Status of Personnel

RALPH M. DUNBAR

"IN CHOOSING a place in which to practice his or her profession, a librarian should not overlook the advantages, and the opportunities for public service, offered by a position in a Government library." So reads a recruiting booklet issued by the U.S. Civil Service Commission.¹

The purpose of this paper is to examine the advantages just mentioned, to trace in part how the present conditions have come about, and along the way to note any disadvantages which may crop up in the course of the probing. In other words, "How do the professional librarians and the subprofessional librarians fare under the U.S. government as an employer?"

The specialists in public administration and personnel have formulated some criteria for making such an appraisal. If the writings of the experts²-⁵ during the last twenty years or so are examined, the following common-core principles emerge as indicating sound practice for employer-employee relationships in private enterprise or in government:

1. All positions and jobs should be correctly classified on the basis of degrees of responsibility and difficulty of duties involved.
2. Compensation for each position or job so classified should be equitable; equal work should earn equal pay.
3. Employees should have a clear idea of their duties and responsibilities and of the supervisory lines of control; they should be placed in the positions in which they can do their best work.
4. Employees should be protected against arbitrary dismissal, or demotion without proved cause.
5. Employees should enjoy opportunity for advancement.
6. Employees should have working conditions which are satisfactory as regards annual leave, sick leave, lighting, heating, ventilation, freedom from noise, and general physical comfort.

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7. Employees should have encouragement to safeguard their health and their future economic security.

Position classification in the government may well be examined first. Before librarians are considered specifically, some background facts will be helpful. The Classification Act of 1949,\(^6\) which made significant changes in earlier acts, now governs the grading of federal positions. It sets up only two schedules or broad kinds of service, namely, the General Schedule and the Crafts, Protective, and Custodial Schedule. The General Schedule now includes all scientific, technical, professional, administrative, fiscal, and clerical positions. It provides for eighteen grades. No distinction is made between a professional grade and a clerical grade. A clerk, a stenographer, a chemist, an educationist, or a librarian may each have the grade GS-6, provided the responsibilities and duties of the position rate that grade. The top three grades in the General Schedule are restricted by an act of Congress, in that the number of positions in the entire federal service is limited to 300 in GS-16, 75 in GS-17, and 25 in GS-18; and the Civil Service Commission must give specific approval to each classification in that grade.

As previously indicated, positions involving librarianship are in the General Schedule. Library positions (formerly designated professional) are divided into eight grades, based on degrees of responsibility, difficulty of duties, and significance of work. These grades are GS-5, GS-7, GS-9, and GS-11 to GS-15. Library-assistant positions (formerly designated subprofessional) are classified into six grades, GS-2 to GS-7.

The description, responsibilities, duties, and qualifications required for each grade are set forth by the U.S. Civil Service Commission Class Specifications,\(^7\) issued in May 1945. What is contained in these specifications may be best understood by examining an actual example, such as the one for the old P-2 library position (now GS-7):

**General statement:**
This class is made up of positions the duties of which are to direct a field or branch library having limited reference sources; or to do reference, cataloging, or classification work of moderate difficulty; and to perform other work incidentally as assigned.

**Distinguishing features of work:**
Library work at this level is made up of one or more of the following functions:

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CATALOGING

At this level is found descriptive cataloging of library material which is difficult (in that it requires extensive and sometimes unusual descriptive entries) and for a large proportion of which research is done to establish entries. Such material includes serial publications, the authors or issuing agencies of which are not consistent, scientific literature for which the actual date of publication must be known or for which extensive author entries must be made, or foreign publications having incomplete title page information. The work of catalogers in positions in this class is revised for consistency of form and entry, and advice and consultation with a supervisor is available. In performing the work, catalogers follow established rules but have opportunity to suggest adaptations.

Also found in positions in this class is the duty of serving as head of a cataloging unit, assigning, directing, and revising the work of a small number of catalogers of lower grade. The incumbent of such a position gives advice on cataloging problems, personally catalogs unusual or otherwise difficult material, such as that requiring extensive descriptive entries or research to establish entries, and adapts individual rules to accommodate growing collections. No review is made of the technical phases of the work performed or supervised. The employee consults with a head librarian or other supervisor on over-all or policy matters.

Qualifications statement:

(a) Knowledges, abilities, and other qualities:

Thorough knowledge of professional methods; thorough knowledge of the use of library tools in selective reference work; ability to contact people tactfully; ability to make library material available for use of specialists in a limited field of knowledge.

(b) Experience, training, and education:

Technical library experience which included such duties as the cataloging and classification of books, documents, and periodicals, answering difficult reference questions, and compiling bibliographies. Academic training in library science may be substituted for part of the required experience.

(c) Physical standards:

Incumbents must be physically capable of performing the duties of the position and be free from such defects or diseases as would constitute employment hazards to themselves or endanger their fellow
employees or others. Incumbents may have physical handicaps which will not prevent their satisfactory performance of the duties.\footnote{7}

This grade, GS-7, represents a higher degree of responsibility and more difficult duties than those required for GS-5. The specifications for grades GS-9 and GS-11 to GS-15 show progressively higher requirements than those defined for the GS-7 example. At the old P-6 (now GS-13) level, for example, the general statement reads: "This class is made up of positions the duties of which are to direct a special library having a broad general collection and research collections in some of the specialty fields, and providing selective reference and bibliographical service; or to direct reference services in a library having extensive research collections; and to perform other work incidentally as assigned."\footnote{7}

The library-assistant positions beginning with GS-2 likewise specify progressively higher requirements as they rise to GS-7. In general, the work in the lower grades is differentiated from professional work in that the duties involve performance or supervision of routines and techniques peculiar to libraries. They do not require a knowledge of the philosophy or the objectives of library science, but they are differentiated from clerical positions, which are reserved for operations occurring in any office.

The principle of equal pay for equal work prevails, therefore, in the federal service. But what is the rate of pay? The latest authorization by the Congress attaches the price tags in Table 1 to the various grades in the General Schedule, effective June 30, 1951.

For the table to be fully meaningful, a copy of the Class Specifications should be at hand to indicate the duties, responsibilities, and requirements of each of the grades (corresponding grades under the old schedule are shown in Table 2 of this article). Since space is not available for that purpose, several examples may be helpful. For instance, a grade GS-7 librarian, a professional worker with one year's experience in professional work, starts at $4,205, receives an annual increase of $125 provided his performance ratings are satisfactory or better, and reaches a maximum of $4,955 at the end of six years. If he continues acceptable service after reaching the maximum salary, three successive step increases are allowed for every three years of additional service. This longevity provision applies only to the first ten grades. To take another example, the GS-13 head of a specialized federal library having an extensive collection of orig-
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TABLE 1
Salary Scale—General Schedule *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade†</th>
<th>Basic Salary</th>
<th>Periodic Increase</th>
<th>Step intervals in weeks</th>
<th>Maximum Basic Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GS-1</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>$2,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-2</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3,230</td>
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<td>GS-3</td>
<td>2,950</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>GS-4</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5,370</td>
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<td>GS-9</td>
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<td>125</td>
<td>52</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-11</td>
<td>5,940</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>6,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-12</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<td>8,040</td>
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<tr>
<td>GS-13</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>78</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>GS-15</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>11,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† No library positions normally exist in grades GS-8 and GS-10. Library assistants (subprofessionals) are in grades GS-2 to GS-7, thus overlapping the librarian positions which begin at GS-5. Clerical and stenographic positions are normally in grades 3 to 6.

How do federal library salaries compare with nonfederal ones? Without considerable statistical calculations and reduction to comparable terms (if that is possible), it is dangerous to try comparisons. But a few bare figures can be pointed out for what they are worth. For instance, a recent A.L.A. survey made on a sampling basis showed that on March 1, 1952, the median annual salary being paid junior librarians was $3,317 in public libraries, $3,147 in college and university libraries, and $3,282 when all types of libraries are included. The same survey indicated that the annual median salary being paid chief librarians was $4,106 in public libraries, $5,700 in college and university libraries, and $4,578 when all types of libraries include...
are considered. The college and university compilation as of September 1, 1952, issued by the Association of College and Reference Libraries, shows a median annual salary of $8,250 for the chief librarians of large university and college libraries and a median of $5,936 for the medium-sized college libraries. The median of the medians for department heads in the large universities and colleges is given as $4,400, and for the department heads in the medium-sized institutions as $3,800. The corresponding figures for “all other professional assistants” is $3,468 for the large university and $3,300 for the medium-sized college libraries. The Bureau of Labor Statistics survey in 1949 found that the average annual salary of professional librarians was $3,050, all types of libraries included. Chief librarians were receiving on the average $3,200, chief assistant librarians $3,050, and chiefs of departments or divisions $3,225. Although exact bases for comparison are not available, it evidently is not an overstatement to say that federal library salaries compare favorably with those paid in non-government libraries.

The present status of librarians in federal position classification and pay plans was not attained without a long, hard struggle. The trend may be seen by tracing the history of legislative measures on the subject, and remembering always that the efforts which affected librarians were part of a much larger program covering federal employees in a wide range of occupations.

The first landmark is, of course, the original Civil Service Act of 1883. This law contained the provision “that all the offices, places, and employments so arranged or to be arranged by classes shall be filled by selections according to grade from among those graded highest as the results of competitive examinations.”

As years went on, it became apparent that equal work was not being rewarded with equal pay, and moves were started to correct the injustices which had arisen in the classified service. Proposals were made to the Congress in behalf of many types of government employees, including librarians.

In 1921, librarians in the District of Columbia reported their difficulties in getting the Joint Congressional Commission on Reclassification to put librarians on a par with scientific, technical, and professional workers. Then when that problem was solved in part, there came the difficulty of getting the salaries of librarians made comparable with those of their co-workers. The previous low compensation of librarians caused the Joint Congressional Commission to place
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librarians below all other professional workers. A Library Advisory Committee finally succeeded in establishing its claim that library salaries should be comparable to those of other professional workers on the basis of duties, responsibilities, and qualifications. That principle was included in the Lehlbach Bill, which failed of passage in the 66th Congress, possibly because it was too voluminous and detailed.\footnote{12}

In the 67th Congress, which began on April 21, 1921, two competing measures were introduced, viz., the Sterling Bill (S.11), based on the Lehlbach Bill but much simpler, and the Wood-Smoot Bill (H.R. 2921 and S. 1079), known also as the Bureau of Efficiency Bill. There was much legislative maneuvering, and it was not until the closing days of the 67th Congress that a compromise measure was passed, known as the Classification Act of 1923.\footnote{13} The law created a Personnel Classification Board, to be composed of three members—one from the Bureau of Efficiency, one from the Bureau of the Budget, and one from the Civil Service Commission. It also provided for five "services," as follows: (1) Professional and Scientific; (2) Subprofessional; (3) Clerical, Administrative, Fiscal; (4) Custodial; and (5) Clerical-Mechanical. In the Professional and Scientific Service seven grades were established, although only six were provided for librarians; and in the Subprofessional Service eight grades, although only seven were allotted for librarians. The salary provisions of the Act were not to go into effect until July 1, 1924, over a year later. The House, which had passed one form of the bill thirteen months earlier, insisted on this condition so that the delay would allow time for sound allocation of the 65,000 or more government positions in Washington.

The passage of the Classification Act of 1923, however, did not solve the problems of federal librarians. Far from it. The definitions of the "services" were so ambiguous that librarians, with very few exceptions, were placed in the Clerical Service. It soon became evident that librarians were being graded on the basis of the low salaries hitherto received and not on the nature of the work performed and the qualifications required. A group of librarians in the District of Columbia immediately undertook to marshal facts on the professional nature of librarianship, for presentation to the Personnel Classification Board. Its arguments were assembled in a comprehensive printed report\footnote{14} of ninety-four pages, justifying the claim that librarianship is a profession, presenting job analyses of library positions in seven pro-
fessional and five subprofessional grades, and suggesting a scheme for rating federal libraries not only by size but also by service rendered.

The persistence and sound arguments of this library group helped to bring about a reversal of view on the part of the Personnel Classification Board. During the period January to June 1924, the chairman of the librarians and a trained investigator assigned by the Board examined almost every library position in Washington, with emphasis on duties performed and not on the salary previously received. The facts were presented first to the General Services Committee, made up of three eminent scientists, which the Board had set up to consider the arguments of groups claiming professional status, and then to the Personnel Classification Board itself. It was on the basis of such data that the Board altered its opinion on the nature of librarianship. The final results led the chairman of the library group to state jubilantly: "This oft-repeated slogan [librarianship is a profession, and librarians are professional] is now true in the U.S. Government service, not only for the higher grade executives, but for the rank and file as well."  

For comparison with the 1949 classification and pay scale described earlier, it may be interesting to note several examples of the 1923 standards promulgated by the Personnel Classification Board for library positions, as follows (Due to lack of space in this article full specifications are given only for Grade P-1; in the case of P-6 they appear in part, but for the other grades they are restricted to title and salary.):

Grade P-1. Junior Librarian $1,860-$2,400

*Duties and typical tasks:* To perform under immediate supervision, minor duties in the field of library science. [Then follow descriptions of those duties in the various types of library operations.]

*Minimum qualifications:* Training equivalent to that represented by graduation with a degree from an institution of recognized standing; graduation from an accredited library school; a reading knowledge of not less than two modern languages.

Grade P-2. Assistant Librarian $2,400-$3,000

Grade P-3. Associate Librarian $3,000-$3,600

Grade P-4. Librarian $3,800-$5,000

Grade P-5. Senior Librarian $5,200-$6,000

Grade P-6. Chief Librarian $6,000-$7,500

*Duties and typical tasks:* To act as the scientific and administrative head of the Library of Congress.
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Minimum qualifications: [In addition to education and training requirements, must possess "extended experience in most responsible library work; outstanding professional attainments; and executive ability."

The Classification Act of 1923, although covering many types of federal positions besides those in libraries, was indeed an important landmark in the movement to have librarianship recognized as a profession and to pay its workers on the basis of responsibilities and duties. The next major event was the Classification Act of 1949, already described, but there were a number of developments in between. In 1928 the Welch Act amended the 1923 law by increasing the salary rates in the compensation schedules, and by changing the number of grades in the Professional and Scientific Service from 7 to 9.

It also provided that this Service should include "all classes of positions the duties of which are to perform routine, advisory, administrative, or research work which is based upon the established principles of a profession or a science, and which requires . . . technical training equivalent to that represented by graduation from a college or university of recognized standing." Prior to the 1949 Act, the pay rates for federal employees under the 1923 measure and the amending Welch Act of 1928 were adjusted three times, that is, by the Federal Employees Act of 1945, by the Federal Employees Pay Act of 1946, and by the Federal Employees Pay Act of 1948.

The Library of Congress has been involved in these problems of classification and pay plans, even though its positions are not filled through open, competitive examinations held by the Civil Service Commission. The positions in the Library of Congress are subject to the Classification Act of 1949, and the pay rates follow the current schedule for other federal employees.

A bit of history here may not be amiss. In accordance with the provisions of the Classification Act of 1923 Herbert Putnam, then Librarian of Congress, after involving his administrative heads in the problem, submitted to the Personnel Classification Board a statement on the personnel requirements at the Library of Congress, which has been described as "eloquent, considered, and well-ordered." After a year's experience with the position-classification plans, he stated that although the application of so comprehensive a scheme could not be free from inconsistencies, discrepancies, and individual hardship, the net result was a decided gain. And in 1940, a later Librarian of Congress
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requested the U.S. Civil Service Commission to conduct a survey of the Library in order to adjust existing inequalities of classification, to take account of changes in the duties of positions, and to bring the classification of positions into line with that of the government service generally. In 1944 the Librarian reported that the reclassification of positions had been completed, and had resulted in more equitable pay for many of the workers, improved organization, and determination of specific responsibilities for employees.22

With position-classification and pay plans for federal librarians examined, the next point to consider is the matter of "job descriptions" and "job sheets." This administrative device confronts every federal librarian when he enters the service, and while he is in it, and in fact before he accepts a position, although he may not be aware of that. The job sheet serves several purposes. The duties and responsibilities enumerated on it serve as a basis for determining the grade of the position according to the standards set forth in the Class Specifications described earlier.7 Within limits the job sheet furnishes, or should furnish, the federal librarian with a blueprint of the requirements of his position.

The job sheet grows out of the description of the position drawn up by the incumbent or supervisor. According to the Civil Service Guide on the subject, an adequate position description should cover these points: (1) nature and purpose of work, including a brief list of duties; (2) scope and effect of the work in this position, how it affects the agency, other agencies, and the public; (3) amount of supervision and guidance received in the position from immediate supervisors and others; (4) mental demands of the position in terms of initiative, originality, and judgment; (5) nature and purpose of contacts with persons and agencies other than own supervisors and subordinates; (6) other knowledges, skills, or considerations not otherwise described.

From the job description, a job sheet is written for the position. The length of these job sheets varies among the federal agencies and with the type of position. Some run to two pages in length; others contain only a paragraph. The following are examples of the short form used by one efficient federal library in describing GS-5, GS-7, and GS-9 positions in its Division of Technical Processes:

Librarian (Trainee), GS-1410-5, Catalog and Records Section
Under immediate supervision of a librarian of higher grade and
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subject to technical review, performs professional library work requiring a thorough knowledge of library techniques and of the rules of library science; searches unrequested gifts and blanket purchase orders; files into the Library catalog and subject authority file; catalogs, classifies, and assigns subject headings to technical, scientific and related material (much of it in foreign languages), in accordance with Library of Congress and Department of Agriculture rules and interpretations; assigns Cutter numbers to all types of foreign and domestic publications; and performs related duties as assigned.

Librarian, GS-1410-7, Catalog and Records Section

Under the general supervision of a librarian of higher grade, performs professional library work requiring a thorough knowledge of library techniques and of the rules of library science, and considerable experience of professional nature in the library field as well as the ability to direct the work of lower grade assistants when required; searches unrequested gifts and blanket purchase orders; catalogs technical, scientific and related material (much of it in foreign languages), requiring discrimination and the application of advanced library techniques and the ability to analyze material in a special field so as to show its relation to cognate fields; describes publications in full bibliographical detail so as to identify them and to differentiate them from all other publications in the collection; analyzes the contents of publications, assigns the subject headings, classification and Cutter numbers in order that the material may be readily located by specialists working in the subject field; files without revision into the Library catalog and subject authority file; and performs related duties as assigned.

Librarian (Reviser), GS-1410-9, Catalog and Records Section

Under the general supervision of the Chief and Assistant Chief, Catalog & Records Section, shares with one other Librarian the responsibility for the descriptive cataloging, classification and assignment of Cutter numbers to all material to be added to the Library; is responsible for the assignment of subject headings to bring out the contents of all materials of interest to the Department; recommends criteria to be used in applying and establishing rules and exceptions for cataloging and classifying cognate material on a wide range of subject matter; serves as reviser for at least two professional librarians working on cataloging, classifying, and searching activities; and performs related duties as required.

 Granted that a position has been reasonably well described, how does the federal government recruit, examine, and select its librarians?
The recruiting takes place in several ways. Notices of library examinations are sent by the Civil Service Commission to library schools, library associations, libraries, periodicals, and federal buildings. Detailed information is made available in the form of a printed leaflet which describes the duties of a position, the location, and salary. This leaflet specifies the education and experience requirements, whether or not the examination includes a written test, what application forms to submit, and where and when to file them. Recruiting for specific vacancies is done also by the agencies themselves, which write to desirable prospects informing them of openings and suggesting that they file a Form 57 (application) with the U.S. Civil Service Commission. There is also interagency recruiting, in which posts in higher grades are brought to the attention of librarians of lower grades in other agencies.

The civil service examinations for the GS-5 (formerly P-1) positions include a written test covering general abilities, paragraph reading, vocabulary, English usage, graph and table interpretation, arithmetical reasoning, and abstract reasoning. The educational requirements which must be met are one of the following: (1) a full four-year course, in an accredited college or university, including or supplemented by thirty semester hours of study in library science; (2) one full year of professional library training in an accredited library school and either (a) the successful completion of three years of education in an accredited college or university or (b) three years of successful and progressive experience in library work, which has provided an understanding and application of methods and techniques used in professional library work, the equivalent of the completion of a course in library science; (3) four years of successful library experience of the type described in 2 (b) just preceding.

The Civil Service Commission rates the papers according to standardized procedures, assisted when necessary by practicing federal librarians. Library applicants are considered under four options: Acquisition, Administration, Cataloging and Classification, and Reference and Bibliography. In the case of applicants for grades GS-13 to GS-15 a Board of Expert Examiners, composed of federal librarians, meets upon call to rate applications, first as to eligibility under the standards and then as to fitness for a specific vacancy.

The rating table customarily followed by the library advisory committee provides: 90 points for outstanding experience for the position for which the applicant is being considered; 80 points if the applicant
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is less than outstanding but better than good; 70 points (the minimum passing grade), if the applicant has good experience for the job. Additional points are given for special qualifications, not specifically required but particularly useful in the position. Five points are added if the applicant is a veteran; and ten points, under certain conditions, if he is a disabled veteran. The points for quality of experience, plus any additional ones allowed, plus any veterans' preference points, make up the final rating. All persons with a rating of 70 or above are placed on the civil service register of eligibles, coded to show whether they are fitted especially for administration, reference and bibliography, cataloging, or some other type of library work.

Appointments to federal library positions, with certain exceptions, are made from these registers of applicants who have passed the examination for a particular grade. When there is a vacancy in a library position, the agency requests the Civil Service Commission to certify a list of persons eligible for appointment. Usually five names are certified, taken from the top of the register and arranged in priority order of their ratings, with a special note of any veteran.

The appointing officer is required to make his first selection from the top three, and if a veteran is passed over, that action must be justified to, and sustained by, the Civil Service Commission. If one of the top three eligibles states that he is not interested, then the fourth name becomes available for consideration when necessary. If still another from this trio replies, “not interested,” then the fifth name may be moved up for consideration.

The exceptions referred to in the appointment system include the staff of the Library of Congress, the librarians in the foreign service of the State Department, those under the Special Services Division of the Department of the Army in installations at home and abroad, the librarians under the Department of the Air Force and the Atomic Energy Commission, and some others. These agencies have their own systems.

The matter of appointment in the Library of Congress has an interesting background. In 1897, just before the removal of the Library from the Capitol to the new, magnificent building across the street, the Joint Committee on the Library called before it representatives of the American Library Association and other librarians to testify regarding policies, functions, operational methods, classification schemes for the books, and appointment authority. The library witnesses included Melvil Dewey; Herbert Putnam, then of the Boston Public
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Library; William H. Brett, of the Cleveland Public Library and president of the American Library Association; G. H. Baker of the Columbia University Library; and Ainsworth Spofford of the Library of Congress.

The question of the best method of selecting the staff of the Library of Congress was posed again and again by the quizzing congressmen. Should the Joint Committee make the appointments? Should the Joint Committee make them upon the recommendation of the Librarian? Should the Librarian be vested with the sole power of choice? Should a panel of outside librarians aid the Librarian of Congress in picking the staff? Should the Librarian make his selections from a list furnished by an outside agency such as the Civil Service Commission? As the hearings indicate, the replying librarians were sometimes on the horns of a dilemma, but the consensus appeared to be that the Librarian of Congress should have the power of appointment, provided he were free from undue political interference; otherwise, it might be better to make the selections from a civil service list. Before the report with recommendations was available, legislation was passed for the operation of the enlarged institution, vesting the power of selection solely in the hands of the Librarian of Congress.

The first statement of the Librarian of Congress regarding appointment described the application form, which tabulated the education and experience of the applicants, noted that no written examinations were being held, and explained that the experience and work on the Library of Congress staff with pay during the probation period of three to six months constituted the examination.

At this point, it might be well to introduce some current personnel figures showing the number of librarians and library assistants in federal employ, broken down by grades. It should be noted that Table 2 does not include all persons employed in federal libraries, but only those classified in Library Series 1410 (formerly professional) and Library Series 1411 (formerly subprofessional). Subject specialists, legal specialists, science analysts, document control officers, technical abstractors, technical information specialists, and information officers are not counted unless appointed from the Library Series, even though they are on the library payrolls.

At the outset of this article, mention was made of good tenure practices as an element of satisfactory employer-employee relationship. How is it in the federal government? Under the regulations, a librarian can be removed (i.e., discharged) because of misconduct, insubordination, disloyalty, crime, gross incompetence as shown by
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Former Grade</th>
<th>Executive Agencies *</th>
<th>Library Positions (1410 Series)</th>
<th>Library Assistant Positions (1411 Series)</th>
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* Count as of July 1, 1951, by the U.S. Civil Service Commission.
† Count as of Feb. 2, 1953, by Personnel Division, Library of Congress.
§ Includes 8 TVA library positions, not distributed.
|| Includes 3 TVA library-assistant positions, not distributed.
an "unsatisfactory" performance rating, or other serious reasons. The procedure requires that the accused employee be given a written statement specifying the causes. He must be afforded a chance to reply. The head of the organization, after full consideration of the case, takes final action. If the employee still feels that the action is unjust, he has the right of appeal according to an established procedure.

Another circumstance which may affect the federal librarian is a "reduction in force" caused by lack of funds or lack of work. In such cases the order of retention depends upon such factors as veteran preference, type of appointment (whether permanent or indefinite), length of government service, and performance ratings. Every effort is made to assist a removed employee in finding another position in his own or in another agency.

What are the chances for advancement in a federal library? It is the definite policy of many agencies to fill vacancies by promoting librarians from a lower grade, provided they have acquired the necessary experience and have demonstrated ability to perform more difficult duties and to assume greater responsibilities. Naturally, the higher one goes in the scale the fewer are the opportunities for obtaining new positions, but openings do occur.

Although not really promotions, there also are in-grade raises in pay at specified intervals (step increases), provided the librarian’s performance rating is "Satisfactory" or better. A salary rise equal to one periodic step increase may be given for work rated as "Outstanding," such as an accomplishment which has brought about the initiation of a new method or device, or a special service in the public interest.

Some explanation may be needed regarding the performance rating which has recently superseded the former efficiency report, with its thirty-one basic elements for appraising, only a part of which are used for any one position. The performance rating scheme, instead of providing for the five possible marks (Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, Unsatisfactory) of the former scheme, has only three: Outstanding, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory; and there is no evaluating of individual elements. The rating "Outstanding," referred to in the previous paragraph, must always be supported by a justifying statement. "Satisfactory" is given if the incumbent's performance of work, for the period of time specified, has met or exceeded the requirements for the position. "Unsatisfactory" is recorded in case the performance fails to meet the demands of the position.

In the last instance an official warning must be given, after which
ninety days are allowed the employee to bring up the rating to “Satisfactory”; and if this is not accomplished, demotion or dismissal follows, according to the regulations. In all cases where ratings are involved, the supervisor and the supervised are enjoined to hold periodic interviews on the subject, so that the employee is informed of his standing. It might be added here that there is a regularly established grievance procedure for government employees.

It is the expressed policy of the federal government to encourage in-service training. The Federal Personnel Manual specifies: “The purposes of Employee Development are to develop a well trained work force and to assist employees toward self-improvement efforts, taking into account the staffing needs of the agency and the availability of facilities for such assistance.” Pressure of work in the federal libraries and lack of funds have prevented the full attainment of these goals, but informal training is carried on where there are not formal classes.

From time to time the Graduate School of the Department of Agriculture offers courses at the professional and subprofessional levels which are useful to librarians. There is also an accredited library school in the District of Columbia at the Catholic University of America. The Library of Congress has given considerable attention to in-service training. According to a recent report the library of the Civil Service Commission carries on systematic instruction for its library employees. In addition, federal librarians have opportunity to participate in the activities of the District of Columbia Library Association and the Washington Chapter of the Special Libraries Association, not to mention those of the numerous educational and cultural organizations in the District of Columbia.

Let us consider now some of the “fringe benefits” that go along with federal employment. In the matter of vacations federal librarians of all grades, along with other government workers, are allowed annual leave on the basis of length of service, as the result of a recent law. For the first three years the employee gets 13 working days per year; after the third year and up to 15 years, the allowance is 20 working days per year; and after 15 years of service it is 26 working days per year. In all cases the leave is credited to the employee as he earn it during each two-week pay period.

Legal holidays for federal librarians are eight normally, with occasionally an extra non-work day or so declared by the President. Four hours of sick leave are earned each two-week pay period. The current work-week is 40 hours (8 hours per day, Monday through Friday).
During World War II it was 48 hours (8 hours a day, Monday through Saturday), with no holidays except Christmas and the Fourth of July.

Working quarters for federal librarians vary greatly. Of the 100 or more federal libraries, a small number occupy quarters designed in advance for library purposes, with attention paid to adequate lighting, ventilation, quiet, and general comfort. In many cases the libraries have been located in wings or bays of buildings, in space originally intended for other purposes but by ingenious adaptations turned into reasonably good library quarters. Many of the smaller libraries have been housed wherever room could be found for them, so that conditions are close to being below-standard. Realizing the importance of a good physical plant as an aid to good performance, the Library of Congress sponsored in 1950 a conference on the relation of environment to work, participated in by nationally recognized experts in the fields of sound control, illumination, ventilation, color engineering, and safety. This conference has had effects on other libraries.

What does the federal government do in the way of encouraging librarians and other employees to take care of their health and future economic welfare? As concerns the first, most of the agencies have health rooms, with nurses on duty to assist in cases of illness or accidents on the job, to consult about health problems, and to give information about medical facilities. If a librarian is hurt in the course of his official duties, the Bureau of Employees’ Compensation in the Bureau of Labor provides medical and hospital treatment. Personnel officers regularly call to the attention of employees the benefits of joining plans for group hospitalization and medical service, and appoint staff members to receive the necessary payments. Many federal agencies have employees’ recreation associations, which promote participation in athletic sports, hobbies, entertainment, and discount plans at stores.

On the financial side, after specified years of service and at specified ages, retirement income is assured by the 6 per cent taken from each pay check plus a contribution by the government towards the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund. The ramifications of the arrangements are too many to discuss here, but this simplified example may help: A GS-9 librarian, retiring at age 62 after 20 years of federal service and with an average of the five highest annual salaries calculated at $5,120, would receive an annual retirement
income of $1,540 for life. Furthermore, to encourage savings and to tide over financial emergencies, credit unions are available to employees in most agencies.

From the evidence presented, librarianship under the federal government appears to enjoy favorable status in employer-employee relationships. Yet it is not all on the plus side. Library administrators and others have found defects in the Class Specifications of 1945. This matter was studied in 1952 by a subcommittee of the Washington Chapter of the Special Libraries Association, and suggestions were made to the Civil Service Commission. There have been complaints that the standards are not suited to the special cases which exist under the government, and that in some instances they are not applied uniformly and equitably. It has been alleged also that sometimes a job description has been written by an agency so closely around the qualifications of a desired candidate that others were more or less excluded. It has been said too that when some agencies find desired applicants unqualified for high library positions under the standards of the Library Series, they try to get them in under other titles.

A former government official, discussing the government personnel system, recently wrote: "... it is my basic thesis that the growing inflexibility of the civil service system of the federal government has not only served as a major impediment to the recruitment and retention of the best personnel for public service, but that these rigidities, so hopefully designed to eliminate political considerations, have failed in even this negative objective." He proceeded to present a bill of particulars to back up his thesis, and then offered constructive suggestions for needed improvements.

Whatever the minus quantities may be, when the conditions of government service are checked against the seven major criteria for employer-employee relationship enumerated at the outset, the net result is surely a solid plus. The principle of equal work for equal pay prevails, the rate of compensation is favorable when compared with that of outside agencies, the tenure conditions are satisfactory, advancement is possible, working conditions are generally good, health is safeguarded, and a retirement system is in effect. It would appear therefore that the civil service recruiting circular was justified in its claims of advantages for federal library service.
References

Status of Personnel


[83]