
Acquisitions Policy

ALTERED Accents on Acquisitions,
and Acquisitions Policy.

The British Museum

The most noticeable change in relations with foreign countries is in the growth of the exchange system. It has become the practice in many institutions to acquire new publications by exchange on a rough value for value basis. The British Museum now has very large relations of this kind with other cultural institutions. On the whole the system works satisfactory enough, but the main difficulty is in the relative number of publications available for this purpose. The British Museum publishes less than a large university, but it is perhaps true to think that the value attaching to many of the museum publications outweighs the smallness of the number. Such exchanges involve a considerable amount of office work, but on the whole this is accepted as quite reasonable.

Different considerations apply, however, where the only system of acquiring books from certain countries is by an exchange arrangement (i.e. where it is virtually impossible to acquire representative selections of publications through commercial channels). Like many other libraries, the British Museum has been forced by current circumstances to adopt this policy in regard to publications of some Eastern European countries. The amount of labor involved is really disproportionate to the results obtained and is justified only by the fact that no other means can be found of acquiring all the publications that are needed. It is the opinion that this is a wasteful method of acquiring foreign books and that the libraries are not really geared to performing an operation which is strictly one proper to a bookseller.

One of the most important phenomena of the present time, from the point of view of a large comprehensive national library, is the greatly increased output of books. Many of the countries long recognized as the main sources of published material are increasing their book production enormously, and many countries where little was pub-

Acquisitions Policy

lished previously are now producing books of great importance for all who are interested in current affairs, and also for students of economics, history, technology, etc. This latter development has necessitated a complete overhaul of the acquisitions policy of the library. Efforts have had to be made to make contact with publishing houses in many "new" countries, particularly in the Far East. This is by no means an easy matter and involves the Acquisition Division in a very great deal of additional work.

In the same connection, consideration is being given to a carefully thought out plan for the redistribution of the grant allotted by Parliament for the purchase of foreign books.

Bibliothèque Nationale, France

The most pressing need after the war has been the filling of the great void caused by the war. Particularly difficult has been the reconstruction of foreign serial and periodical sets and this activity has had high priority in the acquisitions program.

The Bibliothèque Nationale recognizes that the amount and diversity of printed material calls for a decentralization of the national collections. The growth of special libraries and documentation centers in Paris and throughout France is a natural and logical development. Full and efficient use of the combined resources can only come about through close and systematic cooperation between all libraries through interlibrary loaning, union catalogs and, particularly, planned cooperative acquisitions. Important steps have been taken toward these ends.

The Bibliothèque Nationale also recognizes its responsibility to preserve the great rarities of print and manuscript and continues its procedure of methodical collection of these precious documents.

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence

The acquisition of foreign publications, interrupted by the war, has been resumed. Efforts to secure material issued abroad during the period of hostilities have not been completely successful, but exchange relations have been established and much foreign documentation is currently received.

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome

The acquisitions policy is unchanged. Since the cessation of the war, gaps have been filled in foreign serial publications.

Bibliothèque Nationale, Luxembourg

The Library has received several important gifts; notably from the American Book Center in Washington, the Interallied Book Center in London, and the former United States Information Service Library in Luxembourg.

Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Netherlands

Increased appropriations have made it possible to follow a more liberal acquisitions policy and to fill some of the more serious gaps left by the war and by inadequate buying in the years of depression before it. Increased cooperation between libraries to avoid unnecessary duplication, especially of expensive series and periodicals in infrequent demand, helps to make the most of available funds. A new facet which has appeared in acquisitions as well as in library work generally is due not so much to a change in policy as to the discovery in, roughly, 1945, of the continent of America.

Kungl. Biblioteket, Sweden

One of the aims of present policy is the efficient coordination and utilization of the aggregate library resources of Stockholm. In 1949, there was set up a Joint Library Committee for the Stockholm area, which is an entirely unofficial body, composed of the directors of the research libraries in the capital. Since 1953, the committee, which has its headquarters at the Royal Library, has operated a daily inter-library loan and transport service.

Schweizerische Landesbibliothek, Switzerland

Being limited to Helvetica, the acquisitions policy has undergone no change.

Millî Kütüphane, Ankara

World events tend to have some influence on acquisitions policy, but on the whole the established policy is maintained. This consists of acquiring all Turkish publications, and all foreign publications dealing with Turkey and the Near East. Moreover, an effort is being made to acquire those foreign publications which are thought to be most useful to scholars, plus more than two thousand domestic and foreign magazines and other serials.

The Jewish National and University Library, Israel

The current trend of acquisitions is toward greater receipts from

Acquisitions Policy

the United States and Great Britain, rather than from Continental Europe, because English is now the main foreign language in Israel, and is required in secondary and higher schools. Material from Arab countries, for political reasons, must now be purchased indirectly from London or Paris, rather than from the country of publication. Each year brings a greatly accelerated rate of acquisition, with this year marking the receipt of 60,000 volumes and about 120,000 single issues of 6,000 periodical titles.

The National Diet Library, Japan

There has been no change in policy. For the purchase of foreign works and retrospective materials a Book Selection Committee has been appointed. Emphasis is given to the literature of the social sciences and of industry and technology. Copies of all government publications are required by law to be deposited in the Library, as are also copies of all publications of the Japanese book trade, sound recordings, and films.

Bibliothèque Publique de la Régence de Tunis

Beginning in 1945, acquisitions increased in the Oriental Section, already abundantly supplied with manuscripts and orientalia, but since that date these stocks have been materially enlarged by the receipt of oriental editions, notably from Egypt and the Near East.

Biblioteca Nacional, Argentina

No acquisitions of value are being received at present.

Biblioteca Nacional, Peru

By virtue of existing laws and decrees the Biblioteca Nacional has the right to receive two copies of every book, pamphlet, or periodical printed in the country. Many publishers, authors and presses comply; others obey only reluctantly and under compulsion; indeed, in many cases, unfortunately, it is so difficult to obtain such materials that the Library finds it necessary to purchase what should have been transmitted to it free.

Biblioteca Nacional, El Salvador

Because book prices increased during the period 1939-1944, by reason of the rise in the costs of paper and other material as well as wages, acquisitions were reduced by a third or a fourth.

LIBRARY TRENDS

South African Public Library, Cape Town

The adaptation of the Library's functions from a general purpose institution to one specializing in reference, bibliographical and research work, has led to a realignment of acquisitions policies, which is still taking shape.

At present the Library is concentrating on the building-up of its serial and general reference collections, and of its Africana resources, particularly through the acquisition of material on microfilm, and in acquiring the equipment to enable the Library to serve as a bibliographical information center.