Introduction

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This Introduction was to have been written by Esther J. Piercy, who passed from our midst on January 10, 1967. She had planned the issue completely, and, curiously, had apparently thought that she might have me prepare the Introduction. She had listed my name besides hers as a possibility in the outline for the issue.

I regret that circumstances have resulted in my writing it, instead of Miss Piercy. I do not need to dwell at length here on her accomplishments for the library profession. She was a dedicated professional, and her contributions to technical services and librarianship generally have been extensive and effective. As editor, book reviewer, author, consultant, surveyor, administrator, and expert librarian, she was known throughout the country. She also was a wise, warm, and charming personality; she will not be easily forgotten by anyone who met or worked with her.

This issue is one of the many irons she had in the fire. It represents the bringing together of papers on a most important and growing development of an old concept—cooperative and centralized cataloging. The papers group themselves rather logically into the following major categories: (1) evaluation of processing centers, (2) types of centers, including both commercial and non-commercial types serving various kinds of libraries on a national level, (3) processing centers for specific types of libraries, e.g., school, public, and academic libraries, (4) developments abroad, with reference to Great Britain and Russia, and (5) the resurrection of the book catalog. A summary chapter, by Verner W. Clapp, singles out salient developments and points to the future.

The two papers on evaluation, by Kenneth F. Duchac and Sarah K. Vann, have assembled information on the problems of processing...
centers, and have directed attention to criteria or factors that should be recognized in evaluation. In Technical Services in Libraries note was made of the growth in the concept of cooperative cataloging, and of the potentials of centralized cataloging. The former refers to the type of cataloging that is done by a group of libraries for the use of all libraries, while the second term describes cataloging at a central source (but may include the use of cooperative cataloging copy). The two are interwoven, and with the interest of Federal and state governments in increasing library support, they are gradually being merged into major projects. Mention of these is made in various papers in the issue.

Duchac has pinpointed with some detail the problems that arise in evaluating centers. When a new center is established, the assumption is that the product will not only be provided promptly and accurately, but also at minimal cost. Theoretically, the time is long past when individual libraries need to continue elaborate processing activities, once commercial or cooperative services have been developed properly. "Elimination of unnecessary duplication of work, released time for librarians, uniformity of catalog data and processed books [and] savings on the cost of books" are purposes stipulated by Duchac. The importance of the best possible utilization of personnel, when there is an enlarging shortage of catalogers, might also be mentioned as a reason for the interest of librarians in participating in centralized cataloging projects.

Wide variations have been found in library practices among members of a center, including such areas as classification, descriptive cataloging, subject cataloging, and preparational activities. Compromise is necessary to eliminate variations, which are costly and interfere with streamlined and efficient operations. Decisions are sometimes made by majority vote of the members. The extent to which standard or uniform operations—regarded as adequate and satisfactory—are used is a basic measure of efficiency, and subsequently, cost. Similarly, the introduction of majority acceptances can lead to a minimal use of professional staff. Adequacy of personnel, as well as adequacy of equipment and its full use, are other measures of success. Proper relations with jobbers, publishers, and other sources of supply are fundamental in prompt processing.

Miss Vann has examined evaluation from the standpoint of the recipient or cooperating library. She has enumerated the various factors that are involved in the relationship of the library to the cen-
ter, and of the problems that arise from emphasis on "local" needs. Does the center serve to eliminate independence and autonomy of the participating library? Any program of cooperation involves the loss of some independence. The important question is whether or not the independence is significant in terms of services to the particular clientele. This is the essence of Miss Vann's discussion.

The evolution of commercial services, as described by Barbara Westby, reveals that they are not new and go back to the middle of the nineteenth century. She stresses the major stages in the development, including the interest of particular librarians, printers, book sellers, jobbers, and publishers. Libraries, especially the Library of Congress, came into the picture in 1902. It is worth noting that the character of library service, which is not regarded as a profit-making activity, has not had a history of great concern with efficiency and the saving of money. The early leaders of the profession—Melvil Dewey, John Cotton Dana, and others—were cognizant of the need to exercise economy in operations. With the development of the concepts of Carleton B. Joeckel, William M. Randall, and others at the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, in public administration and library management, the need to control more precisely the funds allotted to libraries came to be emphasized. Ralph R. Shaw and others followed with innovations in instrumentation that were designed to simplify library operations. What has occurred in recent years in this pattern of thinking would take more space than has been allotted. Indeed, much of the success of cooperative and centralized cataloging has come with the enlightened thinking of new librarians who are not willing to perpetuate operations because "this is the way we have done it."

It might well be a general rule for librarians, as for any professional group, that when commercial services can do a task more efficiently they be encouraged to do it. The important issue, as seen by Miss Westby, is that they fulfill the requirements of promptness, accuracy, and economy. She raises the important matter of competition; in the long run, this will be an asset for librarians. The work of the H. W. Wilson Company is singled out as exceptional in providing a service to supplement or complement the activity of the Library of Congress in this field.

John M. Dawson has reviewed the work of the Library of Congress in cooperative and centralized cataloging. The efforts of Charles C. Jewett which preceded the service of the Library of Congress should
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be noted as a significant step in the progress toward centralized cataloging service. Dawson gives a detailed analysis of the work of the Library of Congress in the field and provides, to the individual libraries subscribing to LC printed cards, a basis for estimating costs. Although it has been indicated by K. D. Metcalf that the use of LC cards has been an over-expensive item for American libraries, the pattern of the history that Dawson provides suggests that this has not been so, and the Shared Cataloging Program and the Machine Readable Cataloging Program (MARC) of the Library of Congress represent impressive stages in the total program of cooperative and centralized cataloging. The progress has been slow, but it has become more evident in the last few years. The total work of the Library of Congress in the field has been impressive on a national and international basis. Criticisms remain.

Bella E. Shachtman offers a useful paper on what other Federal libraries are doing for cooperative and centralized cataloging. She has provided substantial evidence of the developments in regard to the publication of book catalogs by Federal libraries. She has also called attention to the limitations and potentials of computerization, standardization in the cataloging of technical reports, uniform or compatible subject analysis, and the need for the Federal government at the highest levels to assist libraries through legislation, funding, and research.

The paper by William S. Dix on centralized cataloging as related to the Higher Education Act is pertinent to the Dawson and Shachtman papers. Dix reviews specifically the developments leading up to the current Library of Congress National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging, as authorized by Title II, Part C of the Act. The project of the Library of Congress to extend its coverage should mark the exceptional step necessary to provide catalog copy for titles from foreign countries to an extent never previously believed possible. Dix pays tribute to the work of John Cronin, of the Library of Congress, for his efforts to extend the cataloging work of the Library. Cronin's suggestions for using copy from foreign national bibliographies are part of the project. It is hoped that the great expectations that university and other research librarians have for the work will be met. Again, one of the major problems is the shortage of expert personnel to assist in the work.

Two papers complete the review of processing for particular libraries. Richard L. Darling has indicated that school processing on
a centralized basis goes back to 1917. He has summarized the issues that have resulted in the upswing of centralized processing during recent years. These are somewhat more complex in nature than centralized cataloging for other types of libraries, although similarly present are the basic efforts to take advantage of personnel, introduce uniform and consistent procedures, speed up the work, and provide service to school libraries which had either no school librarian or a librarian with little experience or no time for cataloging. The history of centralized school processing clearly shows the practicality and feasibility of the approach, and one may expect this activity to increase in the future. Indeed, it may well be attached to larger centralized undertakings.

The paper by Peter Hiatt is concerned with cooperative processing centers for public libraries. Actually, Hiatt is concerned as much with centralized processing, in the sense that public libraries have long used services of the H. W. Wilson Company and the Library of Congress. He has reviewed the various stages that have occurred in the extension of cooperation and centralization, and notes the increase in existing centers. The problems of centers are indicated, and it is possible that the near future will bring additional studies of the most effective number and distribution of centers for a particular state, or for a region. As one looks at the growth of centers in New York State, for example, it is not surprising that the librarians of the state have been examining—especially since issuance of the Nelson Associates report—the optimal number of centralized operations that are necessary. As Hiatt points out, there are a number of states without even one center.

A special problem which Hiatt raises and that should be noted in any review of cooperative and centralized cataloging, whether for public or other types of libraries, is the interest of many librarians in the use of the Library of Congress Classification in place of the Dewey Decimal Classification. Although university libraries, and many college libraries, have been using LC and have converted in numerous instances, school and public libraries generally have remained with Dewey. This is a basic issue that Hiatt has raised, particularly in relation to the practical uses of products of the various projects of the Library of Congress. It is also related, as indicated above, to the general idea that the different types of libraries are being merged in connection with centralized processing activities.
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Uniformity may not always be desirable, but it may be essential in terms of using limited funds most effectively.

Two papers discuss the question of centralized cataloging in foreign countries. Eleanor Buist has reviewed in considerable detail the developments in Russia. This activity is described as having the "classic" problems of less centralization than one might expect, less effective distribution of cards than librarians would like to have, and delays in service. It is not surprising that such an issue as classification would be "thorny." Miss Buist examines the program for cataloging-in-source, begun in 1959, which is now being evaluated. As in the United States, centralized cataloging in Russia had its beginnings at the end of the nineteenth century, although the most expansive period has come only recently. Miss Buist calls attention to the character of the printed card, "a key element in the Soviet library economy," which is also being "extended in technical fields to extra-library uses," for such purposes as current awareness and personal files.

The idea of centralized cataloging in Great Britain also had an early start. As early as 1876, the British Museum had a number of its staff in Paris working on the preparation of entries for its catalogs. In 1908, the British librarians cooperated with American librarians in the establishment of Anglo-American cataloging rules. There was less of this cooperation by 1949, but in the 1967 Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, the British librarians again worked with the Americans. Inside Great Britain, between 1915 and 1947, the idea of cooperative cataloging within the country gained support. Yet the extent to which the British National Bibliography is used for centralized cataloging service is not clear, and the use of the cards distributed by B.N.B. appears to be small as A. J. Wells points out. The various reasons for this are mentioned by Wells, and they seem to add up to common problems of lack of coverage, quality, relating books to cards, incompatibility, and incomplete service. The reports on several American studies have identified similar conditions, as may be seen in the Duchac, Hiatt, and Vann papers. Wells points out that there will need to be more standardization in classification and subject cataloging if international centralized cataloging, or the use of national cataloging products, are to be used more fully than they are now. Similarly, he indicates that the intrusion of automation and the computer should be considered in relation to the form of the catalog.

This leads to the paper by David C. Weber on book catalog trends.
The place of the book catalog in cooperative and centralized cataloging is fairly well established for certain types of projects, and the book catalogs of the Library of Congress and other libraries have been of great value for libraries generally in their processing operations. Weber opens his paper with a caution about claiming excessive growth, the introduction of computer potential, and the possible elimination of both traditional card and book catalogs by direct computer inquiry. The latter approach has yet to make a firm impression.

Weber's paper is based primarily on data obtained through a questionnaire distributed during 1966. He estimates that in 1966 there were over three dozen libraries with book catalogs, with another dozen being developed. In the period 1964-1966, twenty-nine of the catalogs began. The availability since 1953 of the Listomatic camera (sequential card), and the emergence in 1964 "of the 120 character extended print chain for electronic computers which provided lower case letters for the first time" are singled out as having speeded the thrust towards book catalogs. The excessive requirements for rehabilitating poor and/or deteriorating card catalogs have influenced some librarians to shift to book catalogs, and this reason probably will be a significant one in the future. The demand for multiple copies for old, new, expanding, merging, or changing library systems; the need for wider distribution of information about holdings among a variety of users; and the establishment of new branches or library units, have been other precipitating incidents for the production of book catalogs. Weber describes in some detail the variety of book catalogs, and their relationship to cooperative and centralized cataloging. Of course, the distribution of any catalog of some size will immediately be useful to other libraries for bibliographical information that could be used for cataloging purposes.

Although it is difficult to assess at this time the general effects of book catalogs on library use, since Weber indicates that "almost always" systems have given up card catalogs in branches, it appears from available evidence that users, including librarians, do not find it troublesome to consult book catalogs. Undoubtedly, it would be helpful to librarians here and abroad if intensive studies were made of the use of book catalogs, and of such matters as cost and format, although Weber does include some limited information and the literature contains relevant data.

The final note that may be added about this issue of Library Trends is that it has isolated a library problem which is in a state of flux,
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and which requires the attention of the whole range of librarians who make and use catalogs, as well as of users of libraries of various types. The cataloging service of processing centers demands constant evaluation, not only in terms of cost, which has been indicated as a major reason for the approach, but also in terms of improving library service. The point that the librarian may well remember is that we may not yet have reached a solution to the problem we are trying to solve, and that new methods, as suggested by Weber, may be awaiting our use.

References
