



Introduction

MANY WRITERS have pointed out that one of the characteristics of a profession is that its practitioners tend to band together for mutual assistance in solving problems connected with their labors. Librarians meet this test abundantly. In every country sufficiently advanced for librarianship to flourish groups have been formed. In some countries, as in Italy and Spain, the organizations are small and weak, with inadequate communication between their members. In others, as in France, a strong national library system under the Minister of Education performs enough of the functions of a national library association to restrict the latter to a status not unlike a literary society. Elsewhere, as in the Scandanavian countries, strong professional associations have developed, committed to the improvement of library service and standards as well as concerned with the professional growth and development of their members.

Nowhere in the world has the association of librarians into active professional groups proceeded with greater vitality and intensity than in the English speaking nations. Interestingly it is in these same countries that librarianship has reached its highest development, where libraries are acknowledged as prime instruments in universal education, and where librarians have achieved the fullest recognition. That the one condition is related causally with the other may with reason be assumed.

The purpose of this issue of *Library Trends* is to consider in rather broad prospective this phenomenon of vocational agglomeration especially as it is to be seen in the United States and the countries of the British Commonwealth. Starting with general summaries of the historical background and present conditions provided by Mr. Cliff and Mr. Stokes, other writers look deeper into various manifestations of associational enterprise.

Equal treatment of the accomplishments of each country has not been achieved. Insofar as it has been possible, the several contributors have tried to present their topics considering developments both at home and abroad. In Miss Ludington's review of organizational publishing, Louis Shores' consideration of associational interest in training

and certification, Mrs. Stevenson's discussion of further education as a library's concern and, of course, Helen Wessell's description of the extensive international activities of the several library associations, the authors have been notably successful in looking across our national borders for their information.

The other contributors bring our attention to the remaining concerns of national associations which have been felt somewhat more acutely in the United States: Congressional lobbying, the defense of intellectual freedoms, and the extensive development of local and regional organizations to supplement as well as complement the national associations.

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