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Official Organ of the Special Libraries Association

# Special Libraries

*"Putting Knowledge to Work"*

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*Indexed in Industrial Arts Index and Public Affairs Information Service*

**MARCH 1938**

VOLUME 29

NUMBER 3

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# SPECIAL LIBRARIES

MARIAN C. MANLEY, *Editor*

Vol. 29, No. 3

March, 1938

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## Groups in S.L.A.

*By Marguerite Burnett, Librarian*

Federal Reserve Bank of New York

NO MATTER how persuasive others may be on the subjects of chapters and national committees in S.L.A., I am convinced that the heart of S.L.A., its very life beat, lies in its groups. A recent writer, José Ortega y Gasset,\* that brilliant formulator of ideas, says something about nations that, to my mind, excellently describes the relationship of our S.L.A. groups, and members as well, to our national organization. He ascribes the misfortunes of Spain to the failure of the people to realize that national living together is not the passive and inert coexistence of a pile of stones by the roadside, but an active and dynamic reality. Nations are amalgamations built "around important and stimulating enterprises which demand a maximum sacrifice, discipline and a mutual consideration for everybody."

"Sacrifice," "Discipline," "Mutual consideration," — are not these words written in capitals over *every* group project in which any of us has taken part? But, nevertheless, most of us agree in regarding them as "stimulating enterprises." And could our Association exist if it represented only a pile of inert stones, — eighteen hundred members passively paying dues into a central office? What makes it living and dynamic are the many earnest, toiling groups throughout the Association. You will recognize

\*"Invertebrate Spain."

my broad use of the word "group," in this particular connection, to include the committees or executive boards, or whatever the small bands of willing workers may be called who do the actual labor of carrying out S.L.A. projects.

But from now on I shall use "group" in its common meaning, to signify any of the ten national classifications of our membership, along lines of subject interest. The object of the discussion is to emphasize the highlights of these groups' achievements, for emulation by others, and also to bring out defects and opportunities for improvement in their programs and procedure.

### ADVANTAGES OF GROUP ORGANIZATION

*Individual.* Advantages of group organization may be considered either from the individual's point of view or from the Association's. For the individual member it means an opportunity to meet informally with a comparatively small number of other congenial people having common interests and similar problems. There is no trouble about starting conversation in this atmosphere, and several chairmen emphasized the "camaraderie" and "friendliness" of these meetings. Another spoke of exciting discussion "of almost cat and dog intensity," and I heard of one evening group meeting that with difficulty broke up at midnight, so keen was the intellectual

battle. Thus the group supplies the intimate and friendly contacts, with an opportunity either to mount the soap box or heckle from the audience, that the more formal chapter meetings cannot afford.

I am, of course, referring here largely to local group meetings, rather than to the contacts that must be established by correspondence when there is no opportunity for meeting during the year other than at the national convention.

*Association.* The outstanding advantage to the Association as a whole of group activities are the projects that are undertaken. A list of S.L.A. publications in *SPECIAL LIBRARIES* in 1931 showed twenty national publications originating in groups, and there have been others since then.

#### PROJECTS

Besides appearing as printed publications, the results of group projects have frequently been distributed in mimeographed or typewritten form among the members. The range of these projects is impressive, as the list indicates: Bulletin; Bibliographies; Membership lists; Manuals; Library organization pamphlet; Subject headings; Book reviews; Method clinics; Articles in trade magazines; Union list of periodicals; Duplicate exchange; Indexing; Abstracting service; Documentation clearing house; Information for business men.

*Criticisms.* Against these achievements may be mentioned critical but constructive suggestions for future projects.

(1) *Group History.* Detailed histories of groups are notable for their absence. When was the group founded; who have been the officers and committee chairmen; what projects have been attempted, completed and abandoned (the last most important for future chairmen); what has been the nature of the programs? A mass of archives papers is

passed along from one chairman to another, but it is understandable if in the rush of pressing duties the new chairman fails to delve into these past records.

When president, Mr. Stebbins inaugurated an excellent scheme in connection with the National Executive Board's transactions which might well be adapted to group procedure. He had a brief chronological record made from the voluminous proceedings of Board meetings, of "Actions Taken." This listed votes and resolutions passed, with all discussion eliminated, and made a convenient and time-saving reference chart. Could not the group chairmen keep a journal recording bare details of official actions taken, names of projects, committee personnel, etc.? This could be kept up from year to year and would form the basis for the more discursive annual report. A copy could be sent to headquarters each year.

(2) *Headquarters Contacts.* Criticism regarding projects is that information about them is often lacking at headquarters, and no filing copies are forwarded of valuable lists, bibliographies, directories, magazine articles, etc., that might be of much use to other groups or individual members of the Association.

Related to this idea is the suggestion that headquarters be made the repository for old group records that are not needed for current use. I have in mind an experience of my own group, the Financial, namely, the disappearance of photographs of financial libraries, posters and printed signs formerly used in exhibits of model financial libraries at bankers' conventions. No one knows *where* they went to, but if they had been filed at headquarters they would have been available for succeeding exhibit chairmen.

(3) *Procedure.* Criticism arises on questions of procedure in project undertakings. Cases have been known where

projects have been continued from year to year by a faithful committee of the group who were not careful to report progress, with the result that the succeeding chairman was not aware of the committee's existence. Sometimes even the current chairman is not kept informed by the committees of what they are doing. This is quite natural, for, after all, good librarians go right ahead with whatever job they are given to do and do not stop to talk about it. Nevertheless, coöperation both within the group and between the group and the national headquarters is an important factor in the smooth running of project machinery.

(4) *Publicity for Projects.* Projects of all groups should be listed completely at the beginning of the year for the advantage of other groups, and also of Association members who do not belong to any group. This would seem to call for publication in both SPECIAL LIBRARIES and the *Associate Members' Bulletin*.

(5) *Book Reviews.* Another repeated criticism, or perhaps more correctly, a hopeless sigh, is in connection with the lack of book reviews. The Insurance Group seems to have solved its own problem successfully with a quarterly bulletin of Insurance Book Reviews. For technical books there is the splendid undertaking, "Technical Book Review Index," which was the outgrowth of work by the Science-Technology and Commercial groups. But for the great number of books on economics and business there is no quick medium of evaluation for special librarians. One school of thought claims that librarians are not sufficiently expert in their subjects to write competent reviews that can compete with the scholarly reviews appearing in economic journals. But others believe that librarians in the same group should hold out a helping hand to each other in some way, especially to our Pacific Coast confrères, who complain that they are much handi-

capped by their inability to get books on approval as we do in the East. What can be done about this? This is a challenge to all our groups.

(6) *Exhibits.* Exhibits are a fairly recent form of project, and while worth-while as publicity, they bristle with problems. Model libraries, or, more correctly, sample libraries, are set up at conferences or conventions of organizations which we would like to educate as to possibilities of library service. For example, the Financial Group has set up a number of such exhibits at the annual convention of the American Bankers' Association, and gratifying interest was shown by the delegates, many of whom are, of course, potential employers of bank librarians. Granting the value of these exhibits, upon which I find opinion unanimous, they raise questions which might well be discussed.

How shall money be raised for financing such expenses as reading lists, descriptive booklets and other costs for actually setting up the exhibit? If a publication is issued by a local group under the name of S.L.A., should it not have the approval of the National Publications Committee? This is an established rule, but apparently has not always been observed. Again, what is the responsibility of the National, if the group fails to raise the necessary funds? Can it be expected to meet a deficit on a project for which it has had no initial responsibility, but in which its prestige is concerned? In short, where should supervision and coöperation between the groups and the National begin and end?

#### ORGANIZATION

*Chairman.* First in importance is the choice of chairman, upon which a group's fate really depends. It is extremely important to choose someone who is alive and effective. He should have experience in the Association and group, and ability

to weld the membership together. One member says, "It is necessary for us to meet people doing the same work and with the same problems as ours, but *do* we? Only if some active group chairman reaches out to get us." Another says, "I never hear from anyone during the year." A danger signal! The most active group may quickly retrograde and even disintegrate if the chairman falls down on the job. How can the right person be chosen in the first place? Will the new Personnel Index at Headquarters help?

But, on the other hand, consider the chairman's personal problem. Contacts of many kinds must, of course, be made by the chairman. If the group numbers some 400 members, as Commerce-Technology did at one time, I believe, or 200 members as Social-Science does, the mere correspondence entailed is a big problem. One harassed chairman wrote me, "Trying to attend to group business at long range without personal contacts has almost swamped me, and I am hopelessly behind with correspondence." Yet letters form a very important contact. A bulletin, too, is almost an essential as a medium of communication.

One suggestion is that the nominating committees should consider these problems and ascertain if stenographic help is available for these prospective chairmen. An organization is often willing to allow such help and time in office hours for S.L.A. business, because of the professional prestige so acquired by the librarian. Or sometimes it is just a matter of the persuasive powers of the librarian with not much consideration of returns to the firm.

A training school for group chairmen was suggested as almost a necessity by one critic. That the chairmen feel the need of guidance is indicated by one complainant who said she never knew of the existence of a "Manual for Group Chairmen" until two-thirds of her term

of office had passed. Could not this manual be sent out by Headquarters at the beginning of each year to each group chairman automatically?

One good suggestion is that group chairmen, if possible, serve two successive years. Thus projects, which usually require more than one year to complete, and involve much correspondence, can be seen through by the same person who is familiar with the background.

*Programs.* What kind of program is most popular for groups? The Newspaper Group says frankly that it is "not interested in listening to talks that cannot be used to advantage in everyday work." But they invite to their group meetings those who have a message. Others agree that family conferences are the best, in which there can be free discussion of classification schemes, subject headings, publicity and individual problems. For example, the Newspaper Group chairman, for one program, selected twenty newspaper topics in advance, and at the group meeting the members were called upon to state the classification under which each topic was filed, and why. The answers brought out many differences in method and systems, and stimulated much interesting discussion that a dry and monotonous recital of cataloging rules or filing methods would never have aroused.

*Size.* How large may a group be without growing unwieldy? One large group, Science-Technology, has solved the problem by dividing into sections, and now has five, called: Chemistry, Electrical Communications, Petroleum, Public Utility and Rubber. Should some standard be established as to the size that makes for greatest efficiency, or should this be left to natural evolution within the group itself?

*Local Groups.* The desirability of local groups is unquestioned in a chapter the size of New York, where 12 thriving

groups meet enthusiastically and often. But for smaller centers the wisdom of formal organization may be doubted, and it is more practical to appoint a local representative to act as liaison officer. One group chairman warns that while local groups are professionally stimulating, there is the danger of their becoming self-sufficient and professionally "provincial."

*Membership.* Membership is an important consideration. The group chairman who is enthusiastic and energetic can gather in hitherto unaffiliated members for the group and also can often attract new members for S.L.A. because of the subject interest of the group. An interesting example of this occurred with the formation of the new hospital and nursing section of the Biological Sciences Group in New York, whereby was established a whole range of new contacts. This section was organized for doctors, nurses and librarians interested in medical and nursing libraries, and the surprising attendance of 32 at the first meeting indicates the warm response. A national membership slant is seen in the proposal of one member, Dr. Curran, to write to hospital officials about institutional membership in S.L.A.

The question here might be raised as to how far afield the Association should go in soliciting new members. Shall we try to confine our membership to librarians only, or shall we welcome and even

urge to join, anyone who is interested in the aims of the Association as generously provided in our Constitution?

#### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Finally, we might mention a problem that is no longer a problem because it has already been solved, but which has interest for us as a professional landmark. Both the Museum Group and the Newspaper Group, in organizing, had to consider whether in forming their groups they might not work more effectively if allied with the specialists in their field, namely the "American Association of Museums" and "The American Newspaper Publishers Association," respectively. While there would have been the inspiration of association with specialists in subjects of common interest, there would have been no professional concern for the methods and problems common to librarians. The newspaper librarians have found that their choice was the wise one, for they have increased their importance in the eyes of their newspapers by their connection with a national professional organization.

But, many as are the professional advantages accruing through informal group association, it is the friendly camaraderie engendered that stands out as the most valuable contribution offered by our groups. We agree with Confucius, who said, "Good fellowship is more precious than fire or water."

## Events and Publications

### *Contributions from Margaret R. Bonnell*

*Profit Sharing for Wage Earners*, by C. C. Balderston. New York, Industrial Relations Counselors, 1937, 156 p., price \$2.00. A re-examination of experience with this type of employee remuneration in the light of current developments in personnel and labor management, with discussion of questions not fully answered in existing treatises on the subject.

The International Documents Service of Co-

lumbia University Press issues monthly a very useful mimeographed list of new League of Nations documents. The first page is devoted to brief summaries calling special attention to particularly important publications. The bulletin is called *The International Reporter*. Nine issues have appeared so far.

Aeronautics Bulletin No. 1, published by the Bureau of Air Commerce of the United States Commerce Department, is entitled *Civil Aeronautics in the United States*. Part I discusses the

aeronautics industry and includes statistics and graphic charts of operations, production, design progress, etc.

The *Financial Survey of Urban Housing*, sponsored by the Bureau of Foreign & Domestic Commerce, is a monumental compilation of statistics on the financial aspects of urban housing — age and value of structures, rents and rent-trends, income of families, cost of housing, mortgage debt, etc., in 22 representative American cities. It is a companion study to the *Real Property Inventory*, which was a census of residential properties in 64 cities but did not cover family income and related financial data, and is the first inquiry of its kind that has ever been undertaken in the United States. May be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, price \$3.25.

*Functions of the Personnel Director* is the title of a recent pamphlet issued by the Policyholders Service Bureau, Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. It may be had upon request to the Bureau at One Madison Avenue, New York City.

*Union Membership in Great Britain and the United States*, by Leo Wolman. (Bulletin 68 of the National Bureau of Economic Research, 1819 Broadway, New York City, December 27, 1937.) Presents statistics of union membership 1897-1935; an analysis of the distribution of membership among industrial groups; and estimates of the percentage of employees organized in all industry and its major subdivisions.

*Some Basic Readings in Social Security*, October 1937. Social Security Board, Washington, D. C., Publication No. 28, 24 pages. All the services provided for by the Social Security Act are described in this compilation of the more significant and timely studies in each field. There is also a list of more than 35 books in English dealing with social insurance in foreign countries, and of regional offices of the Social Security

Board and their directors. This compilation was prepared by Carl Farman, Research Assistant in the Library, under the direction of Ellen Commons, Librarian.

*Profit-Sharing and Other Supplementary-Compensation Plans Covering Wage Earners* is the second of a series of Studies in Personnel Policy issued by the National Industrial Conference Board, 247 Park Avenue, New York City. Appendices give useful tabular analysis of the chief provisions of selected plans. Other titles in the series are *Personnel Policies Affecting Salesmen; Multiple-Shift Operations; and Curtailment, Layoff Policy, and Seniority*.

*Accident Statistics of the Federal Government*, prepared by C. N. Young for the Central Statistical Board Washington, D. C., 141 mimeographed pages. Listing by Bureaus of available publications, relating to accident statistics especially those giving statistics on a regular or current basis. For the publications of each Bureau there is a discussion of material and method of investigation and a critique.

The annual review of the year's new books in the field of life insurance which is prepared in the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company Library appears in the January issue of the Company's employee magazine *The Home Office*. Copies may be obtained from the Library.

A new series of trade statistics is being published by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce in cooperation with the National Association of Credit Men, beginning with a release for December which contains dollar sales, volume of accounts receivable outstanding, and volume of collections on accounts receivable for both manufacturers and wholesalers. In addition there will be shown each month data on the cost of stocks held by wholesalers. The title of the release is *Wholesale Trade*.

## “Putting Knowledge to Work”

By *Beaumont Newhall*

Librarian of The Museum of Modern Art, New York

THE motto of the Special Libraries Association is “Putting Knowledge to Work.”

In this simple phrase lies the whole philosophy of modern library practice. Its implications are great; its responsibilities, large. It means that it is our duty to do more than collect literary and pictorial

data, store it safely, and catalog it so that it is readily accessible to all comers. It means that we should take a militant offensive, and *present* the specialized knowledge stored up in our specialized libraries.

The very title of our organization and the concept of special libraries is modern. Everywhere around us, specialization is



the word. Our education is specialized. Our work is specialized. Our lives are specialized. Through this division of labor we have achieved great technical perfection. But at the same time, as the late James Harvey Robinson so forcefully pointed out in his stimulating "The Humanizing of Knowledge" (New York, Doran, 1924), for all the benefits accrued by our specialization, there have been defects. Our environment is a rich field which thousands upon thousands of workers till. Year by year these workers cut their furrows more accurately—and deeper. Deeper and deeper the furrows are cut, until each worker has lost sight of the surface of the field and cannot see other workers who industriously cut their own clean and deep furrows. That broad perspective which is the mark, if there is a single mark, of the educated man has too often been lost.

We librarians, in our several special fields, are implementing the workers who are digging. We give them sharper, more efficient tools of thought. At the same time, we ourselves dig furrows—furrows of technique, into which we sometimes sink quite out of sight. It is necessary that we should consult with one another, and perfect our special technique to aid specialization. Without efficiency, we would be of no value. But we must not let it engulf us.

In our hands we have the power to despecialize, to a degree, today's knowledge. We can Put Knowledge to Work for other than those specialists that we immediately serve. By cooperating with the advertising office, the publicity department, or the instruction division of our respective businesses or institutions, we can spread abroad that special knowledge of which we are the physical custodians. Popular reading lists might well form a part of direct-mail salesmanship, or any of the other mass-

publication techniques so essential to modern life (newspapers, magazines, radio, moving pictures and—around the corner—television and the radio-transmitted news-bulletin); such investments would bring returns, not only to the special libraries, but inevitably to the institutions which have the far-sighted wisdom to support them.

These popular guides should be roadmaps of literature, on which the trunk highways and the pleasantly winding, discursive roads are marked. Our scientific card catalogs are as impersonal—and as forbidding—as the wonderfully accurate maps published by the U. S. Geological Survey. Every road, every path, every house is indicated. But the state of the road, the kind of reading, is indicated in neither. If it was the commercial enterprise of specialized firms—gasoline dealers—that brought us qualitative road maps, perhaps it is not exaggerated to hope that it may be the commercial enterprise of specialized libraries to increase the number of qualitative reading guides.

Nor should we neglect our own publications. Interesting as SPECIAL LIBRARIES is to the members of the S.L.A., it would be rash to say that it has any popular appeal. Yet it could. By means of pictures, by articles of an informative nature, by literary roadmaps, it could become a magazine which would reach outside of the association. By dramatizing our motto people would learn that we talk of other things than imprints, collation, analytics, and corporate bodies as authors.

It has been said that the heart of a university is its library. Every special library that is Putting Knowledge to Work is a center in that vast informal university so often given the forbidding name: Adult Education.



## The Special Library Profession and What It Offers

### 15—Engineering and Technical Libraries

*By Alma C. Mitchill*

Librarian, Public Service Corporation of New Jersey

**W**EBSTER defines engineering as the art and science by which mechanical properties of matter are made useful to man in structures and machines. The word "useful" is most apropos, as it not only sums up the service the engineering profession gives to mankind but also describes the function of the engineering and technical library for the engineer. As only a limited number of this type replied to the questionnaire sent out in September 1934, this article is indicative rather than complete. Other libraries, however, are covered in the bibliography.

#### HISTORY AND GROWTH

The oldest library reporting was founded in 1892. The others traced their beginnings to the years 1908-1918 inclusive, except for one founded in July 1929. Original floor space ranged from 120 square feet through 3,600 square feet. One boasted of 3,417 square feet plus 891 square feet for bindery. This library, however, was the one founded in 1929, and as there was no increase in space between 1929 and 1934 its comparative spaciousness is explained. With the exception of the recently established library, all have now increased their floor space. One has expanded to three times its original space whereas the others have from 1,200 square feet to 6,400 square feet more room.

At the end of the first year of service five libraries averaged individually approximately 2,000 volumes. No records were available for the others. The fact that five libraries were so similar in the size of their collections can undoubtedly be considered as typical of engineering libraries in the years, let us say, 1910-1920. All the libraries reporting were staffed at the beginning of their existence by one or two members. These statistics compared with those reflecting the present trend show a phenomenal growth testifying to the value of library science to the engineering profession.

A telling comparison of growth and usefulness is revealed in the figures giving the present sizes of collections. Instead of a maximum of 2,000 volumes we find one with a collection of 18,000 books, pamphlets and excerpts; another with 40,000 volumes; a third has grown to 25,500 books and pamphlets and an equivalent of 105 four-drawer filing units; one reports 30,000 volumes and files containing several million cards; another which originally contained but 200 volumes now has 1,000 with four four-drawer units; one has supplemented its 4,500 volumes with card files (150,000) containing patent and general information; one not only has built up its collection to 23,000 volumes but also includes in it 10,000 lantern slides and 18,477 mounted plates; while still another claims 14,000 volumes and unbound periodicals as well as 52 vertical file drawers. It is but natural that with larger collections there should also be an increase in the members of the staff to handle the additional work involved. This is noticeable in each library. At the time the survey was completed a staff usually consisted of two or three members, although there were several with five and one with six members.

Although these statistics would appear to show steady progress there was a noticeable retrenchment in the years 1929-1933. This was to be expected on account of business conditions throughout the country during that period. Five libraries suffered a decrease in staff members. One, however, survived the depression with all its staff intact and another actually increased its staff from one to two members to three. Salaries also suffered. All reporting on this question showed a decrease. Their total staff salaries in 1929 ranged from \$4,140 to \$12,600, but dropped from \$3,300 to \$5,820 in 1933.

The amount of money spent for collections also decreased between 1929 and 1933, but in such varying percentages that the only con-

clusion to be reached is that the decrease reflected the comparative prosperity of the organization supporting the library. It is interesting to note, however, that whereas five libraries suffered severe retrenchment, one increased its expenditures for books, periodicals, binding, memberships, L. C. printed cards and supplies.

#### ORGANIZATION

Judging from the differences in titles of officials covered by this survey, it is evident that there is no general ruling as to whom a librarian reports in her organization. One librarian reports to the President or Vice-President, another to a member of the firm, director or assistant, another may have as her superior the Director of Division of General Studies. In all cases the librarian seems to be left generally free to make her plans on a long-range basis with a minimum of petty restrictions. This indicates a high degree of efficiency in engineering libraries and is essential to the proper development of the library. There is almost an unanimity of opinion that opportunities are not the same for men and women. Although stating that there is no prejudice, one answer intimates that there are certain types of work for which women are not suited. Working hours coincide with the usual business hours and vacations are two to three weeks or one month.

#### PUBLICITY

The clientele of engineering libraries is principally made up of those individuals for whose benefit the library was founded. This includes such users as the engineering firms, laboratory men, teachers, firm members, engineers, graduate students, and institutional members. Only two libraries mentioned use by the public. In one it is welcome but the library's present force is not sufficiently large to assist it adequately. Another admitted the public only by special permission.

Each library has a different method of serving its clientele although only a few reported types of publicity methods. One uses bulletin boards for book lists and notices; another issues a bulletin listing new data and books as a memorandum to its engineers and other members of its firm; one sends a weekly bulletin

to its staff and to any one requesting it and yet another publishes weekly a typed list of new books. One library finds that it is not necessary to advertise as it is far too busy.

#### STAFF

The training and qualifications desired for staff members are surprisingly modest when one realizes the amount of work which is done by engineering libraries. The consensus of opinion seems to be that one learns best by doing. Apparently the prerequisites for efficiency in these libraries are so varied and specialized that previous or formal training beyond a certain minimum is not necessary. One asks first and foremost for economic knowledge, and complains that in spite of a wish to employ trained assistants, except in cataloging positions, library school training is not sufficient. Other qualifications desired by these libraries are B.A. and one year professional; high school education; Library School; modern languages and technical experience. One library trains most of its assistants.

#### WORK ASSIGNMENT

The typical routine of the day in most engineering libraries includes:

- Opening and sorting mail.
- Checking and examining periodicals, and making a daily list of those received to be posted on bulletin boards.
- Sending memoranda to interested persons calling attention to important articles.
- Making proper records for books received, and ordering L. C. catalog cards for them.
- Distributing books ordered for other departments.
- O.K.ing bills for payment and keeping cost records.
- Stamping, sorting, and filing miscellaneous material such as pamphlets, trade literature, college catalogs, announcements, etc.
- Filing and keeping statistics of circulation.

Other tasks, not all of which are done in any one day, include:

- Typing orders and keeping up order card file.
- Correspondence.
- Classifying and cataloging, and preparing books for shelves.
- Preparing periodicals for binding.
- Typing a weekly list "Recent Additions to the . . . Library."

Preparing a bibliography of all the journal articles, bulletins, the patents by members of the institution for annual publication.

#### FUTURE

There is no doubt but that the future of the Engineering and Technical Library is assured. It is essential that the Engineer in making useful to mankind the mechanical properties of matter in structures and machines have access to the best methods evolved not only in this country but abroad, and to the knowl-

edge of what others have done before him. The place to which he will naturally turn will be his library. Here will be found not only textbooks, but also trade and technical journals, proceedings and transactions of engineering societies and scientific organizations, progress reports, the latest standards and specifications, and last but not least, innumerable pamphlets. As the engineering profession progresses in its service to the world so will the library grow in usefulness to the engineer.

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## What S.L.A. Will Find in Pittsburgh

### *A Word From the Pittsburgh Chapter*

SO YOU are coming to Pittsburgh next June and are wondering what you will find in the city of a "hundred hills and half a hundred bridges." You have heard of its high industrial rank, of its millionaires and its smoke, but we wish to tell you something of its romance and beauty and a little of its giant industries.

We will take you up 500 feet to the top of the Gulf Building and from there you can look down on the business and shopping district, the Golden Triangle formed by the junction of two historic rivers which meet to form the Ohio—the "Beautiful River" of the Iroquois. Close to the point of union is a tiny pentagonal building, now all that remains of old 1764 Fort Pitt, once so important in the history of our country. You will look down on a maze of narrow streets meeting at curious angles and curves and seeming even more narrow than they really are because of towering skyscrapers on either side. In the heart of this crowded district stands old Trinity Church with its century-old burial ground

where Chief Red Pole rests beside his friends, the white men. There is much to learn of early Pittsburgh in these tangled streets whose very names recall the days of Shingiss, Penn and Stanwix, and of later days, from the high buildings that tell of the time of Carnegie, Frick and Mellon. The massive Romanesque cluster of gray stone buildings on Grant's Hill above the Point, is the Court House, joined to the Jail by a Bridge of Sighs—both designed by Richardson in 1884. Though the land on which they stand was once thirty feet higher than now, they were so well planned and constructed that after successive gradings of the hill, they stand improved rather than marred by civic progress.

Looking up the Allegheny, if the day is clear, you will see Washington Crossing Bridge, so named because it was there that young George Washington was thrown from his raft and barely escaped death from drowning and exposure.

Turning toward the north and west, on the high hill of Riverside Park, you will

see Allegheny Observatory, which was erected largely through the efforts of Pittsburgh's well-loved astronomer, John Brashear, whose ashes rest beneath its dome. Such names as Langley and Keeler have been included in its directorate in the past.

Hills and bridges are softened with haze by day, but at night they are outlined by millions of lights, that trace the highways and streets and are reflected in the water. While over Soho, like a pillar of fire, flare the furnaces that brought fortune to Pittsburgh.

For three miles along the Monongahela River, past Duquesne University and through Soho, the Boulevard of the Allies leads to Schenley Park and the Civic Center. Here are grouped the buildings that represent science and education, art and recreation.

In the center of vivid green lawns, the Gothic shaft of the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning rises 42 stories high. At its foot is the Stephen Foster Memorial, housing the Lilly collection of original manuscripts of the folk-songs of the famous composer, pictures, letters and other Fosteriana. To the right is Heinz chapel built in memory of H. J. Heinz and his mother. Its Gothic design and the effect of its high traceried windows reminds one of famous Sainte-Chapelle. Just across the way stands the new Mellon Institute. Words fail to describe its classic

beauty. You must see to appreciate the charm of a Grecian temple that is a modern workshop of science.

Near-by, in Schenley Park, are the various schools of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, nationally known for its colleges of Fine Arts and Engineering. At the entrance to the park you will find Carnegie Institute, with its splendid library, its music hall, its museum of natural history and its art galleries containing a permanent collection of modern paintings and showing each year the only annual international exhibition of paintings in the world — all these the gift of Andrew Carnegie.

Our residential districts are a bit inaccessible to the casual visitor, though you will feel repaid if you steal a little time for a drive up Mount Washington to our modern housing unit, Chatham Village, or along Beechwood Boulevard and Woodland Road to the older districts at Point Breeze and Highland Park.

There is no need to quote ratings of local industries to a special librarian, but here are the mammoth plants of the Aluminum Company, Westinghouse and many others. Neither shall we enumerate our special libraries but for these refer you to the directory of special libraries of Pittsburgh compiled by the Pittsburgh Chapter. We simply touch on some of the high lights of the "City of Beautiful Smoke" as a brief introduction to your visit next June.

## Consistent Classification for Special Libraries

*By Henry E. Bliss, Head of Departmental Libraries*

College of the City of New York

**F**OUR important classifications for libraries of special scope have been published in the past four years: one for the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, one for the Baker Library of the

School of Business Administration of Harvard University, one for the Library of the School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the University of London, and one for the Law Library of the

School of Jurisprudence of the University of California. These classifications have been in structure and in detail almost independent of the principles and the systems that dominate in the schools for librarianship. They have been developed in their several special interests evidently with more or less practical adequacy to their requirements. They have been published so that other special libraries in their fields may readily avail of their schedules.

At the International Institute of Agriculture the international classification, *La Classification décimale universelle*, had been adopted some years before. Wherein this was found unsatisfactory, even after modification and simplification, has been told by the library's Director, Dr. Sigmund von Frauendorfer, in an illuminating article in *The Library Quarterly* for April, 1934. For the School of Business Administration the abilities of economists and librarians have combined to elaborate a system regarded as more comprehensive, coherent, and efficient than the eminent systems they had put aside as too complicated and confused. Medical interests also have needed more comprehensive and scientific classification. That made by Mr. Cyril Barnard for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, of which he is the Librarian, has been published successfully and is available for similar very special requirements. Very special in use too are libraries of law and jurisprudence; and classification for them has been an unsolved problem. But the system devised for the University of California School of Jurisprudence by its Librarian, Mr. Thomas Dabagh, and proposed by him recently in the *Law Library Quarterly*, may prove very serviceable.

For the religious field one may add the *Alternative Classification* for Catholic Libraries by Mrs. Jeanette Murphy Lynn, recently reissued in expanded

form. The classification for the Union Theological Seminary, developed some years ago by Miss Pettee, has not been published.

Here are prominent indications of a more general departure from the systems that have been accepted as available standards for all kinds of libraries, but which have been more like the "tentative standards" that are tried out in organized technology. Those systems have *not* been adopted by so many libraries of all types that they are far from being general standards and very far from being so "universal" as the name — and the propaganda — of one of them implies.

The objections to those systems have been stated and there is no need to review them here. What concerns us now is the question whether there should be, or can be, a general standard system, and, if so, how it should be, or may be, adaptable and serviceable.

This question was considered at the session of the British Library Association last June by the writer, as proponent, and others, the chief opponent being Dr. Bradford, Librarian of the Science Museum at South Kensington, London, who is the leading advocate in England for the Decimal Classification. From this discussion it was evident that the relation of special classification to general is virtual in principle and may become actual with adaptation, and that relative standardization may have its advantages, but that conformity to a standard that is unfit, inadequate, or unduly complicated may prove uneconomic, while the ascribed values may be illusory.

## II

The pseudo-standards in vogue have usually been adopted for their already elaborated detail, for the supposed advantages of conformity, and for the subject-terms and class-marks assigned by, or for, the Library of Congress. Any

individual library to which those class-marks are applicable — that is, some of them — may apply them to its collections, and in so far may be said to "adopt" that classification. Details are thus applied. But it is absurd to suppose, as too often is done, that the entire, elaborate classification is adopted by any library, whether general or special. The economy of this centralized, standardized classifying in any case depends on the applicability of the standard system and its marks to the individual library, and also on the cost of obtaining the cards bearing the marks, and the time lost in waiting for them.

Class-marks denote and locate subjects, or their correlative terms, in a classification. This implies order and relatedness. There may be many orders of general subjects, and again of special subjects, depending on interests and points of view. These are supposed to be distinct and may be divergent. But interests and viewpoints proceed, or extend, naturally, objectively, and logically, either from the special subject in view to closely related special subjects or to relevant general subjects that comprehend them. This is the process of *comprehension*, or *synthesis*. Obversely, interests may proceed from the general subjects to the special subjects and progressively to more and more special subjects. This is *specialization*, or *analysis*. Both these progressions avail in classifications whether general or special.

Otherwise there are views that *select* certain subject-matters, passing by others that seem less significant, or irrelevant. Some of these views may distort reality for the time being in the present interest, for "practical" purposes. Such systems are *arbitrary*, or "artificial." Some of them may later find the omissions or oversights unfortunate. Arbitrary systems are likely to be less permanent.

There is an infinite multiplicity of special subjects. Each book, each pamphlet,

each leaflet, each paragraph may be said to have its special subject, however vaguely defined. The inherent and confusing multiplicity of things and of views of them is of necessity avoided more or less by all of us. Disregarding the individualities and the very special peculiarities, we *classify* the special subjects, topics, and aspects in more and more general classes. This process of *generalization* is correlative to *synthesis*, which is a comprehension of special subjects under relevant general subjects. The special subjects may be *coördinate* and may be *collocated*. These are general principles of all classification, and they are essential — logically, and practically too. Arbitrary classifications that ignore these principles, because of some partial view or "practical" purpose, are not natural, not logical, not generally applicable, not nearly so permanent, not adequately efficient for the generalizing requirements of most scientific studies, which should consider special subject-matters in their relations to general subject-matters. Specialists in the human studies also should thus view their special subjects more comprehensively and intelligently.

An arbitrary special classification may be deemed fit for an individual special library, but, if it be not *consistent* with the fundamental principles of classification and with a logical, scientific and adaptable general classification (if standardized, the better), it will probably not be *typical* for other libraries in its field and not be efficient for them. If, however, it be consistent in these two ways and also self-consistent with the subject-matter of its special field, it will be valid, it may be typical, and it may be standardized for its field. Each special field should develop its standard classification with these three consistencies. Special librarians should be trained and qualified to cooperate in such standardization.



A general system should have its general classes so systematized that most special subjects may logically be subordinated to them and therein *collocated* for a *maximal efficiency*. Conversely special classifications should be *consistent* with a general classification that is systematic logically and scientifically. A general classification that is arbitrary or illogical is less efficient for adaptation. These strictures apply to the pseudo-standards rejected by the four libraries named above. The preceding strictures apply in certain respects to those four classifications themselves.

### III

The four classifications in question have not been so consistent with the principles of classification and the system of the sciences and their derivative studies. Their compilers would reply that such has not been their main purpose, which was primarily to serve the requirements of their individual libraries, and only secondarily to become more or less available to other libraries in their fields. This reply would characterize those classifications as arbitrary rather than *consistent*, however self-consistent they may be in their own systems. In the view outlined above they would therefore be the less typical of their fields and the less efficient for other libraries in it.

Should Agriculture come first in the order of sciences? Should the related sciences, Botany, Chemistry, Economics, Geography, Meteorology, Physics, and Technology follow that main interest and be wholly subordinate to it in a scientific agricultural institution? Would not the illogical alphabetic order serve as well? Rather would it not be at once more scientific and more practical to center Agriculture in subordinate relation to the more general sciences and technologies, on which it is dependent? It might then be followed by the related special

branches derived from those sciences, Agricultural Chemistry, Agriculture related to physiography, to Meteorology, studies of agricultural plants and animals rural sociology and politics, agricultural economics, commerce, and finance, etc., each sub-class with its multiplicity of ramifying subdivisions? Such *branches* and details would then be subordinate to Agriculture, while this *composite* study would be subordinate to the sciences and the technologies. Agricultural Chemistry would be subordinate to Agriculture, but not the whole of Chemistry, not, for instance, Electrochemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, if the special library should happen to possess a few books on those distantly related subjects. If so, such subjects would be under the preceding main classes, placed in their scientific order, and so available for occasional reference or more comprehensive research. In an agricultural library the separation of Agricultural Chemistry from the main class of Chemistry would usually be advantageous, for the special purpose is to collocate the books of agricultural interest. Chemical interests in general, however, would probably prefer to have agricultural chemistry under Chemistry, with its other branches. Here we are dealing with cross-classification, with derivative subjects that may be placed under either of two classes. In a general classification this duality should be provided for by indicating the alternatives in the schedules. In a special library there are three alternatives: should all the dual sub-classes be subordinated to the one main class, or to the other main class, or divided, some being placed under the one and some under the other. But no general main class, such as Chemistry is, should be subordinated to a special composite study, such as Agriculture is. The more general the class, the more perverse will be such distortion.

To exemplify how such illogical sub-

ordinations result in inconvenient separations one may cite Chemistry of Soils, F 24, separated from Agricultural Chemistry, A 7137, of which it is a most important part. The somewhat broader Science of Soils, F 2, should be nearer to Agricultural Chemistry, so that the Chemistry of Soils, under either of the above subjects, would be near to both. That would be practical, adaptable, and scientific too. Similarly under F 4, Nutrition and Fertilization of Plants, Chemical Fertilizers, F 43, is separated from Chemistry of Soils, F 24, by Tillage, F 3. Another example is Physiological Chemistry, A 7135, separated from Physiology (general), A 721, by Geology, A 714, Mineralogy, A 715, and Meteorology, A 716, which thus intrude between two very closely related studies. The interrelations of these subjects and the alternatives they may require should not issue in such inconsistencies and distortions.

In the second case, is the whole of Economics to be subordinated to the study of Business? This result would appear in the details of the Baker Library's classification, though not in the synopsis. The study of Business in schools has developed within the writer's memory from a few courses for special training in Book-keeping, Accountancy, Stenography, Office Management, Merchandising, Advertising, etc. These are but special branches. The more general study of the Economics of Business has branched forth more recently from the science of Economics, especially from Industrial Economics, Commerce, Finance, and other branches. So Business is, like Agriculture, a *composite* of branches, the most general and the most important of which are for the larger part of their subject-matter subordinate to the science of Economics. But neither Economics nor its major branches should illogically be subordinated to Business. There is a Social Economics that justifies regarding

Economics as a social science broader than Business. There is a social psychology underlying wants, exchange of products, and advertising. Industry, too, is a broader interest than business, for there may be industries without purpose of profit, which distinguishes business. Exchange also is a broader economic concept, and so are the subjects Commerce, Transportation, Finance, and Insurance. As well might the whole of Technology be subordinated to Business.

A library serving the comprehensive study of Business may have many books on those broader subjects. Should it put them all under Business? Or rather should it not place Business central in its related studies, those on the one hand that are subordinate to it and on the other hand those to which it is itself subordinate? The composite study of Business derives mainly from the social science of Economics and the Industrial Arts and their technologies. If it reaches into Psychology and Sociology, Geography and Commerce, Ethics and Law, special branches of the Psychology of Business, the Ethics of, the Law of Business, etc., may be subordinated to it, but not the whole of Psychology, Ethics, and Law. Again, as for Agriculture, the special branches have the dual relation of cross-classification, and the three alternatives: subject-matters of economic branches of especial interest to studies of business may be placed either under Business, or under the branches of Economics, or partly under the one and partly under the other. In a special library for studies of Business they may be placed mostly under Business, as a main coordinate with other branches of Economics and of the Social Sciences. A special library that intends this but indicates otherwise should make that purpose explicit in the schedules and particularly in the synopsis.

Medical Science is logically a branch of Anthropology, the science of human-

ity, which indeed is central in the system of the sciences, viewed from the human, or humanistic, point of view. Human Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene are closely related to zoölogical anatomy and physiology. *Materia Medica* and Pharmacy reach into Botany and Chemistry. These are more general sciences. On the other hand, Medical Practice, Preventive Medicine, and Hygiene extend into Physical Training, Recreation, Psychology, Education, and Sociology. This broad view informs Dr. Carrel's "humanized" book, *Man the Unknown*. Anthropology comprises a general survey of all of the humanities from Anatomy, through Ethnology, Sociology, Religion, Ethics, Law, Political Science, Economics, to the Arts, languages and literatures. A "medical" library would of course have few books in the cultural humanities, and few books in the more general physical sciences. Its notation could accordingly be apportioned mainly to its central main classes, Physical Anthropology, Medical Sciences, Hygiene, Sanitation, Recreation, etc., and it would therefore be the briefer and more economical. More comprehensive, such a special classification would, however, be *consistent* with the general system of the sciences. It would place the librarian and the reader at the center of the extensive resources and most requisite subject-matters. Moreover, this comprehensiveness and consistency would foster broad-minded specialization as distinct from the narrow-minded specialization so often deprecated by clear thinkers and educators.

In special details the same principles apply, though perhaps less manifestly. If the special classifications fail to collocate their details in self-consistency, they will prove the less efficient in use. Space does not here permit examination into this questioned efficiency. Many separations, duplications, and confusions would probably appear in the elaborated

schedules, careful and competent though the compilation may indeed be. The lack of consistency with the principles of classification and the system of science would be to blame for such lack of efficiency and organization.

#### IV

Special libraries need especially elaborated detail, well indexed to serve reference uses; and for research they need that detail organized consistently with the order of the sciences as well as self-consistently with their own fields. Alphabetic indexing and cataloging do not suffice, though they are requisite to complement classification. Alphabetic order disperses subject-matter illogically. In alphabetic subject-catalogs the various terminology becomes contrarious.

A small specialized library with comparatively few books may have, however, many thousands of pamphlets, clippings, etc. If the reference is very specific and precise, the index and catalog may answer. But if rather indefinite, those answers become mere guesswork. A more comprehensive grasp of the subject-matter becomes necessary to produce results. Here *collocation* depending on *subordination* of special subject-matter to general subjects comes into its own in service. These services become the more requisite the larger the collections and the more extensive their scope. But the more specialized the library, the more detailed its classification should probably be, within its field, provided the details are *consistently organized*. For this a systematic classification should be available for each field; and it may, if typical, be standardized for the field. If none be already available, a special classification should be devised and compiled for the purpose. Much of the detail may be compiled from already existent classifications general and special. These details may be reorganized consistently. This means

consistent with the principles of classification, consistent with the general system of knowledge, and self-consistent.

There may be, or should be, standardized classifications, special and general, national and even international, though not "universal." The special, or individual classification may be consistent with any valid standard. This implies adaptation by selection of subjects, by omissions, and by reapportionment of notation. Where reconstruction becomes requisite and economical, the notation may be so apportioned as to have the requisite capacity with the desired brevity. Notation, we should remember, is merely the correlate of classification so reapportionment for brevity would not negate the consistency of the special or individual system with the standard classification.

Efficiency in use is more important than the false economy of classifying with the ready-made class-marks of a

classification that is unfit. But such a classification need not be *adopted* in order to avail of its subject-terms and class-marks. These may serve as a means to indicate the subjects and classes of the individual library, so that they may be located in its own classification. Even where a classification is adopted, it needs to be modified, altered, and elaborated for the special requirements. Specialist librarians should be trained for this professional competence, whether to adapt a classification or to construct one. To prepare a consistent and efficient system or to develop and elaborate one previously installed in the library or standardized for the field may be regarded as one of the most requisite and most valued of the professional services, for which the librarianship would be the more respected by the constituency. Moreover, the intellectual values of such synthesis are indeed considerable.

## The Move Toward Research in the Newspaper Library

*By Agnes J. Petersen, Librarian*

The Milwaukee Journal

**T**HERE were eight newspaper librarians at the first conference of the Newspaper Group that I attended, fourteen years ago. We talked all day long, food was just incidental, and at midnight we were still discussing the classification of cuts, clippings and photographs.

The years since that memorable meeting have seen the clippings, cuts and photographs so well classified and manned that it is no longer a surprise for a reporter to get his requested clippings in less than three minutes' time. With the clipping files functioning about 100 per cent, the librarians turned their attention to the next big step in their work, and the scene shifted from clippings to books.

During the past few years, I have received requests for lists of reference books suitable for newspaper libraries. Sometimes the requests came from librarians who had a few hundred dollars to spend for reference books, or again from a managing editor who visioned the service that a thousand dollars wisely invested in books would give his staff. What an incentive for research, when there are splendid books available to aid the reporter with his story!

Watching the wide field of service given in a newspaper library, together with the collection of good books for research, one becomes aware that a change has taken place in the functions of the newspaper libraries of today. Still it is

handing out clippings, cuts and photographs, but there has grown a demand for greater research on the part of our feature writers. The writer no longer uses just one or two books on a given subject, but also requires the elusive material found only through research. He wants human interest material, a bit of quotation, or an allusion to another author's character for comparison. Here is your story built from the best material available. Fine writing and the feature story are on friendly speaking terms.

The feature writer may have a few days in which to write her story, but not time enough to gather many of the facts wanted for the story. Thus the newspaper librarian begins gathering this material from many sources for her. Sometimes the librarian visions the story and gathers the material accordingly. Sometimes I can feel the story unfold as I gather the material, and I feel the type of illustrations that may be needed to vitalize the story for the reader. There is this advantage, you know the writers, the type of material they like and can use, and the type of illustration that is wanted.

Thus when I was given permission to reclassify and catalog our books and pamphlets, it really was the natural result of the work we were doing. Our books had been classified and cataloged years ago, by inexperienced workers. While weeding out unused books, I checked and corrected the classifications. Since fashions change in books as well as in other things, many books still valuable to the reading public but of no immediate value to us were sent on to the Public Library.

With the aid of a special assistant, all of our books were reclassified and cataloged. Library of Congress cards were purchased whenever possible. During this period of cataloging, the demands for special research material grew daily. Sometimes I would check material for three or four feature stories at the same

time. It was interesting to watch some of our news reporters dig into this type of writing. The research service, however, is not restricted to feature and editorial writers; we aid the promotion department, radio, advertising — in fact all departments of the *Journal*. New books or pamphlets of interest to any of the men or women connected with these departments are routed to them. Excellent material found in government reports is sent for and forwarded to the department able to use it. Magazines containing special articles of interest to a writer are sent on to him; he may not read the article then, but just note it, and later call for it for use editorially. That is done frequently by our editorial writers.

Years ago we filed many clippings from other newspapers. We still do some, but I found that if I held up the filing of these clippings for a few days, perhaps the exchange editor would send along six clippings of the same story or speech. If I waited, I had the best clipping to file, discarding all the others. Again a clipping held temporarily for news value would be covered later in the bound files of the *New York Times*. This was true particularly of national and foreign affairs.

We followed practically the same principle in regard to clipping magazine articles. We kept dated and filed the best articles we could find on a given subject.

I doubt if today many librarians are still clipping and filing magazine articles. With the splendid aids and indices that we have today, we can readily find the magazine articles best suited to our purpose. No doubt many libraries contain fine collections of magazines for research. Our magazines are in constant use.

Sometimes a news feature needs a caricature to best illustrate the story, and if the photo file cannot produce a good one, the librarian turns to other sources for it. About a year ago, as the demands for good caricatures of persons were

heavy, I started an index on 3 x 5 cards of the best caricatures appearing in current magazines.

So many excellent portraits and illustrations are lost, hidden away in books with no general index to them, that I hope to find time to index the best ones. Sometimes I am amazed at the good portrait of a man tucked between the covers of a book that was as far removed from the subject matter of the book as the stars are from the earth. Histories of Milwaukee and Wisconsin, rich in old engravings and illustrations, are con-

stantly checked and searched for special illustrations. Some day I am planning to index the old engravings, portraits and illustrations in Milwaukee and Wisconsin histories.

#### Exhibits for the 1938 Convention

AT THE National convention in Pittsburgh arrangements are being made for a limited number of exhibits. Anyone interested in securing space should communicate with Miss Kornhauser, % Mellon Institute, Pittsburgh, not later than April 1.

## A Message from a Traveler!

FELLOW MEMBERS: Since my last message to you via SPECIAL LIBRARIES I have experienced some enjoyable evenings. I have had practical proof of something that I have always assumed — that S.L.A. members everywhere are "reg'lar fellers." It has been my pleasure during the last several months to visit our chapters in Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, Newark, Baltimore, and Boston. Instead of trying to offer a talk dealing with the individual chapter's problems, I felt it more desirable to devote my efforts to an explanation of the national association, and how it is related to each chapter. As a basis for my remarks along that line, I made use of the very excellent survey of chapter activities presented by Mrs. Fertig last June.

I was agreeably surprised to learn that this type of discourse was welcomed in each case. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that such an explanation was needed, as the tendency in many chapters was to lose sight of the fact that the chapter is an active and very necessary part of the national association's activity. In several cases I have been told of a re-creation of spirit in the chapter following my call. In one case a chapter president was kind enough to write:

"You made us feel that the national officers are

not such remote individuals as one often assumes them to be, and have helped to break down the isolated feeling," etc.

Another president wrote:

"Several members have said it would enliven the work and spirit of the chapter a great deal, if the national organization could be so represented at a meeting each year."

I could quote from other such kind remarks, but refrain from doing so to avoid creating an impression of conceit.

I can quite understand the tendency for a chapter to think that the national association is a remote body, and interested only in dunning members for dues, etc. I have even heard of chapter members *complaining* because some national officer or committee chairman assigns some association work to them. But bear in mind, fellow-members, that we are all part of a large country-wide organization of special librarians, and the chapter unit is our most efficient method of administering the affairs of the association as a whole. In other words, as I have said before, the national association may be considered a federation of chapters.

Yes, the national officers *ought* to meet with all chapters periodically. I have been extremely fortunate in being permitted — without expense to S.L.A. — to visit nine

chapters since my election to the presidency — having visited Albany, Connecticut, and New York chapters earlier in the year. My greatest regret is that I cannot drop in at all of the sixteen before my term expires. But this is a large country, and traveling costs do mount! My fervent wish would be for S.L.A. to be so situated financially as to permit its officers to visit each chapter every year, just to keep up that all-important liaison between the national body and the chapter.

Of course, I expect to visit Pittsburgh Chapter in June, along with many of my fellow members. And, by the way, I hope that a large number of our members are putting aside a little every month towards our Convention there. This is our first visit to Pittsburgh; our Chapter there is working hard to put on a fine program, while Pittsburgh and its environs have much of interest for all.

But, back to the subject of visits — it is with deep regret that I'll not be able to visit Montreal, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Southern California, and San Francisco Chapters. To them I say in all sincerity, I wish I could meet with you and

convey to you in person the greetings and well wishes of the Executive Board. I hope you will carry on the fine work you are doing in the interests of the profession. Nevertheless, with the exception of the two California chapters, you have been called upon by President Stebbins, and I trust that the goodwill he extended to you will carry over until my successor has an opportunity to drop in on you.

To our California chapters, I feel most humble. It is very seldom that you see one of us of the Executive Board. You seem to be more fortunate than we in the East, in being able to send some of *your* members to visit *us*. You deserve every commendation for your fine spirit, and I admire your aggressiveness. Often have I called the attention of our other chapters to the many interesting activities you have carried on — despite your infrequent contact with the Executive Board.

And now, may I say to all who have made my visits so enjoyable: Thank you from the bottom of my heart! I repeat what I said earlier in this message: "Special librarians are reg'lar fellers!"

WILLIAM F. JACOB, *President*.

## Letters to the Editor

### More Definitions!

THE misconception, obvious to those who know the circumstances, which caused Mr. Coney to see "propaganda" in the submitted Definition, confirms my opinion that our best efforts will continue to befog first one mind and then another until we begin by admitting that there are two sides to the shield of a "special" library. While inclusion in the same Association is of mutual advantage, a definition stretched to completely cover both types may be neither feasible or desirable. Roughly, then:

#### SPECIAL LIBRARY

(1) *A library service to the members or employees of an organization, located on its premises, financed by the purse which pays the persons served. Its chief asset is the activity of its librarian in getting, deducing from, foreseeing the need of, information of any kind from any source*

(printed, written, spoken); in making résumés, digests, abstracts, etc.; and in presenting this information in usable form, frequently as memoranda, both on request and equally on the librarian's own initiative. To a great extent this activity combines those normally divided between librarian and reader. The objective of this service is to get information applied to the organization's needs most expeditiously and economically. The repetition of mental processes is avoided; much source material is not handled by the persons served, the librarian assuming responsibility for the correctness of information taken from it. Its book collection may be negligible in size. Its methods and techniques are based on, but frequently add to or depart from, those of a general library. "Specialization" has two faces: (1) knowledge of the activities of the organization; (2) training in locating and tapping sources and in special techniques. The term "special library"

was coined, for lack of a better, to differentiate this from the usual library type. Examples: Library of a firm of consulting engineers; Library of a city board of engineers.

(2) *A Library of literature on a specific subject*, not financed (in any controlling sense) by the entire (or larger part) of its users, not housed in premises owned by the same, administered by a librarian qualified as in the usual connotation of that term, to which is added familiarity with its subject matter. Its chief asset is the collection. This the librarian gathers and makes available to the users, at which point his responsibility ceases. It is practically never required of him to abstract and digest, — rather the contrary; except that in the special department of a university library, where desire and circumstance permit, he may assume this function for the faculty only. The objective of this service is to provide material from which the reader helps himself and makes his own deductions and applications. Its methods and techniques correspond to those of a general library. "Specialization" consists in knowledge of the subject. Examples: Engineering department of a university library; Technical department of a public library.

A slight overlapping of the two types in their characteristics as described above sometimes occurs. The examples given are chosen to show this variation graded thus to show increasing dissimilarity:

Library of a firm of consulting engineers  
Library of a city board of engineers  
Engineering department of a university library  
Technical department of a public library.

MARIE LOUISE PREVOST,  
*Catalog Dept., Newark Public Library.*

#### A Library Contest

A \$100.00 nation-wide "LIBRARIES LOOK AHEAD" CONTEST is being sponsored by the Junior Members and the "Bulletin" of the American Library Association.

The contest, open to everyone, seeks articles on libraries and library service for the future, suggesting changes that may be beneficial, or significant changes that have taken place, and emphasizing the library's place in the social world of the not-far-distant future.

Besides the cash award of \$100.00, the first prize includes publication in the "American Library Association Bulletin" and "New Republic." The sponsors, however, reserve the right to withhold the cash prize in the event no manuscript merits publication.

Judges include Mrs. Beatrice Sawyer Rossell, editor of *American Library Association Bulletin*; Bruce Bliven, editor of *New Republic*; and Gerald McDonald, chairman of the Junior Members Round Table, American Library Association.

Manuscripts should be between 1000 and 1500 words in length, and must be mailed by April 1, 1938 to "LIBRARIES LOOK AHEAD" CONTEST, Marie D. Loizeaux, chairman, Public Library, New Rochelle, New York.

We are hoping for a wide response from all directions, and from people of all sorts of professions. Of course, probably librarians will send most of the entries, but we hope that some of the bigger "names" in the library world will put their suggestions down, as well as the younger assistants.

MARIE D. LOIZEAUX, *Chairman,*  
*A.L.A. Contest Committee.*

## Publications of Special Interest

Arnold, T. W. *Folklore of capitalism.* Yale Univ. Press, New Haven. 1937. 400 p. \$3.00.

A discerning study of contemporary ideology, particularly in relation to the activities of the government or private corporations. The places of emotion and logic in a changing point of view are brought out and their effects on such questions as taxation are treated in an illuminating and enlivening way. The author has the audacity and wit of Veblen, but is fortunately free from that author's tortuous verbosity.

Baker, E. F. *Henry Wheaton, 1785-1848.* Univ. of Penn. Press, Philadelphia. 1937. 425 p. \$4.00.

A picture of the career of a great lawyer and an authority on international law in the early nineteenth century. Gives much data on diplomatic negotiations with Denmark and Germany and includes many references on the development of international law.

Beales, Carleton. *America south.* Lippincott, Philadelphia. 1937. 559 p. \$3.50.

Not a statistical description country by country, but rather a broad painting of the influences on South America as a whole from the basic factor of the country itself, on through the racial intermixtures and the resources that have been exploited. The parts international politics, the church, and education have played, and comment on the outstanding literature produced from the environment, with notes on other important works about it, are included in this picture of vigorous lines and distinctive quality. The account of the student influence is particularly good.

Brown, L. O. *Market research and analysis.* Ronald Press, N. Y. 1937. 487 p. \$4.00.

A most satisfactory treatment describing different types of investigation, the sources of data, methods of tabulation, analysis and interpretation and giving excellent supplementary references. The style is clear and excellent and many illustrations of forms and charts are included. Is free from padding and avoids superficial methods.



**Buehler, E. C. *Unicameral legislation.* Noble & Noble, N. Y. 1937. 331 p. \$2.00.**

The affirmative and negative side in a consideration of one-house legislation given with long extracts from pertinent articles and a bibliography with careful annotations.

**Forman, S. E. *Good word for democracy.* Appleton-Century, N. Y. 1937. 136 p. \$1.50.**

A direct and stimulating effort to show the possibilities for constructive action and for testing leadership so as to share in the creative support of a fundamental democracy. Pertinent and practical in its discussion. Not indexed.

***Handbook of Latin American studies.* Compiled by a number of scholars. Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge. 1936. 250 p. \$3.00.**

This is an authoritative guide to material published in 1936 on anthropology, art, economics, and other phases of international interest. Well annotated on occasion and beautifully compiled.

**Hewitt, E. L. and Baudelier, Adolph. *Indians of the Rio Grande Valley.* Univ. of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. 1937. 274 p. \$3.50.**

The impressive story of the arts and civilization of the southwest Indian given by two noteworthy archaeologists. Well illustrated, giving many references to other sources and studies and including with this reissuance of his work several appreciations of the great leader of research in this field, Adolph Baudelier.

**Klein, Philip, and collaborators. *Social study of Pittsburgh.* Columbia Univ. Press, N. Y. 1938. 958 p. \$4.75.**

An analysis of the community problems and social services of one area that in its comprehensive consideration becomes a handbook to such problems everywhere. The treatment is distinguished for its sound common sense and appreciation of the strength of such factors as prejudice and conservatism, as well as the true spirit of liberal social service. Its analysis of all types of community service makes it invaluable in any study of such problems. While its study of Pittsburgh conditions gives a special local interest, the conditions it discusses and the recommendations it makes are pertinent to any community. Well documented and indexed.

**Laidler, H. W. *American socialism: its aims and practical program.* Harper, N. Y. 1937. 330 p. \$2.50.**

A popularized version of *Socializing Our Democracy*, which gives a fair objective picture of socialistic developments in other countries and their relation to ours, and shows how in many ways socialistic practices are already accepted in many lines of activity. Bibliography included. Comprehensively documented.

**Metcalf, H. E., ed. *Collective bargaining for today and tomorrow.* Harper, N. Y. 1937. 182 p. \$2.25.**

Reports of the talks by experts in labor relations at a conference of business executives. Includes many illuminating examples, a number of definitions, and a selected bibliography as well as a detailed consideration of joint research in labor adjustments. Not indexed.

**Mitchill, Joseph. *My ears are bent.* Sheridan House, N. Y. 1938. 284 p. \$2.50.**

Pungent, colorful sketches of such odds and ends of New York life as how burlesque shows are handled, the rates for lots in a dog cemetery, Saturday night on the night boat to Albany, and including a snappy account of the life of a reporter.

**Stockbridge, F. P. and Perry, J. H. *So this is Florida.* McBride, N. Y. 1938. 318 p. \$2.50.**

An excellent book on the general resources and industries of Florida, definitely optimistic but full of interesting information on the state as a place to stay as well as to visit. Easy to read, comprehensive and factual. Much entertaining gossip on promoters of Florida found elsewhere is omitted here. Includes a description of leading fresh and saltwater fish. Well illustrated but not too well indexed.

**Stonequist, E. V. *Marginal man.* Scribner, N. Y. 1937. 228 p. \$1.60.**

A study of the racial and cultural problems of the marginal man taking among others as examples of the social hybrids, the Eurasian and the mulattoes of the United States, and of the cultural hybrids, the Jew, the westernized Oriental and others. The many problems involved in living, vocational, and educational adjustments are brought out in selections from many writers. No specific conclusions can be reached.

**Tead, Ordway. *The case for democracy and its meaning for modern life.* Association Press, N. Y. 1938. 120 p. \$1.25.**

A clear, pertinent discussion of the part to be played in modern life by the Christian believer in democracy, showing the necessity for a flexible response to changing conditions and a clear vision in grasping these changes. Includes a fine annotated bibliography of several hundred titles grouped by phases of this subject with symbols for popular, technical or advanced material.

**Thompson, R. W. *Land of tomorrow.* Appleton-Century, N. Y. 1937. 455 p. \$4.00.**

A narrative of a visit to South America dwelling principally on Paraguay, Bolivia and the War Zone of the Gran Chaco — easy and colorful in style, sympathetic in interpretation. Includes many photographs and much local color. Altogether a satisfying and stimulating book.

**Waples, Douglas. *People and print.* Univ. of Chicago Press. 1937. 228 p. \$1.50.**

Once more a subject that would appear to have possibilities for interest and value is taken and ponderously treated. Suggests questions for study and includes countless tables, many of them of possible though not certain value in public library planning. The effort to be objective and scientific is successful in eliminating any color but has no apparent advantage in drawing conclusions.

**Wells, Carveth. *Panamexico.* McBride, N. Y. 1937. 343 p. \$2.75.**

A trailer trip from Mexico City to the United States is introduced by some high-spot history of the Spanish settlement of Caribbean shores, a visit to the Canal Zone, an ascent of Popocatepetl with incidental mention of a bull fight and other local color. Some practical instructions for motorists included. Gay and enticing. Not indexed.