The character of the special interests the new association was intended to serve is best indicated by the seven committees designed to coordinate and promote activities among libraries in the fields of agriculture, commercial associations, insurance, legislative and municipal reference organizations, public utilities, sociology, and technology. 10

For over thirty years the Special Libraries Association represented the nearest American approach to that kind of library activity and point of view which in Europe had received widespread recognition as documentation, though the elements of documentation are closely discernible in the growth of subject departments in a few of the largest public libraries, and in many of the activities and policies of university libraries. In 1937, American librarians first officially recognized documentation as an important bibliographic discipline by organizing the American Documentation Institute. This organization originated from the activities in documentation that had been carried forward by Science Service, dating from 1926 (especially the work done by Science Service under grants from the Chemical Foundation) and from the
Bibliofilm Services organized in 1935 at the Library of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This new institute, which was affiliated with the International Federation for Documentation, was designed as an assembly of representatives from leading scientific and scholarly societies, councils, and institutions, both public and private.

It is important to note that in the beginning documentation was very narrowly interpreted by the founding group as being restricted almost entirely to the promotion of new methods of photographic reproduction; and it is significant that almost immediately it began to publish, with the aid of the American Library Association, *The Journal of Documentary Reproduction*, which survived through 1942. This excessive emphasis upon photographic techniques, especially as they relate to the production and use of microfilm, is still strong among American documentalists. But with the revival of interest in the Institute that followed the Second World War, the term began to be much more broadly interpreted and more nearly approximated its use in Europe. The reorganization of the American Documentation Institute, now in progress, to make it a true society of documentalists, should further broaden its scope and expand its activities.

In addition to these three major lines of development presented by general librarianship, special librarianship, and documentation, there have been overlapping and tangential activities. At the present time the Special Libraries Association maintains a national Committee on Documentation. The Committee on Bibliography of the American Library Association has, of recent years, been largely concerned with problems of bibliography and documentation. The American Chemical Society has become extremely active in promoting improvements in the bibliographic organization of the literature of chemistry. The American Standards Association has just recently begun to re-examine the problems of improving bibliographic standards. Finally, even the library schools, which for some time have recognized the growing need for personnel trained to meet the problems of special librarianship, are in a few instances beginning to associate with such preparation some attention to the closely related techniques and procedures of documentation.

From this review one may conclude that bibliographic organization is an historical unity comprising as its major constituents general librarianship, special librarianship, and documentation. One may further conclude that special librarianship and documentation have a common root, and that their divergence has been largely an historical accident.
the results of which were intensified by differences in terminology rather than in kind. Finally, recent history suggests that the present chaotic and uncoordinated proliferation of these related activities will increase rather than diminish unless a persistent and determined effort is made toward reunification. Yet, if the same status quo is allowed to persist, the profession of librarianship will not only lose control of its very substance, but it will deteriorate into a simple custodial operation.

Despite the fact that the practice of special librarianship and documentation is not new, neither term has as yet been adequately defined. Broadly interpreted, the special library is any collection of library materials assembled to meet the needs of a particular group of users. Thus in a general sense, the historical, medical, legal, or theological library is a special library. One might even go so far as to maintain that academic, school, or children's libraries could be included in this same general category. But a definition so inclusive contributes little to any real understanding of the nature of the special library and its relation to documentation. John Cotton Dana, in his presidential address before the first convention of the Special Libraries Association characterized the special library as "the library of a modern man of affairs." But he quickly admits to the inadequacy of such a definition and hastens forward to a discussion of the special library in terms of library service to business and industry. This concept, later expanded to include a wide variety of private and public enterprises, has remained today substantially unchanged.

Attempts to define documentation have been no more successful. The most recent, that of Briet, holds that the materials of documentation are all indication, concrete or symbolistic, preserved or transcribed, with the purpose of representing, of reconstituting, or of proving either a physical or intellectual phenomenon. But this definition suffers from the fault of being materialistic rather than functional. In a sense it avoids the question by defining documentation in terms of the materials with which documentalists do their work. By contrast Mortimer Taube has defined documentation in operational terms as "the complex of activities required in the communication of specialized information including the preparation, reproduction, collection, analysis, organization and dissemination of graphic." Also appropriate to the present discussion would seem to be the definition of Egan and Shera, who made documentation a part of their inclusive concept, bibliographic organization. They defined bibliographic organization as being concerned with "the channeling of
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graphic records to all users, for all purposes, and at all levels (of use) in such a way as to maximize the social utilization of recorded human experience.” 17 By contrast, documentation, as they have described it, is limited to the world of scholarship, and the objective of documentation is to bring together all the scholarly activities in which graphic records are used and all the intermediary services which transmit this recorded material from the scholar-as-producer to the scholar-as-consumer.

But Egan and Shera do not interpret scholarship in the narrow academic sense, nor do they see the work of the scholar as being confined to pure research. Rather they are following Pierce Butler,18 who defines scholarship as the total intellectual output of a culture; and they insist that the literature of scholarship is as much concerned with the technological, administrative, and operational activities of society as it is with its investigatory or research accomplishments. Thus one may accurately apply to documentation the time-honored slogan of the Special Libraries Association—“Putting Knowledge to Work.”

Special librarianship developed because of the inability of traditional library techniques to meet the increasingly complex informational needs of business and industry. Similarly, documentation was the outgrowth of the desire of a small group of men to destroy the national barriers to the flow of scientific information, and it received a new vitality when the Second World War brought into existence a need for greater and more efficient access to information than traditional library methods were able to give. Though both special librarianship and documentation, in practice, respond to a wide variety of dissimilar demands, they find a common basic unity in their objective—to facilitate the flow of recorded information to appropriate segments of a complete culture.

The similarities in special librarianship and documentation may be emphasized by a discussion of the operational characteristics of documentation and their application to the work of the special library as well as to the documentation center. Documentation is generally considered to comprise four major activities: acquisition, organization, dissemination, and preparation and publication.

Acquisition. The problem of acquisition is so familiar to all aspects of librarianship, in whatever form, that any discussion of it here would seem to be unnecessary. Techniques may differ from agency to agency in accordance with the nature of the material and the needs of the clientele, but the underlying principles are essentially the same. Suffice
it here to point out that the special library and the documentation center are both heavily dependent upon a variety of highly specialized bibliographic tools for effective acquisition; but they, too, have a very great stake in the improvement of national and international enumerative and subject bibliographic services. Such great bibliographic monuments are the very foundation of any effective system of special bibliographic services.

Organization. Organization is composed of three elements: (a) identification, (b) arrangement, and (c) analysis. Again the parallel with traditional library practice is evident. Identification is largely synonymous with descriptive cataloging though it should be pointed out that special librarians and documentalists often employ simplified descriptive techniques, though the procedures are based on, or derived from, accepted library rules. One should emphasize here, too, the frequent similarity between special library and documentation procedures with the techniques customarily employed by the archivist, particularly his techniques for the calendaring of documents, or his preparation of general descriptive summaries for the identification of large blocks of closely related materials.

Arrangement, of course, includes classification, a method of subject arrangement in which both special libraries and documentation centers have done a considerable amount of effective pioneering. Practice here has generally followed one of three patterns: (a) the expansion or elaboration of existing library schematisms, such as Dewey, the Universal Decimal Classification, or that of the Library of Congress; (b) the use of a familiar notation employed by one of these three schemes but applied to a completely different array of terms; and (c) schematisms with a philosophical orientation completely different from those traditional to librarianship.

The third subdivision, analysis, might well include classification since it, too, is an instrument to facilitate subject access. But analysis is usually understood to be restricted to those operations in which the subject content of the material is extracted or separated from the material itself and hence is freed from the arrangement of physical units. Analysis, then, includes such operations as subject cataloging, indexing, abstracting, annotating, and the preparation of special subject bibliographies for particular purposes. In all of this, one should emphasize that special librarianship and documentation do not differ from traditional librarianship in kind but in degree and intensity of analysis. Many public libraries do some indexing and even abstracting on their
own initiative, usually with reference to materials of particular local
interest; and many college and university libraries, especially in their
subject departments, prepare special bibliographies and lists. But the
special librarians and the documentalists have, in general, carried on
these operations more extensively and incorporated them more inti-
mately into their basic procedures.

Dissemination. No special librarian needs to be reminded of the im-
portance of the routing of recent acquisitions to the appropriate
members of his clientele. But dissemination involves more than mere
routing. It can, and often does, involve the free distribution, or even the
actual sale, of materials deposited in the special library or documenta-
tion center. The dissemination of book lists, special bibliographies, and
the like is familiar enough even to the librarian of the small or medium-
sized public library. The dissemination of “primary” material is less
common, though even here the Bulletin of the New York Public Li-
brary, the Yale University Library Gazette, the Boston Public Library’s
rare and valuable materials from their own collections.

Dissemination, however, also includes “control,” which relates to the
limitation of access to certain types of materials to those authorized to
use them. The problems raised by “security regulations” were all too
familiar to all librarians who were in any way associated with the
operations of the information services of the United States govern-
ment during the Second World War, and this was especially true for
the librarians and documentalists of the intelligence agencies. But this
barrier to the free flow of information, which is as ancient as the guild
system itself, is being increasingly fostered by competition in com-
merce and industry. This is particularly true for information relating
to patentable or potentially patentable processes, or to other varieties
of confidential data. Censorship has been traditionally repugnant to
librarians, and the profession has opposed it on many occasions, but
this is censorship “in reverse.” For censorship purports to protect the
public from error whereas security is, in effect, a restraint upon truth.
But in the latter case the social consequences may be far more serious,
and the dangers cannot long be ignored by special librarians and docu-
mentalists.

Preparation and publication. The concept of the special library as
an agency for the composition, preparation, and publication of primary
materials is probably the least familiar to the librarian. Yet there are
a number of large special research libraries that have initiated pro-
grams of this sort. The New York Public Library has not limited its publications entirely to bibliographic compilations. The publication of source materials, often in its annual reports, has given to the world of scholarship some conspicuously successful examples of this kind of publication. The preparation of special reports for distribution within the parent organization is not uncommon among special libraries. Certainly there is no good reason why such publication should not be more fully exploited by the special librarian and documentalist, and in many respects the special library or documentation center is particularly well equipped to serve as the logical agent for the preparation and publication of materials drawn from or based upon the wealth of their resources.

In one sense every library may be regarded as a “special” library by virtue of its adaptation to the particular needs and requirements of its patrons. Historically both documentation and special librarianship are rooted in the parent discipline of general librarianship. But general librarianship can hardly be said ever to have existed in a pure state, for specialization of library function was implicit from the beginning. When any group combines to establish a library it is motivated by a particular purpose or objective, and the library which it forms will reflect that purpose or objective in its collection and service. As has truly been said, “Special librarianship is the documentation of an idea.” That idea may be as broad or as narrow as the human mind can conceive, it may be spiritual, it may be humanistic, it may be educational, it may be scientific, sociological, or technological; but whatever its nature and scope the library will be “special” to that purpose.

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9. Ibid., p. 88.
Special Library Potential of the Public Library

ROSE L. VORMELKER

The distinguishing characteristic of special librarianship is service. It is service which stops at nothing short of producing, on request or without request, information which is needed, at the time it is needed, in the form in which it is needed, and in a manner which inspires confidence and respect for the librarian on the part of the user. It is a noteworthy "instrument of civilization" since through it the "blue prints for action" as found in books, periodicals, documents, and reports become alive. As such, it has a definite place in the public library.

To be sure, not all public libraries offer such service. This fact is due, perhaps, to the still widely prevalent notion that public libraries are general rather than special and therefore need no specialists on theirstaffs. Such a position is tenable today only in instances where the public library is considered a luxury which the public is more or less welcome to use if it wishes, provided it can find its own way around the mysteries of cataloging, classification, and arrangement of the books therein. The same is true of smaller libraries where the librarian, who must be "jack of all trades," rarely comes in contact with many potential users of the library. It cannot be condoned in the large public libraries which depend on public monies for their revenue. Fortunately, in recognition of this, a few already have established subject departments or departments for special groups in the community; for example, educators, musicians, engineers. These are in fact special libraries within the framework of the general library.

Special library service in a public library, however, should not be confused with similar service within a private organization. Obviously no public service can provide all the information needs which a special library for one organization can—and should—supply. The similarity

The author is Head of the Business Information Bureau, Cleveland Public Library.
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lies in the "how" rather than the "what"; the "way" rather than the "means."

There is considerable evidence that, more than ever before, public librarians are growing special library minded while special librarians in private organizations are beginning to appreciate and to make more intelligent use of their trained associates within public libraries. This in itself would indicate that the special library idea has taken fire in the public library, and that librarianship as a profession has taken fire in the special library. It is natural that this should be so, for there is considerable exchange in the matter of personnel for these libraries. Industrial and business concerns frequently seek personnel for their libraries from the business and technical departments of public libraries, and with notable success. Frequently, too, workers are chosen from the more general departments, for example, a children's librarian for an insurance company library and another for an airplane manufacturing concern. But in each case the determining factor in the choice was their outstanding service-mindedness.

Conversely it might be equally true for the public library to seek personnel for a business or a technology department from industry. Instances on record are the Cleveland Public Library and, more recently, the Buffalo Public Library, where the organizers for these new departments had been librarians in industrial concerns. It would be true more frequently if public libraries were more prepared to meet the salaries offered in industry for comparable work.

The work of a business or a technical department in a large public library differs from that in a private organization, to be sure, but by no means to the degree which merits the assumption that the one is less specialized than the other. Even in special fields the public library will have fewer materials but cover more phases of the subject while the private organization will find it necessary to have more materials on fewer phases of the subject. The work, however, of using these materials to provide answers, in whole or in part, to the problems of the clientele requires identical ability on the part of the special librarian. And it is this ability which is the secret of the potential herein discussed.

A perennial topic for discussion in special library circles has been the question, "What is special librarianship?" or "What is a special library?" Many papers have been written attempting to define these phrases, but to Herman H. Henkle should go credit for clarifying the issue by changing the question when he said:
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For many years I have had the opinion that the question should be not so much “what” but “how.” It seems to me that the primary characteristic of special librarianship is not so much the subject content of the collections, nor the type of organization in which the library is operating, nor the particular personnel which it serves, but rather the kind of service which is given. When the emphasis is upon the latter characteristic, much of the basis for debate seems to me to be dissipated. Certainly we all know of libraries in companies in which the activities are little more than routine housekeeping. On the other hand, there are a number of public libraries in which the attitude toward organization and dissemination of business and technical information is hardly distinguishable from that which characterizes the approach to library service in some of our finest industrial libraries.¹

It is significant to note that special libraries are quite widely believed to be primarily business or technical although, professionally speaking, a special library may cover any field. That this has been true from the beginning of special library history was confirmed recently when Sarah B. Ball ² revealed a bit of the Special Libraries Association’s beginning in a note to the Association’s president on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary in 1949. As librarian of the Newark Free Public Library’s Business Branch she had discussed, with John Cotton Dana, the desirability of making provision for informal meetings at American Library Association conventions for those librarians “doing special work in public libraries” and more concerned with business and technical services than with the other fields. Dana thought well of the idea and with characteristic vision enlarged upon it, suggesting that invitations for such a meeting be sent to librarians doing special work in public libraries and all small special libraries throughout the country—financial, commercial, scientific, and industrial, as well as special departments of state, college, and general libraries.

Accordingly such invitations were issued for the meeting to be held in Bretton Woods in July 1909, where Dana coined the phrase Special Libraries Association as the name for the new organization formed there. The rest of the story is history,³ but this serves to explain why the phrase “special libraries” is widely interpreted to mean business or technical libraries. This is also the reason special librarianship brings to mind assembling and dissemination of practical information in these fields, in contrast to providing books for cultural pursuits.

In recent years there has been much discussion on the advisability of changing the name for workers in the special library field. Documentalist, Information Director, Statistical and Economic Research
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Bibliographer, Technical Information Chief, Information Service Director, Factician, are just a few of the titles suggested. These discussions arise primarily because such a large number of businessmen and industrialists are unfamiliar with the resources available to them through libraries or library service, either public or private. It is assumed that they will comprehend more readily, words signifying the practical application of knowledge or supply of information, while other words will so confuse them that in self-defense a person carrying a more descriptive title will be hired in the hope that needed information will get to them “when they need it and in the form needed.” Lionel R. McColvin has this to say on the subject:

. . . I was delighted when a capable chairman laid it down, unequivocally, that a man whose job it was to assemble the material in which information is embodied, to arrange it and make it useful to those who wanted to use it was a librarian and must have the training, experience and background of a librarian, and that the man who used it, who publicized and public relationed it, wasn’t.

. . . All the nonsense about information officers and documentators and what not must often arise only from one cause—that people who are incapable of doing the job of librarianship, or who are unwilling to learn to do it properly, want to justify their inefficiency as librarians by calling themselves something which cannot be assessed, as can librarianship, in the light of accepted standards of professional experience and training. So it will be a good thing for everyone concerned if we revert to the old phrases “special libraries” and “special librarianship”: these are phrases open to criticism because some of our most special librarians work in general libraries and many of our general libraries employ in their special departments special librarians—but at least we remember that they are librarians.4

The words, after all, are inconsequential so long as they identify the high type of service which special librarianship has heretofore represented.

Special librarianship in a public library is most clearly identified with a separate business information department or business branch. Smaller libraries have combined business and technology or business and economics, or made a combination of all three fields. In some cases a beginning has been made within a general reference department. A large proportion of the resources needed is of common interest to all these fields and requires duplication when not readily available to all three.

To set up such a program in a public library, it is necessary to follow
the same procedure which industry pursues when offering a new product to the market. The basic techniques for the program may be simply stated:

Select the person with the best possible qualifications and experience. This is of paramount importance. In addition to general library training and experience he, or she, must have the necessary knowledge of business to be able to speak almost with empathy concerning the problems of his potential clientele. There must be no doubt that he understands their problems thoroughly, can ask intelligent questions concerning them, and, above all, can recognize when an available bit of information will serve their needs or business interests and will see that they get it. Such a person must be alert but not meddlesome, dynamic but not officious, confident but not arrogant, obliging but not obsequious. It is a job for one who has had the experience of a lifetime but kept the approach of enthusiastic and expectant youth. It is no job for a novice. Ruth Savord has stated other needed qualifications in this way:

Native ability—a bit above the average; a sense of humor as a cushion against the irritations and the stress and strain under which he is apt to work; mental curiosity to goad him into learning more and more about his subject and his organization; quickness of comprehension to enable him to understand the need, to ask intelligent questions which will clarify the problem and to speak the language of the inquirer; accuracy and more accuracy; resourcefulness, for the answer is not always written in black and white and he may have to go down many byways and reach out by telephone, telegraph and cable before tracking it down; breadth of vision to enable him to see the many ramifications which may enter into the solution of a problem; initiative to keep him ahead of the game and thus to have the basic information available before it is asked for, and, finally, tact—if he has it, he can deal successfully with the many temperaments—and tempers—from the president to the office boy. These qualities are fundamental because, by most standards, they are innate and not a matter of education. The potential special librarian should have a broad cultural, literary and factual background as well as specialized training in a chosen field of activity. He should develop the ability to analyze all the factors involved in a problem, to separate the essential from the non-essential, and to condense information to present all pertinent facts.

Experience in general reference, technology, sociology, and economics in a public library plus experience in a business organization would provide the perfect work experience prerequisite.
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He must survey his “market.” Just as a special librarian in a company must study the organization to be served, so the person inaugurating a business information program in a public library must study the community and the organizations to be served. Ideally this would mean calling on each firm to discuss its library needs as well as the contemplated service planned to meet these needs. From a practical standpoint no such detailed analysis is possible but a sampling should be made following recognized statistical sampling procedures. A list of the industries within the community might be compiled and trade papers for those industries examined to acquaint the librarian with current problems facing his potential clientele. Annual reports of many companies are available as well as the corporation data in investment manuals which would serve to supplement the librarian’s knowledge of the business activity in the community. The city and telephone directories as well as existing community surveys such as those included in Editor and Publisher’s annual Market Guide, the Standard Rate and Data Service’s Consumer Markets study, Sales Management’s Survey of Buying Power, and others may well be used as tools for information on community characteristics.

Finally there are the community’s newspapers. A trade association executive whose duties included investigation of business possibilities in various cities once said, “Before I contact our members I study a week’s file of the newspapers in the respective city under discussion. Our members continue to be amazed at the information concerning their city which is at my finger tips on so short a stay. Not one has guessed my secret!” What proved good for the trade association executive is equally pertinent for the business librarian.

To make such a study as is indicated above may seem like a large order, but it is essential. It will enable the librarian to proceed with precision in developing a collection pertinent to the community to be served. Automatically it will also provide the first step in public relations—acquainting the potential clientele with the potential service. And, unless carefully worked out, the demand for the service may easily far exceed the supply long before details have been completed.

He must contact and keep in contact with business associations. Numerous business and trade associations exist for the purpose of discussing problems and interchange experience. The business librarian can glean much from these and also make significant contribution to them. Naturally he will be most effective as a member, active or associate, although other means for keeping in touch with associations are
possible. Indefatigability and imagination are the *sine qua non* here. He must be able to speak before organizations on request, and where invitations are lacking use supreme tact to bring them about. Tact is always an important factor in educating a potential public to realize that their library can—and will—provide factual information for practical use.

He must develop and maintain an adequate supply of resources. The services, the business books and periodicals, and numerous other materials are, by and large, expensive. There are, however, many which are available for the asking. The problem here is budgetary but also a matter of knowing what to buy.

He must adapt general cataloging and classification procedures to business information sources. When this is done within the business department there is relatively no problem, as those working with the subject can quickly develop necessary classifications for their materials. When, however, it is fitted into a general library scheme, a great deal of cooperation and understanding is needed on the part of the processing department to get needed groups of materials where they will be most useful.

He must assemble or recruit and train an enthusiastic staff. No one person can handle such a service. Consideration of staff is necessary at the outset—staff that will enjoy this lively and rewarding work and be willing to supplement their professional training with continuous study of new business developments and sources of information concerning them.

He must prepare special indexes to supplement those published commercially. Business literature has grown in volume literally by leaps and bounds. There is no comprehensive index to it as yet. *Industrial Arts Index, Public Affairs Information Service, Labor-Personnel Index,* and the other well-known H. W. Wilson Company indexes are indispensable, but at best, provide only partial coverage for this growing field. The gap between these indexes and ideal coverage is bridged, to a degree, by the lists and bibliographies published by other libraries, universities, government agencies, research bureaus, periodical publishers, and commercial bibliographies: the section entitled "Looking Around" in current issues of the *Harvard Business Review,* the bibliographies compiled and published by Princeton University, Industrial Relations Section and by the Amos Tuck School of Business Administration as well as the bulletins issued by the business departments of public libraries, notably those of the Boston Public Library’s Kirstein
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Business Branch,9 the Cleveland Public Library’s Business Information Bureau,10 and the Newark Free Public Library’s Business Branch.11 All these are but a beginning. Much supplementary indexing and development of bibliographic tools is required.

He must give service with a capital “S.” (a) At the top of the list comes reference and information service, the actual answering of quick reference questions by phone, by telegram, by letter, or in person. These answers must be accurate and specific. If, for some reason, complete answers are not available, evidence or proof of this should be confirmed and any partial answer at hand made available. At all times facilities in other libraries and elsewhere should be considered and used whenever possible, even if only as a referral measure.

(b) Research service. Usually only a limited amount of research service can be offered through a public library without charge. But when facilities of staff and materials permit, such research may be offered for a fee.

(c) Literature searches and compilations of bibliographies. In this category, also, only a limited amount may be undertaken, without charge, but a start may be made in outlining for clients the procedures involved and the sources available within and without the library at hand.

(d) Consultative service. As prestige develops, built through service, the demand for consultative service arises. This may range from “advising” where to get business in another city, state, or country, to providing guidance to other public libraries or to business and industrial firms planning business service. Other types of problems likely to be presented for consultation are where to find speakers for special occasions, how to inaugurate programs for education of workers or executives in industry, how to develop classification systems for specific purposes, and a host of other problems.

(e) Publications. A bulletin, issued regularly, is one of the best means for calling clients’ attention to the library’s resources. The bulletin may be devoted to new accessions, but if possible such a title should be avoided; it means little to the work-a-day world. It may be an annotated list of references on a subject of current interest and include books, periodicals, special reports, documents, and other data. Or it may consist of extensive abstracts of information available.

Public relations. Volumes are being written at present on the place of public relations in library programs with considerable confusion as to where responsibility for public relations should be placed. Suffice it
to say that, in the field of business information, it is part and parcel of the work and should be constantly kept in mind. Whether the department negotiates contacts with newspapers, publishers, exhibitors, associations, or whether this is done through a centralized department devoted to public relations techniques is immaterial. It matters only that it be done.

**Conclusion.** These simply stated, basic techniques should not delude the reader into thinking the performance of them is a simple matter. They are given primarily to help crystallize the task.

A prerequisite which goes without saying, yet merits thought, is that nothing of the sort should be undertaken without wholehearted support of library boards, encouragement and cooperation of library administrators and library associates.

The returns to the library from such service as herein indicated are inestimable. It is apparently still so rare that it causes much comment when and where offered. It serves as a focal point for attention to the library on the part of a vast section of any library’s potential clientele. Workers, whether they represent management or labor or the consumers, rarely expect to find anything of practical help for their jobs or other business needs in a library and are the best promoters for such service when they do.

Since money still talks, it is heartening to be able to say, with factual evidence, that business will endorse, effectively, requests for additional library appropriations for such libraries as have given the community a sample of the meaning of business service. This, in turn, enhances the appropriations for all departments of the library.

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ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Crisis in Libraries of Science and Technology

HERMAN H. HENKLE

The root of most difficulties in libraries of science and technology lies in the extraordinary increase in the volume of scientific literature. This is not, of course, the exclusive problem of scientific libraries. The Librarian of Congress called attention to the general problem in his annual report for 1940–41 with quotations from the words of Ortega y Gasset. "The book, wrote Ortega y Gasset in 1936, is an instrument to facilitate the conservation of ideas. At first it was a pure facility ’and had in our life only a positive significance.’ Now, however, it has ‘turned against man’ and its relation to us is complicated by a negative significance. ’In all Europe there exists the impression, the reverse of that in the Renaissance, that there are too many books.’ ’The man of science himself warns that one of the greatest difficulties of his work is to orient himself in the tremendous bibliography of his subject.’ ’We are in danger of living to study instead of studying to live.’" ¹

This concern is certainly more than a century old. In the American Eclectic for September 1841, a German writer was quoted in protest against the increasing number of scientific periodicals in Germany. "Most of the natural sciences," he wrote, "have some great journal of undisputed authority, which is conducted by the ablest men in that department, and sought by their fellow-laborers in the same department. . . . Of medical journals there are forty-three in Germany. It must be granted that different modes of practice require different periodicals . . . But forty-three journals are an astonishing number. What physician who practices daily can read them all, and to what physician who does not practice can they be useful? The number of journals in natural science can be justified only by the number of particular departments, which are sufficiently important to have a separate periodical devoted to them." ²

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This mid-nineteenth century writer would hardly believe the fantastic increase in the number of medical periodicals in the one hundred years since he expressed his concern for forty-three medical periodicals in Germany. An area of the world far less productive, proportionately, of scientific literature than Germany, the countries of Latin America, are producing now some sixteen hundred medical periodicals. He would be equally distressed, as he probably should be, at the large numbers of periodicals which have been published even in some of the medical specialties. There have been recorded, for example, more than three hundred periodicals and other serial publications in the field of pediatrics; fortunately, not all of them are being published currently.

Rough measures of the rate of increase in the number of scientific periodicals are provided by two examples. In 1895, Bolton listed some 8,600 scientific periodicals, exclusive of medicine and exclusive of the transactions of learned societies, which are devoted primarily to the proceedings of the societies by which they were issued. The preface to the third edition of the World List of Scientific Periodicals points out that “the number of periodicals to be included [in this] proved to be of the order of 50,000.” The number of periodicals indexed by Chemical Abstracts has shown equally phenomenal increases. The first volumes indexed approximately 650 periodicals; the current volumes index more than 5,000 titles; and if the rate continues, the number of periodicals indexed may well have increased more than ten-fold by 1957, only fifty years from the founding of this abstract journal.

The interpretation by the Librarian of Congress of the words of Ortega y Gasset included a strongly expressed belief that a primary problem of librarians is to bring the great mass of the world’s books under catalog control. This requirement applies to the literature of science with perhaps more force than to the literatures of other disciplines, primarily because of the progressive character of scientific knowledge. Harvard’s President Conant emphasizes this fact when he states “that science emerges from the other progressive activities of man to the extent that new concepts arise from experiments and observations, and that the new concepts in turn lead to further experiments and observations.” The practical aspects of this statement are of the greatest significance to libraries of science and technology, not only in the relation of library service to basic research, but particularly in its relation to industrial research and development in both peace time economy and national defense.

In the area of industrial research, served primarily by special librar-
ies, there are certain characteristic demands which must be met by the technical library. For the most part their roots are economic; but they draw heavily, also, on the cumulative character of science. In the first place, industry is constantly alert to the practical possibilities of new basic discoveries in chemistry, physics, biology, and related sciences. There is an urgent interest, therefore, in prompt and full reports in the indexing and abstracting journals of research results in all periodicals and separate reports in the basic sciences. For many companies these secondary publications are neither full enough nor prompt enough to serve company interests, and large expenditures are undertaken privately to review current journals and to extract information pertinent to the manufacturing interests of the company concerned.

Similarly, industry is interested in new technological applications of science accomplished throughout the world. For every company with an active development program, it is vital to be kept informed of new products and new techniques that may affect the competitive position of the company either in products to be marketed or in costs of production and distribution. A special aspect of this economic interest is found in the field of patents. Quite apart from reference to patent literature, on which many companies spend large sums of money, there are problems relating to preparation of specifications for new patent applications, and review of prior art in connection with litigation on infringement of patents. In this complex of problems, there is need not only for prompt access to the content of new technological publications but need for thorough record of all such publications issued in the past.

Fortunately, the literature of science, technology, and medicine is more fully covered by abstracting and indexing journals than are the literatures of the social sciences and the humanities; otherwise the situation would be one of much chaos and little progress. As it is, there are elements inherent in the present situation which contribute to a degree of chaos and an obstruction to progress. The principal elements are inadequacy in fullness of coverage and inadequacy in quality of coverage.

Chemistry is the only subject field of primary interest to industry for which fullness of coverage can be considered reasonably complete. Physics and engineering, including such currently important fields as metallurgy and electronics are much less fully treated; and the coverage would be even less complete if it were not for the large amount of literature of interest to these subjects now being included by Chemical Abstracts. An important exception to this general statement is nuclear
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physics, in *Nuclear Science Abstracts*. This exception is due in part to
the cooperation given to the Atomic Energy Commission by the De-
partment of Agriculture Library, the Armed Forces Medical Library,
the Bureau of Standards Library, and libraries of other federal agen-
cies in covering published literature of the world. The exception is
due, also in part, to the fact that *Nuclear Science Abstracts* covers the
unclassified report literature issued by the government.

This last point, namely the record of separate government research
reports, may have bearing, of increasing importance, on the problem of
fullness of coverage of scientific literature in the future. Not only is
there an increasing amount of report literature being produced by
government agencies and by contractors doing research for the govern-
ment, but there appears to be a growing number of advocates of separ-
ate reports versus publication of research literature in the form of peri-
odicals. If this movement succeeds, it will increase the problems of
bibliographical coverage. The problem of covering fifty thousand
papers each year from some five thousand different periodical and
other serial publications is fraught with difficulties. To be faced with
fifty thousand separate publications, with all the problems of acquisi-
tion and distribution for abstracting, might prove too much for even
the highly organized machinery of *Chemical Abstracts*. The present
system, illogical as it is in some important respects, offers, at least, some
continuity in the source of publications and a measure of assurance of
completeness of coverage. Both of these advantages would be lost if
the periodical form of publication were to disappear. The minimum
requirement to offset these losses would be the publication of the
separate reports in series.

Some of the administrative problems of technical libraries would be
greatly increased if the separate report were to replace completely the
periodical. Even assuming adequate subject cataloging and indexing
coverage of reports by the abstracting journals, which is quite an as-
sumption, there would still remain the mountainous problem of locat-
ing these reports for users of the library. No library in the world con-
tains all of the periodicals; all libraries must depend in part, most often
in large part, on the content of other collections. While the equipment
for this purpose is far from adequate at the present time, the problem
of location is solved in large degree by the *Union List of Serials*, the
check lists of holdings published from time to time by *Chemical Ab-
stracts*, the National Union Catalog at the Library of Congress, and
special subject and local union lists and catalogs.

This does not mean that the need of the individual scientist for per-
sonal copies of the papers he requires for his own research should be ignored. It might, however, be effectively met by other means than by the wrecking of a publishing device which has many merits, both in the intellectual life of scientists and in the practical machinery of collecting and supplying scientific and technical literature through libraries. Experimentation with one possible solution is already in progress at the Library of Congress in the program of the Technical Information Division. This includes publication of bibliographical information and abstracts in card form, with full microprint text of the indexed paper on the back of the catalog or index card. It does not seem unreasonable to hope that the modern scientist will be willing to accept this or some other practical publishing device which utilizes the technical methods and equipment for the development of which he has been personally responsible.

To return to the problem of bibliographical coverage of scientific literature. Reference has been made above not only to “fullness” of coverage, but also to “quality” of coverage. The latter is related to what Dyson calls the “chain of inquiry” between the original publication and the user of the publication. The importance of quality of coverage is made strikingly clear. “To arrive at one end of this chain from the other all the links must be in order. The probability that this will be so depends on the efficiency with which each link operator works; if searcher, indexer, and abstractor are all 90% efficient, the over-all efficiency is 72.9% and the chance that a given piece of original information will reach the searcher is approximately 3 in 4.” For this chance to be even as good as “3 in 4” depends on the unstated assumption that all relevant literature has been covered by the abstracting journal. The implications of this analysis are made even more crucial by the fact that few other abstracting journals are the equal of Chemical Abstracts in fullness of coverage and quality of abstracting.

Enough has been said here to demonstrate that one of the most serious problems with which the technical library must deal is the economics of utilization. The first element in high costs is the inadequacy of distribution. As already stated, no library acquires all of the literature of science and technology; and great dependence must rest on union lists, union catalogs, and other sources of more random search to locate items for the clientele of the individual library. A second element is the inadequacy of coverage, both quantitative and qualitative, by the indexing and abstracting journals. A third element is insufficient knowledge of the techniques of searching. And all of these contribute
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to a fourth, and sometimes very serious, element of high cost in the economics of utilization, namely, delays in the availability of scientific and technical information necessary to the progress of scientific research and development. These delays are always undesirable and in instances when they relate to research bearing on national defense they are potentially disastrous.

Many agencies are engaged in the study of these problems, including libraries and organizations of librarians. The broad issues were on the agenda of the Scientific Information Conference sponsored by the Royal Society in London in 1948. They have also received attention internationally in the program of Unesco. Some of these activities have been described by Collison and Carter, respectively, elsewhere in this issue of Library Trends. They have been on the agenda of the American Chemical Society, the American Institute of Physics and other scientific societies which have been working to improve the quality of abstracting services. A major attack was made on the problem of techniques of searching in the Symposium on Searching the Chemical Literature held by the Division of Chemical Literature of the American Chemical Society in Detroit in April 1950.

A promising experiment has been tried by the Committee on Periodicals and Serial Publications of the Medical Library Association in the evaluation of medical periodicals to aid in determining priorities in acquisition and indexing literature in this field. A Selective List of Latin-American Serials has resulted from "an attempt to provide an evaluative guide through the bewildering profusion of medical serials published in the countries of Latin America." A review of some 1,600 serial titles resulted in four categories, as follows: (1) essential in any comprehensive collection (66 titles); (2) essential only in a research collection, but useful in any medical library (169 titles); (3) useful only in large research collection (666 titles); and (4) of little or no usefulness (the remainder). Although there is some confusion in use of the terms, "comprehensive," "research," and "large research," there is obvious merit in grading periodicals for determining relative values for indexing by the Armed Forces Medical Library and for acquisition by the various medical libraries of the country. Widespread use of this evaluating technique would improve the quality of indexing and abstracting coverage not only in medicine but in all other scientific and technical fields as well.

In terms of potential for the future, by far the most important development in recent years has been extensive experimentation with
machines for the storing and searching of information. The Symposium on Machine Techniques for Information Selection, held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in June 1952 was devoted to a review of progress in this field. The announcement of the symposium opened with the statement: "The quickened pace of research during recent decades has been paralleled by rapid expansion in the volume of recorded knowledge. Its use in planning and conducting research and development often requires professionally trained experts to devote many hours to scanning indexes and to selecting needed items from classified collections. Such tasks consist mostly of routine operations that can be performed by suitably designed machines."\(^{13}\)

The use of machines for bibliographical and informational searching has now received extensive study, and the M.I.T. symposium represented only another gathering of scientists and scientific bibliographers to evaluate progress and further lines of research. Experimentation with punched cards has been sponsored by the American Chemical Society since 1946; and an account of this work was given in the March 3, 1952, issue of Chemical and Engineering News.\(^{14}\) The rapid selector, using film, has been frequently in the news. The electronic digital scanner, using magnetic tape, and the IBM electronic card scanning system were reviewed at the M.I.T. symposium. The problems of terminology, information analysis and methods of coding and indexing have all been, and are being, studied for use in the several machines. The significance of all this experimentation is of the greatest interest to the technical library. An evaluation of the potential significance was given in a paper by Shera, on the "Effect of Machine Methods on the Organization of Knowledge." The following quotation from Shera has a high degree of relevance to the crisis in libraries of science and technology.

One can argue with a reasonable degree of credibility that we do not as yet know enough about the precise nature of these new mechanisms, and that our perspective is as yet inadequate for a dispassionate appraisal of the effect of machine methods on the organization of knowledge. However, it is not excessive to maintain that we can even now envisage the general characteristics of these mechanisms with sufficient clarity to enable us to hypothesize certain conservative estimates of their effects upon traditional bibliographic procedures and operations, especially as these relate to bibliographic classification.

What, then, are the characteristics of these mechanisms that one may assume without too much fear of contradiction? (1) They will
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probably be electronic rather than mechanical. (2) They will doubt-
less make use of photographic techniques in one or more forms. (3) They will be capable of storing large masses of bibliographic data in their “memories.” (4) Through the operation of a coding system they will be able to sort this stored data in a variety of ways so that the user receives only those materials relevant to his purpose. (5) They can be designed to manipulate complete bibliographic units (i.e., complete photographic copies of entire monographs or other documents); abstracts of these units; bibliographic information only; or fragmented segments of information (i.e., units of information or units of thought.) (6) They will operate at speeds far in excess of the human. (7) Negatively, they will not be mechanical substitutes for human intelligence. Hence, (8) their use seems likely to be limited to the more complex problems of bibliographic searching, and therefore, they may not be applicable to the entire range of bibliothecal operations. This brief capitulation emphasizes the enormous potential inherent in these machines, and the difficulties encountered when one attempts to discuss them with restraint. Even a conservative view must acknowledge that here are latent forces that could revolutionize, not only traditional library and bibliographic operations, but the very pattern of scholarship itself.15

It is probably too early to judge whether a turning point has been reached in the bibliographic organization of scientific literature and information, and in the techniques for utilization. The massive volume of publications, the crucial relation of scientific literature to progress in scientific research, and the need for effective chains of inquiry in our system of scientific communication, will all continue to be vital factors in library service even after the crisis is past. A great deal is at stake: the alternatives of experiments and observations, recorded in the literature, leading on to new experiments and observations in ever widening circles—the normal process of scientific research—or intellectual strangulation. The possibilities of the latter seem quite remote, but the former, too, is far from being realized to its full potentialities. The costliness of the horse-and-buggy techniques being used for the collection, organization and utilization of scientific literature is now realized, however, and this fact alone is a harbinger of better days ahead.
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In the introduction to the first edition of the Library of Congress, Science and Technology Project, List of Subject Headings, Gull and Taube gave the various reasons which led to the decision to use an alphabetical system of subject headings rather than a classification system as an instrument to organize the scientific and technical reports under the cognizance of the Project. They also gave reasons for deciding upon direct, uninverted and specific headings.

In essence, the reason for this latter decision was a conviction of the desirability of following standard library subject heading practice with the further purpose of making this practice consistent. In short, the subject headings used in the Science and Technology Project were consistent in principle with those used in the Library of Congress proper and differed only in being a more consistent example of the principles of subject heading work developed by the Subject Cataloging Division of the Library of Congress, with the exception that there is no principle which requires LC headings to be uninverted.

From the recent restatement of these principles by David J. Haykin, Chief of the Subject Cataloging Division of the Library of Congress, we can extract the following basic principles and directives of subject heading practice:

1. "The heading should be as specific as the topic it is intended to cover. As a corollary, the heading should not be broader than the topic; rather than use a broader heading, the cataloger should use two specific headings which will approximately cover it." 2

2. "In effect, the headings for a given topic in an alphabetico-classed catalog and a dictionary catalog are equally specific. The difference lies in the fact that in the former the specific topic is the last element

Dr. Taube is president of Documentation, Inc., Washington, D.C.
in a complex heading [e.g. Zoology—Vertebrates—Amphibians—Frogs] whereas in the latter it is named directly; what distinguishes the subject heading in a present-day dictionary catalog from other forms is that it is both specific and direct."

3. "Subdivision, as against the use of a word or phrase heading, is resorted to when no invariable, commonly used and accepted phrase is available with which to express the intended limitation of a subject. Thus, while Geology is the obvious heading for that subject, there is no set phrase for a dictionary or encyclopedia of geology under which most readers would inevitably look. However, aspects of a subject or topics comprehended within it are likely to be sought under names of their own, hence, as a rule, require entry under independent headings, rather than subdivisions under the broad subject. The contrary practice yields headings of the alphabetico-classed type, the advantages and disadvantages of which have been brought out earlier, in the discussion of the types of subject catalogs. Subdivision should as far as possible be limited to the form in which the subject matter is presented and the place and time to which it is limited."

These general restrictions as stated by Haykin were broadened by the Technical Information Division (TID) to include topical subdivisions, and all were further characterized by Gull and Taube as follows: "In most cases a subdivision must be common to two or more headings to be a satisfactory subdivision."

Aronson in a recent paper on the cataloging policy and practice of TID enlarges upon the Gull-Taube statement in regard to headings for two aspects of a subject: "A . . . report will describe the properties of some substance; one scientist may be interested in the substance, another in the particular property and in order to satisfy both, two subject headings could be used. However, in most cases, the substance, material or equipment is chosen as the main heading, followed by a subdivision for the particular property. The subdivisions we use are generally applicable to more than one scientific field." And again she writes: "a report will describe some particular effect that one substance has on another, perhaps radiation injuries to liver caused by gamma rays; rather than combine this idea in one subject heading, we use one heading for each substance with suitable subdivision describing the action, such as 'Liver—Radiation Injuries' and 'Gamma Rays—Pathological Effects'."

Several points are worth noting about this last example. In the first
Specificity in Subject Headings and Coordinate Indexing

place, although “Pathological Effects,” by an effort of mind, can be considered a subdivision of “Gamma Rays,” there is really little sense in interpreting “Radiation Injuries” as a subdivision of “Liver.” The heading “Liver—Radiation Injuries” is really an instance of two general terms coming together in a coordinate relationship to designate a complex idea more specific than the designation of either term taken by itself. In the second place, although the ostensible justification of the two headings is that they permit a dual approach, the necessity that two headings be used really follows from the TID rule to use no more than one subdivision under any given heading. Third, it seems clear that each of the single headings “Liver—Radiation Injuries—Gamma Rays” or “Gamma Rays—Pathological Effects—Liver” more adequately indexes this report. There are undoubtedly good reasons in standard library practice against the piling up of subdivisions and the consequent creation of alphabetico-classed catalogs. But note that “Liver” is not a subdivision of “Gamma Rays” nor of “Pathological Effects”; nor contrariwise can “Gamma Rays” be considered a subdivision of “Liver” and “Radiation Injuries.” Rather, the addition of the third item in each instance is the addition of a third general idea to two others to form a more specific concept. Finally, a curious consequence of the limitation of subdivision emerges. Whereas Haykin and Aronson state that specific headings should be used instead of broad headings, here in actual practice the limitation of subdivision advocated by both Haykin and Aronson results in two broad headings instead of one specific one. For it should be noted that the two series of three terms “Liver—Radiation Injuries—Gamma Rays” and “Gamma Rays—Pathological Effects—Liver” are not both required. The middle term in each series, “Radiation Injuries” and “Pathological Effects,” functions like an active or passive verb and converts the term “Liver” to object in one instance and subject in the other. An earlier paper has questioned the necessity of connectives showing direction of action and indicated that coordinate indexing could use logical non-directional connectives and that in coordinate indexing, as opposed to standard subject headings, the order of terms is nonsignificant. It recognized the possibility of ambiguity as in the case “man plus chases plus dog,” but intimated the conviction that most coordination would be of the type “man plus bites plus dog” in which the meaning of the terms rather than the active or passive voice of a connecting verb reduces ambiguity to a minimum. In the example used for Aronson’s remarks, both the order of elements and the alternation between “Ra-
"Radiation Injuries" and "Pathological Effects" make a difference in elegance but no difference in meaning. It is not reasonable to suppose that two headings and two connectives are needed in order to make clear that liver does not confer radiation injuries on gamma rays or that gamma rays are not affected pathologically by liver.

In previous papers on coordinate indexing it has been indicated that any desired degree of specificity could be attained by "coordinating" as many general terms as were desired or necessary. What was not realized was that the specificity achieved by the intersection, coordination, or logical product of terms of equal generality differs in principle from the specificity of a specific word or phrase and whatever degree of subdivision is allowed. Gull and Taube knew and had participated in establishing the rules and practices set forth and described by Haykin and Aronson. But it was only through a recent intensive study of the relation of specificity to subdivision on well over a thousand catalog cards, that the difference in kind between the two methods of attaining specificity was clearly recognized.

Standard library practice assumes that, in general, it is possible to express any specific topic in a single word or phrase. This assumption underlies the directive to use subject headings that are direct and specific ("what distinguishes the subject heading in the present day dictionary catalog from other forms i.e., the alphabetic-classed catalog is that it is both specific and direct."

It must now be recognized that this assumption is false—that there are many specific complex ideas which cannot be expressed in specific words or phrases plus nontopical subdivisions, but only as the specific product or relationship of two or more general terms. Since a large percentage of scientific articles or reports are on specific subjects, only in this latter sense, i.e., as a specific complex of general ideas, the conclusion follows ineluctably that standard library subject heading practice is inapplicable in principle to the specific indexing or cataloging of scientific articles or reports. For example, if it is desired to index an article on the treatment of cancer of the thyroid with radioactive iodine, or a report on the effect of climatic conditions on the insulating materials of electric cables, it can be seen at once that no specific word or phrase can cover such complexes; nor does it make sense to subordinate or subdivide cancer by iodine or iodine by thyroid, or climate by electric cables or insulation by climate, etc., etc. Rather, specific topics like these are only expressible as the coordination of terms on the same relative level of generality.
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The applicability of TID or Library of Congress policy and practice to certain types of material is not being questioned. Books and monographs being more general than articles or reports can usually be adequately indexed under specific subject headings plus non-topical subdivisions. What is here being questioned is the extension of this policy and practice into an area in which its limitations become a matter of principle.

It is worth noting in conclusion that the recognition of the limitations of standard practice and the recognition that new techniques are required has in large part been a result of the attempt by the TID to achieve a "consistent development and exemplification of the rules of uninverted and specific entry. We believe this attempt important not only because of the kind of list resulting thereby, but also because it is only possible to test the adequacy of a rule or procedure by carrying it out to the limits of its applicability." It is possible now to go beyond these limits only because TID with a true experimental approach has provided a thorough demonstration of the limits of its own practice.

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3. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
4. Ibid., p. 27.
5. Gull and Taube, op. cit., p. xii.
International Interest in Special Libraries: Unesco

EDWARD CARTER

There are two good reasons why Unesco's part in the development of international interest in special libraries should find a place in this number of Library Trends. First, the subject coverage of Unesco—education, science, and culture—implies, by definition, an interest in the specialized functions of contemporary society which special libraries are created to serve; and, second, the purpose of Unesco, or one of its main purposes—to increase international understanding—has been recognized from the start to imply an interest in the methods of international communication including those of libraries.

All libraries in some way or other are concerned with international communication but none so clearly as special libraries, created to meet the needs of men of science and learning, industry and commerce. Always, but never more than today, they have been the means of widening the experience of specialists on whom so much of the welfare of the world depends beyond the limited boundaries of nations. It is significant that most of the outstanding developments in documentation and bibliography, in documentary reproduction and selection techniques, and in the techniques of interlibrary communication have been fostered by special librarians and have found their fullest use in special library service. These developments have, in their turn, been among the most active stimulants of special libraries, in so far as the purpose of a bibliography or a microfilm service is to increase the availability of books and periodicals to specialists which can only be achieved if there are libraries to provide the service.

Unesco is concerned with special libraries not only because Unesco is interested in the specialities of education, science, and culture, but because of the nature of special libraries themselves. This is revealed

Mr. Carter is Head of the Libraries Division of Unesco.
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if only the preposition in the title of this article is changed, and we speak for a moment of the international interest of special libraries. Unesco is interested not because it possesses any special proselytizing zeal to turn special libraries toward recognition of their international role or because they are a contemporary phenomenon for observation, but because fundamentally almost every special library serving any field of education, science, or culture, from the nature of its work, must be concerned with international communication and must look beyond national frontiers both for its material and for its public as the user and the creator of its material. Even the most highly localized subjects are enlightened by comparative studies; few subjects, least of all that huge range which falls within the scope of Unesco action, can be confined within national boundaries.

Furthermore, interest in special library development is considerably increased today for reasons which are partly political in origin. We are all aware that running hand-in-hand with a growing awareness of “world community” is a growing national consciousness. In some respects the latter is logically an effect of, and a condition of, the former. On the analogy of the strength of a chain being found in its weakest link, the capacity of mankind to create a world community of education, science, and culture—which can be one definition of Unesco’s tasks—is undoubtedly limited while many parts of the world are unable to realize their full individual national potentialities. This is even more evident in matters of “culture” than in those of science and technology. It is undoubtedly true that the most active and efficient focal points for international library communication today are in those countries which are sharply aware of their home job and their local responsibilities. This must be the base on which every effective international service stands.

During the past century and more, during the mercantile and imperialist phases of history, most fundamental scientific and cultural studies have been concentrated in “the West,” where great libraries have been created, most naturally, in the main centers of research. Thus the world famous libraries of natural science and technology are still to be found in western Europe or the U.S.A.

The wealth of the West, its colonizing energies, and the stimulus provided by the far-reaching travels of westerners have enabled the creation in the West of humanistic and scientific libraries treating of subjects internationally, even though the subjects may often by definition be localized. The reasons for this creative energy in library
building are many; sometimes undoubtedly because a good library is an essential part of the apparatus of political authority, but there are many other gentle, less paternal, even filial reasons. The only fact of importance is that the West has had both the incentives and the means to do what now is a world wide responsibility. The old process continues even now, as Europeans notice, sometimes with friendly jealousy, the brilliant development in the U.S.A. of special libraries largely concerned with European studies. The great Boswell and Walpole collections at Yale are outstanding examples. In the natural sciences and technology, the same western concentration exists in an even more emphatic way, but in both natural and humanistic sciences changes are on the way which profoundly affect special library development. All countries are waking to their responsibilities to develop their resources and are seeking means to create the necessary scientific and cultural organizations to this end.

Unesco is not concerned with the simple reversal of a well justified and deeply rooted system; that, in any case, would be impossible and is largely undesirable. It is, however, directly interested in stimulating awareness among all its Member States of the value of special libraries as a means of enhancing every side of national education, science, and culture, so that every country can realize its own potentialities in the world community. In fact Unesco, with its limited means, cannot keep pace with the continually growing demand for help in building up adequate libraries. Generally the demand for help arises not because in the first place there is any direct activity by Unesco in its library programs, but because its more extensive programs in the Unesco subject fields are continually pressing into the foreground the need for improved library and documentation services.

Today, largely as a result of Unesco’s work, or, more modestly, as the result of tendencies of which Unesco’s work is an expression, there is considerable decentralization of research and studies. Countries far from the old western center are starting energetically to enlarge and activate their educational, scientific, and cultural life on the strength of their own resources, which of course, as librarians know without being told, means the creation of libraries to marshal systematically their national documentation and to provide through library service all the means of drawing into local use the intellectual resources of the rest of the world.

In this sense, special libraries, as well as national and university libraries, are part of the apparatus of the contemporary chain of inter-
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national communication which we cannot allow to be weakened by weak links in the national contributions. There is no idea as yet of a systematically organized scheme such as the United States has attempted in the Farmington Plan. The scale of Unesco work is not yet large enough, Unesco has not been working long enough, and doubtless the world is not politically ready for the development of a universally applicable scheme of international library service to be propounded. In theory, with the use of microfilm services, centrally produced abstracts, and so on, regional organization of special library and documentation services can be envisaged; but it must not be too readily assumed, even in the field of science and technology, that even limited regional schemes involving inevitably the designation of major and senior services against the current of national opinion are possible. And it is doubtful whether, until the logistics of international library communication have been much more fully studied, such a degree of efficiency could be attained that attention can yet be diverted from efforts to build up purely national and autonomous libraries.

It is perhaps because of this that Unesco's most effective work has not been in the direct creation of, or even in attempts to create, special libraries but in the stimulation and organization of bibliographical and documentation services for specialists which can operate on an international scale with the least possible excitement of nationalist feeling. In each of three main areas of Unesco work—the natural, social, and humanistic sciences—international bibliography or documentation committees have been created which, by attacking the question of bibliography or documentation (to a large extent the words are used synonymously) get at the problem of special library service indirectly. Apart from the fact that many if not all documentation services are centered in libraries, so that their development represents a corresponding growth in the libraries of their origin, all such services are aimed primarily at making the printed records of human communication available, which, despite the largely unrealized potentialities of documentary reproduction service, still means for most of us service from libraries.

Many of the most interesting Unesco projects, leading to special library development, come within the United Nations program for economic development which, as far as Unesco is concerned, is mainly concentrated on natural science and technology, and fundamental and technical education.

The immediate objective of every project is to improve national or,
in certain instances, regional competence to meet urgent current needs by the provision of equipment, the supply of highly qualified foreign experts, and the training of local specialists through fellowships. Thus, to take one example, Turkey has applied for and received help in establishing two institutes for the study of new problems in hydrogeology and seismology. Until these are solved, vast arid and earthquake areas of the countries cannot be settled or developed. The Turkish authorities recognized at the start that this work would involve a sharp improvement in the scientific library services available. Concurrently, therefore, with the development of the institutes, they have been enabled to add a consultant to their National Library to organize a national bibliographical center which, while it covers the full needs of such a center on a national and comprehensive scale, is immediately directing its energies to providing the special library and documentation services which the scientific institutes need. In practice this is not likely to result in the creation of new special libraries in the two subjects concerned, but in the development of the existing faculty libraries in the universities and of the specialist departments of the National Library itself, and in the provision, through the National Library for a modern documentary reproduction service, so that material can be transmitted to field and laboratory workers from national and foreign sources.

Another technical assistance project which is just about to start will provide the Higher Teacher’s College in Baghdad with a modern library, involving extension services to a number of institutes for technical education.

In Iran and Syria, librarians from Europe have been working in the university libraries. Pierre Bourgeois, National Librarian of Switzerland, was consultant for the Syrian Library project for three months and is now succeeded by Jean Baby of France. In Iran, Josef Stummvoll, National Librarian of Austria, is head of the Unesco mission. These men are reorganizing the university libraries with, as is inevitable under the terms of the technical assistance program, special emphasis on the development of the libraries in those faculties which have special reference to the scientific, technical, and economic welfare of the countries. Although, as university library projects, these might seem to fall outside a strict definition of special library, they are concerned none the less with all the problems of special library service because it is clearly beyond the means of these and most other countries in similar stages of development to consider the establishment of numberless special libraries to serve each subject. Concentra-
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tion of special library services under the aegis of the National University is both logical and economical.

In Hashemite Jordan a project is just starting which, also by definition, as a project for a national library, might not seem to be the subject of reference in an article on special libraries, but the scale of the project and its necessary concentration on a limited number of currently important fields bring it within this service. Jordan certainly lacks modern libraries to enable its current business to be carried on with the intellectual background which only libraries can provide. Here, clearly, it would be absurd to divide the library organization into numberless special units, but it will be the first duty of the expert sent by Unesco to isolate the areas of first priority importance and to create their library services within the framework of a national library. Jordan illustrates one particular but not unique problem of considerable interest. During past decades there was considerable research in the economic, geographic, and political life of the country by various agencies. It will be one of the first objectives of the project to establish as much as possible of this documentation in Jordan itself as a first step in the development of a fully constituted national library service.

The Middle East, the scene of all the projects mentioned above, is one of the regions in which Unesco maintains a Field Science Cooperation Office with two bureaus, in Cairo and Istanbul. All of Unesco’s Regional Sciences Offices in the Middle East—Delhi, Djakarta, Manila, and Montevideo—have largely concentrated their efforts in stimulating science library services and on developing interlibrary cooperation. The bibliographies which they publish of science publications in their regions are in themselves highly successful in drawing attention to the importance of special libraries since, characteristically in these regions, men of science are, if anything, poorer than their colleagues in the West and entirely unable to build up large private libraries or to subscribe personally to the periodicals they need.

One more libraries project in Unesco’s Middle East program can be mentioned which was aimed directly at the promotion of special libraries. Publication of a guide to the libraries of the Near and Middle East, Répertoire des Bibliothèques du Proche et du Moyen Orient compiled by Joseph Dagher,1 of the National Library, Beirut, was intended not only to serve the normal purpose of a guide—to give information—but to increase awareness in the countries recorded and elsewhere in the world of the vast wealth of Middle East special libraries, of the opportunities for their development, and of the possibilities and need for interlibrary cooperation in the region. This work

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was largely experimental but, despite the limitations of a pioneering effort, has proved its worth and will, as soon as means are found, be given a second, revised and enlarged edition.

Similar work to that in the Middle East is being done in Latin America where there are several technical assistance projects already working or being developed, notably the Mexican Scientific Bibliographical Center, which is planned to serve as a regional center for Latin America, the Unesco Field Science Cooperation Office in Montevideo, and projects for the development of national bibliographical centers in Uruguay and Brazil. All of these are being planned to assure efficient inter-relation although a completely unified regional plan has not yet been thought out. In India, at Delhi, a scientific Bibliographical Center has been set up similar in function to the Mexican Center and also intended to serve all the countries of the region.

When Unesco was first established, one of the biggest and most urgent problems was to assist in the reconstruction of war-damaged libraries and for three years a small fund existed which was used to buy books for “reconstruction” countries. This was the time of the American Book Center and the Interallied Book Center in London, both of which had collected many thousands of gifts which largely found their way to special libraries in Europe, China, and the Philippines. Out of this reconstruction work has grown one of the most permanently useful of all Unesco library projects and one which is almost entirely directed to special libraries—the exchange and gift services of the Unesco Clearing House for publications.

The problem was an old one—the disposal of library surplus material so that it reaches libraries where it is really wanted, so that “dumping” and wasteful channeling of gifts or exchange material through devious routes is avoided. The system is simple and efficient. Unesco receives lists of surplus books or periodicals from all over the world; these are duplicated and sent precisely to those libraries which have indicated their interest in exchanging publications or receiving gifts in the subject of the list. Each recipient library marks fifty first priority choices in order and as many additional choices as it wishes. The Clearing House then decides on the final allocation and helps the donor library to negotiate the actual transmission of the books to the recipient library. Many hundreds of international library exchanges are being effected in this way. At present about 2,600 libraries are cooperating in this scheme which is one of the most completely international activities of the Organization.

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Two examples can be given of recent distributions:

List 149 (science and education). One hundred thirty-four books offered by a U.S.A. library were distributed at the recipients' request to forty-six libraries in the following countries: England, India, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Poland, Sweden, Belgium, France, Norway, South Africa, Argentina, China (Canton), Chile, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Indonesia, Burma, Italy, Viet-Nam, the Netherlands, and Japan.

List 158 (education and social science). Three hundred thirty-seven books offered by the British National Book Center were distributed at the recipients' request to forty-five libraries in the following countries: Switzerland, Iran, Czechoslovakia, India, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Italy, the U.S.A., Austria, the Netherlands, France, Canada, Israel, Egypt, Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Hong-Kong, South Africa, Turkey, Indonesia, and Syria.

Lists have come this year from special libraries in, among other countries, Austria, Denmark, Germany, France, Argentina, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Hawaii, Sweden, Brazil, Switzerland, Algeria, Portugal, Italy, Chile, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.A. The greatest part of U.S. exchange activity is through the United States Book Exchange, which was set up with the declared aim of fulfilling a program resolution of Unesco urging creation of national exchange centers.

Long before Unesco was created, the International Federation for Documentation and the International Federation of Library Associations had existed and had been doing much work which it has been Unesco's duty to support. The F.I.D., more perhaps than I.F.L.A., has been concerned with special library functions, largely in its development of the Universal Decimal Classification. Unesco has recently contracted with the F.I.D. for the publication of a new edition of *Index Bibliographicus*, in two volumes, covering the natural and applied sciences and all other subject fields, and a *Guide to Documentary Reproduction and Photocopying Services*. Recently a new International Association of Music Libraries has been established with Unesco support. The I.A.M.L. has a heavy and expensive program, including the preparation of a new edition of the *Eitner Lexicon*, which it is tackling with energy and enthusiasm in cooperation with the International Council of Musicologists.

A brief survey of international interest in special libraries from the Unesco viewpoint cannot hope to go both deeply and widely into the
question of the importance of special libraries in the world today or to
describe any of the Unesco projects sufficiently fully for a complete
picture to be given of their scope and limitations. It is, perhaps, be-
cause the potential scope of Unesco work is so enormous that its limi-
tations are so painfully evident. Yet as we see Unesco as the responsible
agent for a world-wide program of library development, we can
glimpse possibilities which have never previously existed for a rising in
the whole tide of activity; and without doubt big things are happen-
ing, bigger far than the item by item recital of individual projects can
reveal. Governments which never before have had questions of li-
brary service brought to their attention see that libraries have a large
place in the work of an international agency which they pay for and
support. The hard financial fact, for that is what it comes down to,
that Unesco is positively interested in library service as one way of
fulfilling its charter, is in itself an education to anyone who still doubts
the need for libraries as an essential service of a modern state. They
are led to observe the value given to libraries in the countries where
economic, social, educational, and cultural developments have flowered
most and become ready to give a similar value to their growth at home.

Everyone knows the hackneyed complaint that the modern specialist
is a person who knows more and more about less and less. The exist-
ence in all subject fields and in all countries of first-class special li-
braries will certainly help the scientist and the scholar to know more
and more, and if that is his role he cannot achieve it without the help
of his own special libraries. From the international point of view, how-
ever, a good library assures that science and learning are preserved
from parochialism, narrow and nationalistic theories, and are widened
and enlightened by the flow into every small center of creative energy
of the accumulated intelligence of the past plus the present from all
the world.

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Recent Developments in Special Libraries in Great Britain

ROBERT L. COLLISON

It is not known how many special libraries there are in Great Britain today. Most of the larger libraries—about one thousand of them—are members of Aslib, but they are probably outnumbered by the one-librarian information officer services of the smaller organizations. They certainly cover a vast range of subjects from oil to precious metals, and from wool to paper; but it may not be fully realized how specialized some of them have become. Recently a librarian who was being introduced as head of a library concerned with seaweed interrupted to say, “not seaweed in general—brown seaweed.”

There is no doubt that the Second World War acted as a stimulus to strengthening and enlarging existing libraries and to the creation of new ones. While great organizations such as Imperial Chemical Industries were expanding and developing their central and divisional library services, the Ministry of Works was establishing an extensive system of branch libraries throughout the country, and totally new libraries such as that of the Ministry of Food came into being. Since the war this trend has been accelerated by the following factors: (1) increased interest by both government and industry in research and development and, therefore, in special libraries. (The incentive to export more goods has helped.); (2) encouragement and financial aid from the Treasury through the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (D.S.I.R.); (3) the detailed examination carried out by the Royal Society of London of the whole machinery of obtaining, recording, and making available scientific and technical information; (4) increased efforts by Aslib to improve its services, enlarge its membership, and make itself heard in all matters relating to special libraries (For these and other purposes Aslib has secured a substantial grant

The author is Reference Librarian of Westminster Public Library in London.
through D.S.I.R. which has enabled it to increase both its staff and its publications.); (5) a purely voluntary tendency among all types of libraries—public, university, and special—to achieve a greater degree of cooperation among themselves.

By the end of the war, government officials, industrial executives, and research workers were all urging an inquiry into the state of the information services. Those who had visited the U.S.A. were impressed by the degree of importance achieved by the American special library and by the vast provision for libraries in such institutes as Massachusetts Institute of Technology and California Institute of Technology. There was a general feeling that Britain was lagging far behind, and that the recovery of the country might be delayed if nothing was done to remedy the position of the information services. To date, the government has had two committees in succession studying the problem, and one of the most important results of their work has been the decision that a new national scientific and technical library is needed as soon as possible. At the moment its functions are partially performed by the libraries of the Patent Office and the Science Museum, but it was the opinion of the committees that these libraries are overburdened by the double duty of serving the needs of their own institutions and those of the general public throughout the country.

Apart from this, there has been much consideration of service to industry, particularly to the small factories unable to maintain effective libraries of their own. For these the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research has established an extensive information service both from its own central organization and from its many research stations and affiliated bodies whose interests range from fire-fighting to building.

The work of the Royal Society is no less important. This ancient and august body, which numbers among its restricted membership some of the finest of the world’s brains, decided as soon as peace had returned to inquire into the whole question of scientific information. The resulting volume, *Scientific Information Conference 1948: Report and Papers Submitted*¹ including recommendations² adopted, is bulky but makes fascinating reading, for, like a Royal Commission, the Society called for evidence from many interested organizations and covered the whole field in workmanlike fashion. Immediate results included action on abstracts, periodicals, and reviewing.

The Society felt that the present arrangements concerning abstracts were inadequate and that there was unnecessary overlapping in some areas while other important fields were being unduly neglected. They,
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therefore, published a very useful list of abstracting journals, A List of Periodicals and Bulletins Containing Abstracts Published in Great Britain, and made various recommendations to the bodies concerned. The burden of obtaining permission to copy articles from the editors of periodicals and the dangers of copying without permission were fully recognized by the Society, which therefore approached a large number of scholarly journals directly and secured from most of them carte blanche permission for the copying of articles for the purpose of research.

In addition, the Society published a List of British Scientific Publications Reporting Original Work or Critical Reviews to aid research workers in their quest for the scant notices of new information and developments. The work of the Society has not ended here, and its impressive efforts on behalf of libraries and information services have been warmly appreciated by the whole profession.

The treasury-grants to Aslib during and since the war have been sufficiently substantial to make its program doubly effective. Its headquarters have been removed to larger and more convenient premises in South Kensington within a short distance of the Science Museum, and its publications policy has been intensified. To the well-known Journal of Documentation and the very useful little monthly newsheet, Aslib Information, has been added the quarterly Aslib Proceedings. The Aslib Book-List has been improved and a ten-year cumulative index prepared. One of the newest developments is Aslib's decision to record British doctoral dissertations and to publish a classified annual list under the editorship of P. D. Record of the Bodleian; the first issue is announced for publication this year. And at the present time Aslib has in active preparation a standard and comprehensive manual of special library practice. This year, too, by a special treasury-grant, Aslib appointed a consultant, C. E. C. Hewetson, to aid organizations in the establishment of new libraries and information services, to advise on the improvement and reorganization of existing services, and to undertake the study of special problems of technique.

In the international field special libraries have been active, taking special interest in the work of such organizations as Unesco, the International Federation of Library Associations, and the International Federation for Documentation, and sending representatives to their councils and conferences. Moreover, they have fully cooperated in the compilation of the third edition of the World List of Scientific Periodicals which has just been published.

Special tribute must be paid to the British Standards Institution
and J. F. Stanley, its librarian, who have been responsible for the translation into English of various parts of the Universal Decimal Classification and for organizing working parties on, and publishing standards for, such items as bibliographical references, microfilm storage, book measurements, standard format for periodicals, and alphabetical arrangement.

The trend toward greater cooperation between all types of libraries is exemplified by Sheffield, where the City Librarian, J. P. Lamb, organized the recording of the periodical holdings of all types of libraries throughout the area. The advantages to the smaller special libraries were immense, and the effectiveness of the Sheffield scheme can be gauged by the fact that it has been the model for schemes in other parts of the country.

One point which has become increasingly evident in recent years is the fact that many British public libraries include special library functions. For example, most British public libraries have extensive collections of material relating to the local history and archaeology of the surrounding area, while many of them go much further in the collection of books and periodicals, and other material on local industries—such as Nottingham on lace, Northampton on boot- and shoemaking, Westminster on entertainment and catering, and Hendon on aircraft industries. It is also becoming the habit for local organizations to deposit their libraries in the public library where they can be efficiently cared for, and where the public may secure access to them. Manchester Central Library, for instance, has over one hundred such libraries in its Special Collections Department.

With this awareness has come the urge to coordinate all types of special collections. At the Library Association, about three years ago, a working party consisting of representatives of all types of libraries, formulated a plan similar to the Farmington Plan for increasing the coverage of British and foreign material in existing subjects and the establishment of new collections and libraries where necessary. The scheme goes beyond the Farmington Plan in its inclusion of both serial and government publications from the start.

A notably interesting movement in recent years has been the increasing tendency of special libraries to organize themselves both regionally and by subject interests. The first move came from the medical libraries in London, which voluntarily arrived at an agreement to divide their subject field in order to achieve greater economy, the elimination of unnecessary duplication, and, at the same time, an in-
crease in their total coverage. Under this scheme, for instance, the Royal College of Physicians now specializes in medical material published prior to 1850 (in which it is very rich). Aslib has been prompt to meet the demand by encouraging the establishment of several very lively subject groups—textiles, food and agriculture, fuel and power, economics, aeronautics, metallurgy, and possibly an engineering group—and also branches in the Midlands, in the North, and in Scotland. Some successful conferences by these organizations have already been held and have evidently fulfilled a real need. Independently of these, two other organizations have come into being. The government librarians have formed their own association under the title of The Circle of State Librarians and publish an informative newsheet, the State Librarian. And, in London there came into being the Standing Conference of Technological and Philosophical Libraries in London, which has recently published its own directory of libraries within its field. It seems probable that similar groupings will take place in such subjects as chemical engineering, oil, theatre and film, and plastics—all of which are strong in libraries and information services.

Parallel with this has been the movement for a new section in the Library Association, which culminated in the formation about two years ago of the Reference and Research Section with a surprisingly large commencing membership. At first it might appear that the number of associations and branches and sections is unnecessarily large, but there is active cooperation between them all, resulting in joint meetings, cooperative working parties, and much real cooperation in the everyday work of librarianship.

The position concerning the professional training of assistants in special libraries is unusually interesting at the moment. The only examining bodies are the Library Association and the University of London's School of Librarianship at University College, both of which include papers on special librarianship. The University of London provides a course for special libraries in its curricula which can be attended both by full-time postgraduate students and by assistants in active employment in libraries. Several of the schools of librarianship maintained by the technical institutes and colleges include courses in special librarianship, and the Association of Assistant Librarians (a section of the Library Association) gives help in these studies through its publications for students and in other ways.

Aslib itself offers no formal courses of training for the examinations in special librarianship, but it does hold regular junior and senior train-
ing courses (given by practicing experts) to which most of the im-
portant special libraries send their assistants. Aslib also publishes
manuals and pamphlets to aid both librarians and students. There has
been some question as to whether Aslib should take greater part both
in the field of courses and in the establishment of its own diploma of
efficiency in special librarianship, but there is much disagreement on
this point, and a recent proposal for a revision of policy along these
lines was decisively referred back for further study at an annual gen-
eral meeting of Aslib.

In Britain the position of the special library within its own organiza-
tion has always been the subject of much discussion. In some bodies
the special library and its librarian are subordinated to the informa-
tion officer (whose duties may include both internal and public rela-
tions and information). In others the duties of information officer and
librarian are combined in the one person. Most librarians are agreed
that a definition of the functions of each post would be helpful, and
it is hoped that this will be provided by the government committees
when their reports are published. This may help to clear up an un-
satisfactory position, for in some organizations the present arrange-
ment makes the position of librarian just one in a hierarchy, so that the
librarian of today may be the branch manager or the research officer of
tomorrow—a situation which definitely weakens the chances of main-
taining a good service and which militates against the librarian taking
a strong interest in the wider aspects of special librarianship.

Although Great Britain, in relation to its size, is probably the rich-
est in libraries of all the countries of the world, there are still large
subject fields—such as sports, handicrafts, biography, philosophy, etc.—
which are either very weak in special library provision or which have
no libraries whatsoever specializing on their material.

British librarians are keenly aware of this and of the many other
problems which confront them. In their search for solutions there is
much evidence that they carefully study American periodicals and
books on professional subjects, and that they follow with great atten-
tion the work of both the Special Libraries Association and the Ameri-
can Library Association, as well as that of the American Documenta-
tion Institute and the activities of the French, Dutch, and Germans on
such subjects as micro-reproduction.

Unfortunately there has not been nearly enough visiting between
the librarians of each country, although representatives of the Depart-
ment of Scientific and Industrial Research (Urquhart), the Royal
Recent Developments in Special Libraries in Great Britain

Institute of International Affairs (Kyle, now Hon. Secretary of Aslib), and the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (Drake)—to name only a few—have toured libraries in the United States since the war. Still closer cooperation between the U.S.A. and Great Britain would, in the opinion of this writer, be of great value to both countries, and it is notable that Aslib and the Special Libraries Association are now working on a promising scheme for the exchange of librarians between individual libraries on both sides of the Atlantic.

References

   2. Ibid., pp. 195-208.


The World Health Organization
Library Service

H. A. IZANT

The World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, is charged under its constitution with the widest responsibilities for the improvement of the health standards of the people of the world. The necessity for an adequate medical library and reference service, as an essential adjunct to the technical work of WHO and its Secretariat, was early recognized. In December 1946, at a time when the organization was only in its preparatory phase, arrangements were made to deal with urgent library needs and requirements.

Today, the WHO Library in Geneva contains some 25,000 textbooks, monographs, and bound periodicals, in addition to a large collection of reprints, official documents, and annual reports and regularly receives nearly 1,500 current periodicals. The nucleus of the collection had been formed by the library of the Office International d’Hygiène Publique in Paris, whose functions and responsibilities have been inherited by WHO.

To supplement the WHO collection, there is available in the same building, the Palais des Nations, the large and well-stocked United Nations Library which includes the health and medical sections of the former League of Nations Library. Some of this material is available, by special arrangement, on long-term loan in the WHO Library, and access to it all is easy.

Administratively, the Library and Reference Section of WHO is part of the Division of Editorial and Reference Services. Its staff, which includes American, Belgian, Costa Rican, Dutch, English, French, Polish, and Swiss workers, numbers eighteen, nine of whom are trained librarians. The Section has to service an organization which is by now fully regionalized with offices and small libraries in New Delhi, Alex-
andria, and Manila. Its chief functions may be summarized as follows: (1) to provide the WHO Secretariat with an information and library service and, more particularly, with a rapid and comprehensive service of medical documentation essential for the execution of its duties and responsibilities; (2) to provide Member Governments, WHO regional offices, and WHO field teams with a rapid and comprehensive service of medical documentation; (3) to advise upon and to procure medical literature, both under the regular budget and under technical assistance funds, for WHO Member Governments, WHO regional offices, and WHO field teams; (4) to advise Member Governments on their special requirements for the adequate development of medical library services, especially in conjunction with long-term WHO plans for strengthening national health administrations.

As may be imagined from the variegated nature of WHO’s work, the requests received for information and bibliographies are both numerous and diverse. A WHO field worker in Rangoon, Burma, writes for a list of references (with reprints or photocopies) to the literature on histoplasmosis and histoplasmin sensitivity in South-East Asia; a WHO consultant needs a comprehensive bibliography on the toxicology to man and mammals of the new insecticides; the health department of a Member Government requests a list of teaching films on malaria; another asks for information on the optometric profession in various countries.

An essential requirement for reference work is an up-to-date index to the current periodical literature. There have, unfortunately, been serious delays in the publication of the Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus. Also, though changes in the presentation of the Current List of Medical Literature have made this publication of greater value to medical libraries, there is still, especially for European libraries, an inevitable delay in the receipt and indexing of non-American periodicals. For these reasons the WHO Library is now regularly scrutinizing 965 periodicals in eighteen languages and indexing on cards, by author and subject, the articles of interest to WHO. Duplicate cards are sent regularly to all WHO specialists who wish to be kept informed of current articles in their subjects, which means that on an average some four thousand cards are prepared each month.

An analytical index is also compiled for WHO publications and documents and for all the publications and documents of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies which are of particular interest to WHO.
H. A. IZANT

The Library News, which was started in May 1947, is a monthly mimeographed document of about twenty pages. It consists of a list of the books received and cataloged during the preceding month, the periodicals newly received, the annual government publications added to the library, and the bibliographies prepared. From time to time supplements are issued containing selected lists of books and periodicals on subjects of special interest to WHO. The Library News is distributed free of charge to members of the WHO Secretariat in Geneva, to the WHO regional offices, and, on request, to medical libraries and universities.

During the past five years WHO has furnished considerable quantities of medical literature to Member Governments for libraries of medical and health institutions, especially those concerned with the education and training of professional, technical, and other public-health personnel. The number of books supplied had, by the end of 1951, exceeded 22,000, while nearly 9,000 periodical subscriptions, as well as many hundreds of reprints, photocopies, and microfilms had been provided. This has assisted in replacing collections destroyed or damaged during the war, in rehabilitating inadequate or outdated libraries, and in furnishing nuclear collections to countries where standards of medical education and of health services are below average. It has served to keep up to date in basic medical literature, libraries in countries with very limited funds to spend in external purchases.

Special literature recommended by the appropriate technical sections of WHO is also ordered through the library and sent to the WHO advisory and demonstration teams working in the field. For the members of those teams cut off from ready access to medical literature, the WHO Library has a special responsibility and provides, wherever possible, photocopies or microfilms of the literature required.

While the supply of current medical literature is an indispensable aid to the development of health services, that is but one part of a complete library service as conducted by trained professional librarians. WHO has acknowledged its responsibilities to assist in the preparation of medical librarians by granting fellowships to medical librarians to study outside their own country. Four such fellowships have already been granted, and three of the fellows have spent a portion of their period of study working in the WHO Library.

Another important development was the appointment of a medical library consultant to the WHO Regional Office for Europe, to survey
The World Health Organization Library Service

and report upon the several medical libraries in European countries. It is expected that other WHO regional offices survey medical and public-health library facilities within their area. The present goal is to build up at least one adequate medical library in each country. These central medical libraries would be expected to provide advice and services to other national medical and public-health libraries and to take the initiative in establishing a union list of periodicals and a system of interlibrary cooperation in acquisitions and loans.

The place of medical library services in the work of WHO is still in the experimental stage. So far, for very good and obvious reasons, this service has tended to face inward and to have concentrated on the task of providing the WHO specialist quickly and efficiently with the material and information he requires. This may meet WHO's needs but not the needs of the world. The appointment of a medical library consultant to the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the granting of medical library fellowships, however, are indications of possible future developments. They are indications, too, of the growing realization by WHO Member Governments of the essential role of medical libraries in the development of adequate health services.
Special Library Education

EDWARD N. WATERS

Two important conferences on library education were held in 1948. The first was held at the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, August 16-21. Justified through the value of its own content and the originality of its participants, it laid down no program for future action, and its influence was entrusted to the publication of its papers and the criticisms they inspired. It should be added that this influence may be considerable if enough of the right kind of persons read the volume, but even under the best of conditions the results of the book will depend upon the imagination of its readers.

The second conference took place December 11-12, at Princeton University under sponsorship of the Council of National Library Associations. This conference also led to a publication, this time a summary of the proceedings which included resolutions or recommendations bearing on future developments. The guiding forces of this conference endeavored to set in motion certain activities which would affect library education for a long time to come.

It was more than mere coincidence, of course, that two meetings on the same broad topic should be held and successfully executed within less than half a year. The same fundamental reasons underlay both—changing patterns in educational practice and needs, and a feeling of uncertainty respecting directions and goals. The earlier conference in Chicago was by far the broader of the two. Its roster embraced notable individuals from outside the library field who were sometimes quite ready to criticize strongly the self-esteem of professional librarians. The Princeton conference, on the other hand, was attended exclusively by librarians (though they were not all educators), and whether they were sufficiently critical of their own work can only be determined by a subjective reading of the proceedings.

Both of the conferences devoted attention to special librarianship, but even the most unobservant reader must be struck by a strange difference in terminology. The editor of this issue of Library Trends wrote

Mr. Waters is Assistant Chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress.
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a paper for the Chicago meeting entitled "Education for Special Librarianship." The same topic at Princeton was called "Educating Librarians for the Several Types of Library Work." Is there anything significant in the fact that two such widely varying titles were used to explore substantially the same ground? To this writer there is; these two titles indicate, not that special librarianship is a professional riddle, but that a special librarian (and possibly a special library) is an ill-defined creature, and since he suffers from this stigma his training remains problematic.

The special librarian himself is partly responsible for his present position. Ask any such person what his occupation is and he may possibly give you two answers. If he is loyal to the library profession as a whole, he is willing to reply, "I am a librarian"; if he chooses to be more selective he will doubtless say, "I am a medical librarian" or a "music librarian" or a "law librarian" or a "science librarian." It is not likely he will assert that he is a "special librarian," for if pressed for further explanation, as he surely would be, he would be hard put to it for adequate phrases. On the other hand the term "special librarianship" is widely used because it represents a broad concept unique and legitimate in the library field. The trouble comes in trying to devise educational schedules in accordance with a broad concept and in failing to realize that the particularities of that concept may have little in common but much in isolation.

There is another consideration which looms large with many "special librarians" and which the general librarian can little appreciate. Ask a law librarian what field he works in, or even what profession he belongs to, and he is quite apt to say "law"; similarly medicine, science, music, and a dozen other callings claim the allegiance and closest personal interest of their librarians. This attitude is encouraged by training, by inclination, by association. Any educational scheme for special librarians must take it into account and see that it does not weaken as students prepare to discharge their duties in library institutions.

There can be no question that preparation for work in a library is essential. That preparation is the best and most economical which is acquired in the shortest time under the most proficient tutors in the most systematic fashion. Does this automatically mean library schools, and are they in a position to serve the peculiar needs of the prospective special librarian when he most needs attention?

After the discussion of special library education at the Princeton conference it was recommended "that if and when a joint committee on education for librarianship is appointed, a thorough survey be
made by the committee to determine the most desirable educational preparation for special librarians, to serve as a guide to library schools in developing programs of training." This recommendation was followed and is still in process of effectuation which may continue for several years. The Joint Committee on Library Education was created and it called into being two successive sub-committees on Special Library Education.

The first sub-committee was exploratory, rendering but one report. It assumed that "special librarianship" meant librarianship connected with special subject areas, and rendered a definition and a statement which appears to be permanently valid:

A special librarian... is a librarian who, by virtue of special interests and talents, chooses to operate in a special discipline, and for that purpose requires a broadened and intensified knowledge of his selected field—to which he must adapt the library technics basic to all library practice.

The inclination toward his subject mastery, possibly evinced before entering library training and adopted as a career prior to library training, must not be discontinued as library technics are encountered; the latter are to be molded to the needs of the former, and the two must be studied and amalgamated with one end in view: the production of an individual who, as a librarian, can render a service that the general librarian is not competent to give. Several years may be necessary to make this situation (an ideal one) the general rule, but it is a condition of undoubted desirability. Library students of the present day, awakening to the attractions of library specialization as they study library technics, are still more in need of subject study, and the library schools have the responsibility of seeing that they get it. Otherwise the library schools do a disservice to the subject interests they endeavor to serve.

The first sub-committee recommended, and was succeeded by, a second, much larger and more varied sub-committee, comprised of Leon Carnovsky, Eleanor S. Cavanaugh, Robert B. Downs (now replaced by Harold Lancour), George Freedley, Walter Hausdorfer, Sanford V. Larkey, Julius J. Marke, Mary Louise Marshall, Louis Shores, Maurice Tauber, and Melvin J. Voigt, with this writer as chairman. This is a representative committee and should be able to cope with any problems connected with library education, special or general, near or remote. But the dissimilarity of subject interests raises unexpectedly strange questions with some of the individuals, and it is only fair to say that early solutions are not in sight. How could they be
when these questions have been vexing the best library minds for a generation past?

This current sub-committee is exploring seven fields of special librarianship: drama, finance, journalism, law, medicine, music, and science and technology. These are typical of present-day practice; they do not exclude many more fields which may be examined subsequently. The sub-committee’s assignment is to suggest how librarians for these widely differing professions may best be trained and developed, how students may best acquire what they want in order to become “special librarians,” how the library education system may best adapt itself to providing the students with what they need.

The library schools of the country are supposed to produce the country’s librarians, just as medical schools produce our doctors, law schools our lawyers, technical schools our technologists and so on. The same schools respectively turn out the specialists when they go back for further work; and here lies a fundamental difference between training for library specialization and training for specialization in the so-called professions. When librarians return to school for additional training, they rarely do so for the purpose of specialization, at least subject specialization. Too often, indeed, the reverse happens; and a special librarian, discouraged by the lack of recognition by, or integration with, the library profession, seeks additional training which will make him a full-fledged “general librarian.”

That there is widespread dissatisfaction with the opportunities for special library training cannot be denied. Neither can it be denied that the library schools should play a part, a significant part, in altering the situation. There is evidence that they would like to if they knew how, although one is occasionally shocked by individual attitudes. It was only a little more than a year ago that a letter from one of the most prominent library school directors firmly expressed the wish that our committee were not in existence! He gratuitously went on to say that, in his opinion, subject background training for librarians was unnecessary except for art, architecture, and music. How the business and science, drama and law, medical and technical librarians would have guffawed at this. It is not to be inferred that this educator is typical of most library school directors, but there may be a few like him, and the specialists will not be provided for until such a viewpoint is completely obliterated.

One is also depressed by the considered reflection of teachers. The following quotation from Lowell Martin is an example:

The introduction of sufficient subject or interest-area content into
the one-year professional curriculum to develop college graduates into specialists appears to be a forlorn hope unless we are prepared to sacrifice far more of the training in library skills than now appears either practicable or advisable.

Three alternative possibilities suggest themselves for training subject or interest-area librarians. One is to recruit and train general librarians who will then acquire additional content training in the form of higher degrees in subject fields.

The second alternative is to recruit specialists already trained who will acquire knowledge of library techniques by experience or education. In this instance, library schools would occupy a secondary role in the preparation of members of the profession. The [library] profession has trouble enough competing with other disciplines before their members are trained; and, in attempting it, librarianship would court the possibility of getting the least qualified on both subject and personal grounds.

The third alternative for producing subject or interest-area librarians is to enrol students in library schools at an earlier level—after the second year of college, for example—and to put them through a combined professional and subject program over a period of several years. While it has not done so thus far, this approach could lead to a new curriculum rather than to a modified traditional program. The core of such a curriculum would be the bibliographical organization of knowledge. The difficulty is the necessity for young people to select librarianship as a career at an earlier age than is customary—but not, it should be noted, at an age earlier than in several other professions.

This was written seven years ago, but it prognosticated a current trend toward the five-year integrated program advocated by the Board of Education for Librarianship of the American Library Association. The A.L.A. Bulletin for January 1951 printed a rather grudging recognition by the Board of the existence of specialization. The Board recommended the following: “That instruction for specialized service in libraries may occupy a place in this basic program but not at the sacrifice of necessary academic and professional preparation.” This statement, it will be noticed, is permissive of, not conducive to, special library training. Furthermore, the statement is so lacking in definition that it is of little practicality.

Martin’s utterance was and remains gloomy because, although the three methods are now in use, he thinks the production of specialists is a “forlorn hope.” This is defeatist to begin with, and implies that special library education is less important than all the usual library
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skills. Such an implication this writer must contradict whole-heartedly and point to institutions which are facing up to the problem, e.g., Carnegie Institute of Technology and Simmons College. Their solutions may not be ideal, but they indicate interest, endeavor, and progress.

The writer can not be sanguine about Martin’s first alternative. The second, however, has been going on for years and with considerable success, perhaps to the vexation of the library schools. Here the chief trouble is lack of systematization and organization, not in the quality of the end product. Moreover, Martin was ill-advised to complain of other professions exerting a competition which librarianship cannot meet. He spoke with veracity, but librarianship itself, library education in fact, is largely to blame. The third alternative, also, is in existence now for a general program (e.g., the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois). There is no reason why a full five-year curriculum should not be devised for persons wishing to become special librarians, but the content of these curricula awaits formulation. Eileen Cunningham’s article “Library School Undergraduate Curriculum,” is relevant and suggestive of further thought. It is not, however, an introduction to Martin’s third alternative.

There are both special and general librarians who, without forsaking the service they render to others, want to vie with professional colleagues not engaged in library work. These are the ones, in university circles, who want faculty rank. Lawrence C. Powell says there is great need of such librarians and he expresses it in strong terms: “A desperate need exists for more librarians who have knowledge and interests of the same kinds as the faculty. On every academic library staff I have any acquaintance with, I can count on a few fingers the number of persons who can establish intellectual camaraderie with the faculty. Until this can be done by the majority of the staff, talk of equal rank with the faculty is a waste of breath.” This would seem to be another type of librarian (in the formation of which specialization is very much involved) the library schools do little to produce because, perhaps, the usual skills and technics of library science cannot be satisfactorily adjusted or abbreviated.

No one, least of all the writer, wishes to quarrel with the library schools. However, if they claim the responsibility for training the country’s librarians, they should measure that responsibility in its broadest terms, not merely by the framework of a core curriculum leading to the first degree. If other professions ran their educational systems with
no more regard for specialization than librarianship does, one shudders
to think of the state our society would be in. This does not say that the
library schools can provide all that is wanted, but their responsibility
is to see that specialization is obtainable for persons as librarians and
as part of their library training.

In many meetings one hears the question of economics, both present
and future. If special courses were instituted would there be any stu-
dents for them? If there were would they find employment? These are
reasonable queries to which real answers are not forthcoming, but
many in the profession think that special librarianship would expand
rapidly if trained personnel were readily on call. A set of questions
was addressed by this writer to about a score of large university and
public libraries, divided half and half, to see if some light could be
thrown on a very complex situation. The questions were:

(1) Does your institution employ special librarians for professional
work (i.e., subject specialists in fields such as law, medicine, drama,
music, business, journalism, science and technology, etc.)? Approx-
mately how many?

(2) Does your institution maintain a policy, when filling such posi-
tions, of engaging special (subject) librarians who have had formal
library training, or does it engage persons who have only expertise in
their respective fields?

(3) If you employ special (subject) librarians, do their services
command more remuneration than those of regular librarians? The
same? Or less?

(4) Are good special (subject) librarians difficult to obtain? Have
you tried to convert regular librarians into special librarians, or vice
versa? With what success?

(5) If you have openings for special (subject) librarians, where do
you look for candidates?

The directors who received these inquiries have been unusually gen-
erous in responding. Among them are some of the most important and
influential librarians in America.

It will surprise no one to learn that all of the institutions approached
employ special librarians. Most of the institutions prefer persons with
library training, but also, most of them were gratifyingly flexible and
allowed exceptions. Only one, a large library in the Middle West,
stated categorically that its professional workers, general or special,
had to have a library school degree. The exceptions were of two kinds

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—they were extended to persons whose practical experience equaled formal library training or to persons whose personality and subject accomplishment were such that they could not be rejected. Three institutions actually prefer subject competence over library training, and one admitted it has adopted no policy in the matter. Another reported that it tries to secure the best special librarians available; if they have library training, so much the better. This surely implies a preference for the subject specialty.

The number of specialists working in these libraries varied greatly, a phenomenon owing perhaps to a lack of definition of the term. A number of directors failed to state how many specialists were on their rolls; others had 7, 8, 13, 17, 24, 26, 54, and 58. The last two figures (the first two as well) were not from institutions of comparable size, and the entire quantitative range seems to support the belief that there is no acceptable definition of “special librarian.”

The question about remuneration was answered identically by all the public libraries. In these institutions specialization does not lead to a larger salary. The universities varied considerably on this point, some finding it difficult to analyze the problem and consequently giving an unclear response. Four universities admitted that specialization might be expected to offer a slightly higher stipend.

There was near unanimity regarding the discovery of good special librarians. They are difficult to find. Only one institution found the problem not too difficult, and by expressing itself in this manner gave a qualified answer.

There was also considerable confusion in explaining the means of finding special librarians, a fact which shows that there are no recognized sources of supply. The largest library responding simply said that it looked everywhere for the likeliest persons. Another very large institution looked to the subject field first, then to the library schools. Still another sought desired personnel among its alumni, a curious procedure to say the least. Special library associations are consulted regularly. Library schools were frequently mentioned, but they seem to be rather unfruitful when specialists are needed.

The procedure of conversion, general to special and vice versa, seems to be considered useful, but chiefly as a measure of expediency. Only two institutions, however, admitted using the device in both directions, and another declared it was impossible if not done with exceptional persons. One director indicated that it was feasible to convert a specialist into a general librarian, but claimed the reverse would not
work. On the other hand, another administrator feels the exact opposite is true.

There were a number of extremely interesting comments from the directors of these institutions which, in their totality, reveal a sadly unsettled condition. One man writes that the head of a very large departmental library has a degree in his subject field but no library school degree; then he adds that this information is not for publication! Why? The query is certainly pertinent to the cause of special library education. Another administrator expressed a desire for scholars alone to head his special collections, leaving it to "underlings" to perform the library operations. One wonders how many library directors secretly share this feeling. An institution in the Far West is more interested in persons with "special subject backgrounds" than in those without "definable specialization," but because the former are difficult to find, it must use employees of ability who develop "in the special subject areas they work in." Another institution explains that its practices "do not represent anything near the ideal"; and still another speaks of eight specialists of whom "none . . . went to a library school." This informant added: "There is no school that I know of that trains people satisfactorily for rare book library work." Perhaps the most unhappy administrator is the one who looks forward to expanding his staff of specialists, but who hopes the results of this informal survey will influence some of his decisions.

It is granted that this survey was not scientific or definitive in any sense of these terms. However, it revealed representative conditions and disclosed several things, namely, that special library education and the employment it supposedly leads to are in a state of chaos. There is no uniformity of concept, no regularity of output, no standard of accomplishment, no recognizable goal to attract more people to such work. Yet one fact is constant—special librarians, by whatever name they are known, are in demand and are being sought. Is the library profession going to provide them or does the library profession propose to absorb them haphazardly and accidentally? If the former, then it must come to closer grips with the problem than it has heretofore, even if that means throwing overboard certain cherished traditions which have accumulated for more than half a century. There is something paradoxical in the realization that librarianship has claims to exercising the most rigidly organized (general) educational system, yet condones the greatest degree of laxity in the preparation of its specialists.
Clearer thinking is needed all along the line. We need better answers to the "how" and "why" and "when" of special librarianship. This writer is not among those who think that the library, in principle or reality, is chiefly an educational institution, but the rigidity of educational methods has hampered its training program. The library commands great respect as an educational center, and well it should, but it offers so much more—recreation, undiluted pleasure, aesthetic experience. It contributes to the safeguarding of health and property, and freely strives to increase the profits of commercial corporations. It is a microcosm of our present-day culture which flourishes in an age of specialization. Functioning as it does it must have specialists to serve other specialists, and the various specialities have each their own rules and discipline. No one course, no one curriculum can encompass them all. There are such courses, to be sure, and they can fill a distinct need. That need, however, is one attaching to the general librarian, not to the librarian working in law, medicine, music, or science. The latter's needs are bewilderingly different, regardless of whether he is cataloging, counseling, evaluating, purchasing, or administering.

In 1948 Herman Henkle wrote:

It must be recognized that the responsibility of the special librarian varies widely. At one extreme, it may require no more knowledge of a subject than is essential to identify contents in the literature. In the other extreme, it may require the special librarian to prepare an evaluation of data contained in technical literature, with a quality of judgment which can serve as the basis for policy decisions or the foundation for a company's development program.

It is from these extremes that the confusion arises in the use of the term "subject specialist" in library literature dealing with the problem of special education. The first assignment can be fulfilled by a librarian. The second requires a subject expert. The two can be, but are not necessarily, synonymous, even in the organization of a special library. To such degree as they are synonymous, the special librarian is in effect a member of the research staff, but he need not be that in order to be a good librarian.²

With slight modifications this can be applied to any aspect of special librarianship. It is up to the library profession to decide whether it wishes to train students—or see that they are trained—for both the extremes mentioned above.

There is more than a "forlorn hope" for the development of special librarians. Some compromises in curricula may have to be made, but
these will result in gains, not sacrifices. Special librarians are heartened by the reactions of leading library educators in meetings of the past two years, which show awareness of the specialists' desiderata and are impressed by the observation written in 1948, of Leon Carnovsky, which reads as follows:

In the United States, education for librarianship began in 1887 [School of Library Economy at Columbia]. This was more than thirty years after the opening of the Boston Public Library and eleven after the founding of the American Library Association, an event signalizing the culmination of a long period of public library development in this country. My point is that formal education for librarianship came after a long period of library operation, and problems of curriculum construction were therefore resolved in the light of the library practice then known.13

It seems reasonable to believe that formal education for special librarianship may come after a long period of special library operation, and problems of curriculum construction may therefore be resolved in the light of library practice now known. The time is here for the development to begin.

References

5. Lancour, op. cit., p. 54.
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