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Special Libraries, January 1911

Special Libraries Association

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Special Libraries

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With this issue Special Libraries begins its second year. That it has justified its entry into the library field is amply shown by the increasing interest it develops. The subscription list has had a remarkable growth and the articles published have been widely quoted in library journals, magazines and newspapers. It has begun also to fill a real need in its co-operative work.

The growth of this publication is merely a reflex of the growth of the Special Libraries Association. In July, 1909, the association was formed at the Bretton Woods conference, after the call issued by the librarian of the Merchants' Association of New York. In November of that

year a meeting was held in New York and the real work of the association was begun. The annual convention, held at Mackinac Island in July, 1910, exhibited the interest which is taken in the special library movement. Plans were developed there which are beginning to bear fruit in the proposals of publishing houses which have taken tangible shape, looking to the publication of new bibliographical and other aids.

It has been the announced purpose of the association from the beginning to promote co-operation among libraries doing special work. This policy is carried out as far as practicable in Special Libraries. The work of the publication is to a large extent experimental. New fields are tried out, the object being to test the conditions in order to establish sound bases for co-operation. During the first year the chief aim has been to put special libraries in touch with each other by the description of the form, methods, work and facilities of typical libraries. In looking back over the year's work this seems to be the best claim which the association has for credit—that an unknown field of library and semi-library work has been discovered and, to a certain extent, surveyed and platted.

The future looks even brighter than the record of the first year and a half. Special libraries are just coming into a vigorous life. Their value is established. They are a business asset to any private or public organization. They are not established and maintained as a matter of sentiment, but as a cold proposition of dollars and cents. They must be useful in every-day practical problems. They have become indispensable to the progressive business houses, administrative offices, legislatures and city councils, which have already established them. Their spread is rapid, although as yet there is but a small portion of their possibilities, both extensively and intensively, developed.

The crystallization of our knowledge of the movement through the Special Libraries Association is doing much to further the rapid growth of these libraries.

Special Libraries will continue to follow the policy already begun, and with the cordial co-operation of all members and subscribers which has thus far been received it is confidently expected that there will be a steady advance in the value of the publication.

**SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION
CHICAGO MEETING.**

The Special Libraries Association held its second sectional meeting of the year in Chicago, in the rooms of the Chicago Historical Society, January 5.

The meeting was directly in charge of a committee composed of Mr. Frederick Rex, Assistant Statistician of the Municipal Library of Chicago; Miss Caroline M. McIlwain, of the Chicago Historical Society, and Mr. Dwight L. Akers, of the City Club Library. About thirty librarians were present, mostly the special librarians of Chicago. The program was informal and the discussion brought out many facts of interest concerning the special library facilities of Chicago and vicinity. Plans were laid for the development of a co-operative system after an investigation of the available sources.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Rex, who acted as chairman and outlined its purpose.

Mr. John A. Lapp, of the legislative reference department of Indiana, spoke of the work which the Special Libraries Association has done and the plans which are being developed for the future. The problem of working out bibliographical facilities to meet the needs of the special libraries was discussed at length.

Miss Caroline McIlwain explained the scope and work of the Chicago Historical Society Library and Museum, giving special attention to the historical collections dealing with every phase of the social, economic and political history of Chicago and Illinois.

Mr. Dwight L. Akers, of the City Club, explained the work which the club has done in collecting material upon the many civic problems which the club, through its numerous committees, considers. Facts concerning some good collections of material on city problems, such as commission government, city charters, etc., were brought out.

Mr. Frederick W. Schenk, librarian of the Chicago University Law School, spoke upon the problems of special libraries and emphasized the possibilities of co-operation among the libraries of Chicago.

Mr. C. B. Fairchild, Jr., librarian and statistician of the city railway, spoke upon the special work, not strictly library work, which special librarians are called upon to do. He expressed the general belief that special libraries which merely collect and classify material are fulfilling only a small part of their mission.

In the discussion, Mr. H. W. Wilson, of the H. W. Wilson Company, gave an outline of the plans of his company for the trades index, newspaper index and other help to

special librarians which they are planning to undertake.

The training of special librarians was also discussed by Miss Merica Hoagland and others. The opinion prevailed that while library training is essential for assistants it need not be extensive and should not be too formal. The other duties imposed upon heads of such libraries make their training in other lines more necessary than in the technicalities of library work.

At the close of the meeting a committee, of which Mr. C. B. Fairchild, Jr., was named chairman, was appointed to consider the formation of a Chicago section of the Special Libraries Association and to investigate the special library facilities of Chicago and vicinity. This committee was directed to outline plans for organization and further co-operation.

**DIGEST OF PAPERS AND DISCUSSIONS,
BOSTON MEETING, NOVEMBER 11,
1911.**

The Use of Print in the World of Affairs.*

JOHN COTTON DANA, President of the S. L. A.
(Read by Secretary.)

Mr. Dana said that from investigations of his own and others it is shown that college presidents and professors do not realize the value of their libraries and do not impress their students with the importance of skill in the use of books and of libraries, while, on the other hand, men of affairs are making more and more use of print to broaden their fields of work and increase their efficiency. To illustrate the fact that the academic mind has fallen short of the practical mind in the application of printed things to further its development, it should be noted that "the whole vast business of education in this country does not produce one journal relating to its field in general which a layman of average intelligence, finds at once of interest and instructive." Furthermore, in only five or six of the thousands of high schools, and not in more than three of the colleges and universities of this country do we find a library adequately housed, administered and used as a tool for training students "in the knowledge of the use of books and other printed things. Examples could be cited and facts given. It is enough, perhaps, to ask you to add together the expenditures of Harvard in the past twenty years for laboratories, museums and gymnasium and athletic grounds, and then to set the total beside the sum spent on its library. Or you can consider my own college, Dartmouth, and compare its total expenditures for museums

*Printed in *Library Journal*, December, 1910, and in *Stone & Webster Public Service Journal*, December, 1910, from which reprints have also been made.

and athletic grounds with its library, never yet properly developed, and now turned over to a group of professors as a side issue in their work * * * I am a great believer, and long have been, in Emerson's saying, that the greatest civilizer, after all, is selfish, huckstering trade. I have long felt that business runs the world, and that the world gets civilized only as it learns and puts in practice principles tried and proved successful in business. When I established the business branch in Newark * * * I had long felt that there is in the field of everyday affairs a vast amount of helpful material," which men "in that field would find useful and would use freely if it could be gathered, mastered and placed close to their hands." The Newark branch is "a few steps from the business and trolley center of the city. It occupies a room on the ground floor on a street in much use for heavy traffic, but greatly used as a thoroughfare by pedestrians—men and women from great office buildings in or near it." The material consists of nearly 300 directories, American and foreign, telephone and the trades. These were used by 200 persons per month before the branch was established, and now by 1,300. A co-operative list of directories is being made, on loose-leaf ledger sheets. Several thousand manufacturers' catalogues are soon to be placed in the branch. It has a large number of public documents, and it is found that common council manuals of important cities and reports of state bureaus of labor are much used. A large folder case of the important railways is promised. There are about 500 books relating to business accounting and advertising, besides about 500 ordinary reference books. There are 40 general periodicals and 200 relating to trades, manufactures, labor, chambers of commerce, municipalities, movements for public betterment, and the like. Also, there are a few of the most used telegraph and cable codes. There are 40 local and general maps, mounted on rollers, about 60 maps taken from directories of American and foreign cities, more than 150 covering our cities, states and territories, showing topography, agriculture, geology, railroads, trolley lines, etc., mounted on large sheets of cardboard. There are several thousand volumes of fiction and general works, making a total of nearly 9,000 volumes, from which "we are now lending books for home use at the rate of about 100,000 per year. * * * We are only at the beginning of a work, the size and importance of which we did not realize at all when we began. * * * We believe the idea of placing in the center of our city a collection of printed things which men of affairs will wish to use is a

very good one. Our beginnings indicate that our belief is sound. We shall carry the work on as long as the use made of our collection grows as rapidly as it has thus far."

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LIBRARY AND THE FACILITIES IT OFFERS.

LLOYD B. HAYES, Librarian Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Hayes considered the Chamber of Commerce Library rather as an information bureau, particularly for the service of the members. The collection consists of government, state and city publications, and those of commercial organizations. The Bureau of Manufactures, Census Bureau and Consular Reports are conspicuous in the collection. An attempt has been made to keep practically all the Massachusetts state and Boston city publications of recent issue, and to obtain the annual reports of various commercial organizations throughout the country by exchange with the organ of the chamber, "Advance New England." The trade publications cover cotton, wool, coal, shoes and leather, fruits, exports, imports, textiles, etc. Also, there are various directories. Inquiries come through the mail and largely by telephone, but very few persons call at the library. The questions are multifarious and a long list could be given. "We get a large number from abroad, mostly from Europe, in order to know the opportunities here for the sale of different manufactured articles, and, on the contrary, inquiries from Americans as to the market abroad." An important branch of the work is to report on solicitors for charity. "The merchants of Boston seem to be especially 'easy marks' for the fake charity hunter and fakirs in various business schemes.

STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY AND WHAT IT OFFERS THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL MAN.

HORACE L. WHEELER, Librarian Statistical Department

The inquiries that come to this department are miscellaneous and most extensive. There are upwards of 15,000 books to answer the questions, and they pretty well cover the field of economics. Census statistics not only from the United States, but from pretty much all countries of the world, are in the collection. It is surprising, for instance, to find how large is the output from Sweden and Italy among the foreign countries. There is a large collection of industrial statistics and conditions of people engaged in industrials. People come with various schemes and endeavor to get figures that will help them

One person asked for statistics on collars and cuffs, another on schemes for abolishing poverty, another on the Zero System of banking, another, concessions of a certain railroad in Nicaragua, and a host of topics could thus be listed. The collection of British parliament papers is very good and also the collection of economic periodicals, including trade journals, newspapers monthlies and weeklies.

DISCUSSION:

Is There Need of a Down-Town Business and Professional Men's Branch of the Boston Public Library?

DR EDWARD M. HARTWELL, City Statistician.

Dr. Hartwell described his library in brief, one of its functions being to distribute the city documents and to receive others in exchange. He enumerated the number of libraries in the business district, showing that apparently they were sufficient in number—over twenty. "There is not, however, more than the nucleus of a distinctively business men's branch. * * * They have lost what they once had. The Mercantile Library was something that the business people of Boston made their own," but was hardly a technical library. "I doubt if there is any very clearly recognized demand as yet on the part of the business and mercantile man for the kind of library which it seems to me, as a practical worker in the libraries, might very much help this section. But I doubt not that it is not at all impossible to find an intelligent and enlightened business man in Boston * * * to promote the interests of an out station of the Public Library," or to help "some co-operative scheme whereby the libraries which already exist could establish a reading room which is accessible and useful, if it is managed on such principles as are in operation at the statistical department of the Public Library, and that very interesting library which we heard of this afternoon, the Business Men's Branch in Newark." This is not only the business center, but the center of newspaper Boston, and our papers are not very well supplied with what we should call libraries. They have their "morgues," in which death notices are prepared in advance, but "I know from what some of the newspaper men say that a downtown branch of the library * * * kept up-to-date with a fresh supply of selected current literature, they think would be a good thing. * * * It could do very much not only to stimulate the reading habit among the business men of Boston, but guide people who are seeking information offhand and

arriving very often at very offhand conclusions. * * * I do not think it would be of much avail simply to put a lot of books down here in charge of a cataloguer, and I do not suppose the Public Library would think of doing such a thing as that, but there are a certain class of books which need to be considered." The books bearing upon "questions that the people downtown take a daily interest in" should be within easy reach, and it should be somebody's business to find out what they contain and have the information not only on tap, but digested and reduced

Walter B. Snow, Publicity Engineer.

"My line has been connected most immediately with engineering, and my greatest help has been found in the library of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology * * * I am not in a position, through lack of co-operation, as you suggest, to go to other libraries and ask questions, and I think that the subject of discussion, as I conceive it, would not be in the broadest sense a library, but a clearing house. It certainly should be the repository of a goodly amount of helpful material, the latest editions of the directory, gazetteers, and the like. * * * The value of that library would consist almost entirely in its personal element. The capacity of the individual in attendance to guide to the proper places for research would be of the greatest assistance to the individual who was seeking for information." Many of us are not aware of the wealth of information at the Town Room Library, and have very little idea of what the State Library contains, and "I am very sure that if the private libraries were thrown open it would be a revelation to many seeking information along special lines. The wisdom of an undertaking which would ask the individual to throw his library open to the public when that individual is selling the information to the public, is a question which should be left to each individual to settle, but I feel personally that a central clearing house for information * * * could not fail to be recognized by all as a very great advantage. * * * I know that all of us would be very thankful to our friends if they should say to us, "You will find that information in such and such a place. * * * I should certainly second any effort which might be made to develop, through any instrumentality, a library of that character, or a clearing house which might direct to sources of information."

In the remainder of the discussion the matter was brought up by Mr. Marion of asking one another stock-in-trade questions. It was suggested by Mr. Handy that "the source of information is open to anybody without interfering at all with the expert

information" of a given corporation. Mr. Lee suggested that the librarian or secretary of the co-operative undertaking should have the discretion to see that the questions coming to the center do not trespass upon the time or business interests of any the members, and that if a nucleus were started experience should evolve it on to a satisfactory working basis.

THE EARNING POWER OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES.

D. N. HANBY, Librarian, Insurance Library Association of Boston

It is by no means possible to estimate the earning power of special libraries in dollars and cents returned upon capital invested. The investment cannot be traced "through raw material, finishing, sales and other departments to an ultimate profit which can be made to show on a balance sheet." There is nothing of the penny-in-the-slot about it. Rather it is the "power to furnish required and necessary information where it will do the most good at the right time and in the right shape, with a minimum expenditure of time and energy on the part of those whose business it is to use the information when furnished." It depends not only upon library efficiency, but upon an intelligent, "active constituency bent on getting out of it all the traffic will bear." The value of the trained special librarian appears in his expeditious, judicious and adequate supply of needed information at the crucial moment. In New York City, where the Insurance Library "has made a special effort to keep in touch with the insurance laws and legislation in every part of the Union," there is a growing appreciation of the library service, which saves so much time of correspondence; for here the representatives of the great companies can consult this literature, which otherwise would have to be obtained by each one writing to the different state insurance departments. A special library in Boston cites a list of seventy questions answered in the aggregate of 7 hours 28 minutes, or an average of 6 1/2 minutes to a question. It cites, also, an inquiry that took over three days of research work, the significant fact being "that here was an organized plant ready at the motion of the questioner to be set at work on his behalf, the questioner's time and energy being

saved for the constructive work when the data was laid before him." Now and then a direct profit of the special library can be traced from its use. A notable instance of this was when the representative of a large safety deposit company called upon the Insurance Library of Boston for information on fireproof safes, which information he was to use in preparing "advertising literature intended to persuade men to the use of vaults for the safe keeping of valuables." The unprejudiced facts that he obtained "gave him scientific authority for what otherwise would have seemed a questionable assumption." That information meant money to him, and the saving by the Insurance Library Association was unqualifiedly a display of earning power. "So, too, when the field representative of a fire insurance company, by consulting our law reports, is enabled to cite certain court decisions and rulings and thereby ward off expensive litigation or wholly unwarranted settlements of losses, likewise a service has been done which demonstrates specific power to earn for our constituents."

Granted the earning power, how shall it be increased? "Our own library collects everything of immediate value or of even possible interest on the subject of fire insurance, pure and simple"; and, incidentally, information for preventing fire, materials collected on "building construction, fire resisting and fire retardant materials, municipal building laws, fire department and water supply systems, control and management * * * and so on, through a multitude of even less apparently related subjects." There are subjects upon which it would be a burden for this library to keep literature, yet which we may have occasional and urgent call for; hence the need for co-operating with other libraries which may specialize along related lines. "Might not a co-operative bibliography be built up?" Suppose, for instance, our library needs to keep in touch with sources of information on electrolysis, and that another library of Boston has the same need, but even to a greater extent than ours; suppose our references should be united with theirs, and that the united list be always available to our librarian, and "always freshened by the addition of the latest material; would there not be a gain to both? And if the co-operating limits were extended to twenty libraries, would not the gain be even greater? * * * How far can the special library work with the public library to help in rendering more accessible the material which it already has on narrowly specialized fields? Much of this material is buried in printed proceedings, annual reports and trade papers, and unless one happens to know where it is before he goes there, it is very doubtful if the library assistant will be able to unearth

it from the mass of general titles, not a few of which give little clue to contents. * * * In the special library, because of the limited field covered, it is not impossible for an alert librarian to become so familiar with its contents that he is in a measure freed from limitations set by indexes and catalogues. But in a general library this can be true only of general subjects. If the special and public library can work together to render more accessible to readers material already received by the latter, it will doubtless increase the ability of both to serve their constituents."

Special libraries bulletins would help the city publication. The part played by the public library "would consist in placing at the disposal of the special library cataloguer all the material on its shelves bearing on his subject, and in using the indexes provided when they were delivered to it. The co-operative part played by the special library would consist in furnishing the indexes. As indexes cost money, there would be no inconsistency in the public library paying an annual subscription price for the service." Another field of co-operation for the special library is with specialists, with whom it should seek to be in touch, endeavoring to be the repository of "unusual and expert data. * * * It should seek to be thought of as the natural repository of valuable collections. It should feel keenly the slight when a private collector dies and leaves his collections to be dissipated in auction rooms, or sold to already overburdened public libraries. * * * It is apparent that in the growing demand for special information and its prompt delivery without the intervention of slow and indirect methods, the necessity for the library which concentrates its activities upon a single subject is to be more and more recognized. Its intensive methods are to command increasing attention and respect; and specific earning power, which is now too often grudgingly conceded, will be universally admitted."

LIBRARY OF THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY.

MISS ELIZABETH S. PENDLETON, Librarian

Miss Pendleton gave a brief description of the Library of Philanthropy of the Boston Children's Aid Society, a working collection of more than 20,000 books and pamphlets, dealing with subjects of interest to social workers. Since the interests of social workers are in a very real sense shared by all right-minded people, the books are freely at the service of all readers who care to consult them either for reference or home use. The greater part of the collection consist of reports, monographs, and

bulletins, issued by 1,342 different organizations in the United States and foreign countries. Besides the publications of philanthropic agencies, scientific societies, conferences, etc., the library contains a number of indispensable books of general reference, and many books giving legislative, statistical, scientific, historical and practical information of definite value in the actual solution of difficulties constantly dealt with by social workers. It also includes the most important contemporary studies of social conditions and problems, as well as stimulating and inspiring volumes which convey the contagious fervor of master spirits to those who naturally turn to books for the best they can give.

The paper contained an outline of the history of the library's growth, mentioned its present limitations, and noted the fact that a committee of the board of directors are now considering plans for its future development. In conclusion, Miss Pendleton said:

"At a time when Boston is making more vigorous effort than ever before to arouse in all citizens, young and old, a quickening sense of civic responsibility, it seems especially suitable to urge upon the attention of all who care for the 'ideals and sacred things of the city' the importance of such a library. As a center of educational influence, 'social, charitable, civic,' the possibilities of usefulness before it, if adequately equipped and administered, can scarcely be overestimated."

DISCUSSION.

CHARLES W. BIRTWELL, Secretary Children's Aid Society.

"It seems as though I could heartily agree with the man who said it would have been money in his pocket if he had never been born. Now, libraries cost—everything costs. I look upon a library as simply a necessity. * * * You have got to have it. You have got to have books on your shelves whether you look at them or not—not read very much, perhaps, but they count. The fondness for libraries and the tendency to collect libraries is simply a mark of progress. What I feel is, that the use of libraries for business men does not dawn upon human beings as early as it ought to." People take an interest in other lines of inquiry besides their own immediate business, and I could illustrate this by the difficulty I had in getting information on the clearing of salt marshes from eel grass.

"In the special libraries you have specialists who know what is in them and know the value of what is in them. * * * Of 146 books on a subject * * * which are

the best ones? If I were going to find out, say the difference between going to a general library and being told there were 146 books, well catalogued * * * and going to the School for the Feeble Minded and having Dr. Fernald guide me and tell me which books and which chapters and which pages are the most recent and best, and who are the men back of them," you can imagine what the difference would be.

Where you have a library you must have a man who knows that library, and you must have high-minded people who are open minded, and who give sincere and disinterested directions to what is worth reading * * * I think we are going to find that we, in the lines of social service and the men down at the Chamber of Commerce, are almost indistinguishable.

Mr. Lee then gave an example of his recent experience in finding out who was the Secretary of State of Arizona. At the Back Bay postoffice he was referred to the Boston postoffice, from one division there to another; from there to the office of the Secretary of State, and from there to the Governor's office; and he finally found what he wanted at the State Library.

C BERTRAND THOMPSON, "Boston—1915."

"It is a series question how to get needed information quickly on occasions when it is most wanted, and how to do so is the question which the Special Libraries Association must answer. They must provide facilities for the speedy answering of questions. Bibliographies are absolutely necessary, card catalogues also; but they do not actually supply answers to urgent questions for a busy, practical man

"A very good suggestion was made this evening, that all the libraries in and around Boston should have a central card catalogue, probably in the Boston Public Library, so that one can look first in the Boston Public Library and find at a glance what and where the resources are."

Time is saved by the clever use of secretaries. They are the ones to read articles, "and select and digest the material and turn the results over to you in five pages from a hundred magazines."

Some time ago, when I was practicing law, I was asked to write some articles for an encyclopedia, and I hired law students to do the preliminary case reading for me. At the end of the day I could read the passages they had marked in a couple of hours; and I was sending in twice as much copy as any of the other writers. That demonstrated to me that it is possible to get a sufficiently high grade of research work, which under competent direction, can provide in a nutshell the kind of practical knowledge that practical people need for

their work. If we get such a secretarial service from the Special Libraries Association, I think we can have the best kind of thing that can be done in Boston.

At the budget exhibit in New York City for this fiscal year, the Public Service Commission Library, Mr. R. H. Whitten, librarian, had this notice of its work and needs, in large display:

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION LIBRARY

Consists of a working collection of Books, Pamphlets and Articles from Technical Periodicals relating to

PUBLIC UTILITIES AND RAPID TRANSIT

2,600 Volumes. 6,000 Pamphlets.
Used by Commission Employees: 300 per week; 15,000 per year.

PURPOSE.

To keep in touch with progress the world over.

To have the facts always AT HAND.

To avoid going over old ground.

To profit by the experience of others

ANDREW CARNEGIE, in his "Empire of Business," says that his firm made many mistakes through neglect of the simple rule: "Never undertake anything before having been able to examine everything that has been done on the surface of the earth in that particular line."

ARTISANS' TRADES INDEX.

The H. W. Wilson Company, of Minneapolis, well known as the publishers of the Readers' Guide, are contemplating the editing and publishing of the Trades Index, the plan and scope of which have been already presented in Special Libraries. Most of the magazines listed in the June, 1910, issue will be indexed, as well as several others. The form of entry will be that of the Readers' Guide, and the alphabetic arrangement will be followed. A sliding scale of subscription has been adopted, whereby each library will pay approximately at the rate of 20 cents for each magazine indexed which it receives; i. e., if a library takes 50 of the magazines indexed it will pay \$10.00. This arrangement, a just and sensible one, allows small libraries, individual manufacturers, etc., who subscribe for less than fifteen magazines, the opportunity to secure the index at a rate of \$3.00, which will be the minimum rate.

The editing of the index by the Wilson Company will insure a high grade piece of work, and it is hoped that there will be a quick response to the circulars being sent out by the publishers Trade schools, boards of trade, manufactures, labor organi-

zations, technical libraries and departments; and in fact, every one interested in trades literature as distinguished from engineering literature, will be interested in this index.

A TRADE CATALOGUE LIBRARY.

(Eng Record, December 31, 1910)

A library has been established in the Hudson Terminals at 50 Church street, New York City, which is accepting catalogues of American manufacturers, classifying and filing these catalogues and digesting them in card index form for reference and consultation of buyers, manufacturers, engineers, contractors, purchasing agents, and other consumers, both resident in and visitors to the metropolitan district. The plan has filled a needed want in the way of providing a permanent and comprehensive collection of trade literature, which is resulting to the mutual benefit of the manufacturer and the buyer.

The custodian of the library is the Commercial Bureau Company, to which application for space should be addressed. The total cost to the manufacturer will be \$10 per year, for which sum he is entitled to have placed on file any or all of his catalogues, photographs, drawings, etc. This fee also includes the insertion in card index files for buyers, of a card giving a printed index of the original catalogues placed on file by the manufacturer. These card index files are distributed to buyers and others interested for use in their own offices.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

One of the most significant publications of the year is the small pamphlet of thirty-two pages on the Inter-Relation of Social Movements, prepared for the charity organization department of the Russell Sage Foundation by Mary E Richmond. This pamphlet gives information concerning the work of sixty-seven organizations devoted to social work, and suggests the next inevitable step—their co-operation or amalgamation. This is of special interest to librarians because of the problem of keeping in touch with the publications of these various societies. We are living in a time when practically all progressive work is done by voluntary organizations. They cover every field and every phase of activity. As soon as a need is disclosed, the tendency is to form an organization to meet it. The reports of investigations and the proceedings and other publications of such

societies are admittedly the most valuable kind of material. Yet these publications are nowhere indexed except in a few instances. And until this pamphlet appeared concerning social organizations, there has been no source of information concerning the scope of their activities.

This is, however, only a small part of the problem of getting information concerning the material of organizations. There are hundreds of national and international associations which publish proceedings, besides the social organizations and not including the learned societies. The problem is to learn of the contents of their publications, but before that can be done there must be knowledge concerning the organizations themselves. This is the problem of the general as well as the special librarians. It will be one aim of "Special Libraries" to encourage all attempts to secure data concerning national organizations in different fields and to publish facts concerning them. It is recognized that it is a big undertaking to make a complete list giving data concerning all the national organizations.

It is possible however, to meet a part of the problem at a time. The Library of Congress is preparing a list of national associations of public officials, such as the national association of insurance commissioners. This will bring to the public attention many of this most practical kind of associations.

It is to be hoped that the committees of the Special Libraries Association will each take up the matter within their field and compile data concerning all national associations which publish proceedings or other publications.

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