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Special Libraries

Vol. 7

OCTOBER, 1916

No. 8

The Work of the Detroit Edison Company's Library*

By Miss Maude A. Carabin, Librarian, Detroit Edison Co.

The Business Library—Its Scope and Purpose

The growth and expansion of any business is intricately bound up with the quality of study given its problems and its possibilities; and whether this study be directed by a formally organized research department or accomplished through individual endeavor, or both, it is obviously imperative that research be given the support of intelligent, efficient assistance from the library department. The business library should be primarily a bureau of and for active, dynamic research conducted along practical and scholarly lines. It should constitute a constructive department in which is lodged a thorough comprehension of the status, scope and policy of the business which it serves and the capacity to broadly sense the trend of future developments.

The ideas which contribute to the growth of any industry may originate at the top of the industry, that is, with those individuals who direct its several departments, and may then ramify down through the organization; or they may originate at the bottom and grow up through the industry. A vigorous growth in both directions, is, of course, the desideratum. The former type of idea is of a more definitely formulated character, and springs from the bolder convictions of authorized research. The originators of these ideas are amply capable of initiating and discovering methods for substantiating their soundness before proceeding to the practical application of them. The directors of these studies map out their plan of attack, establish definitely the points to be fortified, and marshal their facts to these ends. When they come to the library they want certain definite data, and do not want their plan to be befogged and beset with the annoying difficulties of working through quantities of irrelevant material.

This class of idea requires much less in the way of external impetus than does the second type which is by no means of secondary import. This second class includes the

idea that proceeds oftentimes, inelegantly speaking, from a vague "hunch." The man who operates in a more limited field, but who comes in intimate contact with the "works" is the author of this second type. He is less familiar with the instruments of research; he is less able to discover and weigh the existent evidence to prove or justify the soundness of his idea; doubtful of its value, he is many times reluctant to discuss its feasibility with those in his immediate department who might be competent to censor its soundness. At this psychological stage, if an agent can step in, who is not antagonistic to his self-interest and his departmental standing, and diplomatically throw him a hint which will enable him to crystallize his "hunch" and organize and give direction to his originality, a constructive, leavening force has been set in operation, the significance of which, when extended universally throughout the organization, cannot be overestimated. The library executive has limitless opportunities to achieve much in this direction.

Any member of a business organization should rightly expect to consult his library with the consciousness that all preliminary explanation, incident to a search at a library not his own, can be waived, and that he may proceed at once to his investigation with the conviction that it has been somewhat anticipated, and that the existent, adaptable data have been weighed, their availability measured, and that as a result of judicious culling he will be spared the annoyance of working through an irrelevant, worthless mass of material. A judicious librarian quickly senses the objective of the investigator and avoids bewildering and clouding the possibilities of its attainment by references to indiscriminate, ill-chosen data. He does not overwhelm at its inception an idea which may prove to be far-reaching, although perhaps vaguely conceived, and

*Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Special Libraries Association, Asbury Park, June 30, 1916.

cause it to be abandoned through lack of accurate data or a surplus which is non-relative.

The practice of cautiously husbanding and nurturing timid ideas may seem to lack virility, and it may be argued that ideas that are well grounded will, of their own inertia, take shape and demonstrate their practicability regardless of whether contemporaneous opinion supports them or not. And this is true, in great measure, if one is willing to let them come to fruition when they will; if one is content to wait for them to develop by natural growth and without forcing. But the history of the evolution of improved industrial methods tends to prove that originality of ideas must be given intense cultivation, if you would be in the van of the procession of achievement. The spirit in industry today tends to confirm the principle that if it would get into the market first, it must get a hot-house start.

The Director of the Business Library

It is essential that the director of a specialized library be, not alone, endowed with a native predilection and mental fitness for the practical survey of the technical and commercial phases of industry, but also possessed of the capacity for maintaining a breadth of vision and interest equal in scope to that of the broadest department of the business. He should know minutely and intimately the business which he represents. He should be able to take an appreciative cognizance of the progress of the world's industries so largely reflected in the current periodicals, trade publications, and the deliberations of the various learned societies, and by judicious dissemination to proper departments and individuals, build into the tissues of the organization that which is capable of assimilation. To use a chemical expression, the librarian should function somewhat as a "catalytic agent," or as an "introducer." As a gleaner and distributor he should be as assiduous as the technical journalist who scours the world to be able to give new discoveries and developments to his patrons promptly. It follows that the librarian should have a highly developed taste for technical study. In the average business unit the librarian is the one person who has the opportunity to read and study. Those who are engaged in the administration of a business find scant opportunity for examining the publications of the day. The librarian is strategically situated to function, in Napoleonic parlance, as "the eyes of the army." To state it in an exaggerated way, he should sweep the field of progress for precedents, indexes, guides, and dangers, that he may relay to the business man inaugurating and recommending innovations in business which involve great investments of capital, the confidence and power born of a thorough knowledge of the situation.

The earlier concept of a library was that

it should serve as a repository for books, pamphlets, etc., which should be properly classified, indexed and kept in storage until patrons should come and solicit them. The reference department, specially equipped to assist its patrons in the study of particular questions, was a later development. The need for enlarging this latter activity and for developing specialized facilities, especially adapted to a particular business, is the *raison d'être* of the business library. The tendency in the business library, as well as the general library, is inclining more and more to the realization of its duty and its responsibility to act as a positive, informing agent. The modern busy man of affairs is not apt to know that embodied in a few obscurely placed paragraphs there resides an enunciation of a new, well-supported principle or a solution of a problem which has occasioned him much speculative thought, and even difficulty. It is patently the part of the librarian to discover and to be alert for just such buried data and reveal them to those departments or individuals interested. The members of a business organization, possessed of a special library, and particularly the departmental directors, should feel assured that, as a result of the activities of their library, no new principle or item of importance will be allowed to escape their notice.

Too many business libraries become isolated, to a certain degree, in their relation to the industry which created them, and degenerate into what might be termed an industrial barnacle. This condition frequently traces its beginning to the vitiating attitude reflected by a remark often expressed, "I am a librarian, not an accountant, nor an engineer." *The business library must represent an economy, not a luxury or a toy.* In this era inefficiency is quite as abhorrent as the proverbial vacuum in nature, and if any factor does not work for efficiency and economy of operation, it should be and is relentlessly scrapped. And so a business librarian cannot adhere strictly to the hard and fast practices of a purely professional librarian. He must dissolve the barriers which have been built around the profession and get on informal speaking terms with business. His interests, while specialized, are nevertheless highly differentiated, and versatility in appreciating the interest of each group of the business is a pronounced asset. Just what measures will enable the librarian to keep informed of the scope and progress of the business of his company is a matter which may well command more attention from business managements. In some cases the practice of a library council, in which members of representative departments meet with the librarian for mutual advisory purposes, has been adopted. Some few firms provide a seat on the controlling board for the librarian. It would be interesting to hear this phase of the question discussed at greater length.

Library of the Detroit Edison Company the foregoing discussion of some of the reasons which should characterize the business library I have outlined in a general way what the Detroit Edison Company's policy is and aims to be. The use of electricity touches all industry and in a city diversified manufactures, as Detroit, it is especially important that the company generate and sell this power should be keenly alive and even anticipate the needs and developments in the industries in which it is used or might be expected to use this power. The acquisitions of the library and the 130 technical journals are largely based on that which is of immediate interest to the company or the industries which it serves.

An organization of the character of the Detroit Edison Company, in which the nature of the business precludes centralization of location, and where you find important centers of activity located in several different parts of the city, a unique problem presents itself, a problem which is found in cases where the centers of activity are concentrated in one building. To be most effective, the librarian must be an efficient and rapid means of acquainting himself with the problems and investigations peculiar to the various stations or plants. Each station or center is, in a sense, a branch library, which contains certain records, equipment data, test reports, blueprints, trade catalogs, etc., which are of peculiar value to that station, but which are of almost equal importance and interest to the general library and its patrons, the other stations. The general library should be organized as to learn of the existence of this different material and classify it so as to incorporate it into the permanent reference files. Every one is familiar with the enormous waste of time and effort, and, frequently, with the fruitlessness of search for some comparatively simple bit of information, and how one is referred here and forth from one individual or department to another, each confident that the other can furnish the desired information. Experiences of this character have gradually forced upon us the realization of the true need of a central reference department, specially organized to conserve and lay down data in an economical, skilled manner, with a minimum expenditure of time and energy. The accomplishment of this could be effected by the establishment of a central bureau, preferably the library, organized to acquaint itself with all material which is to be preserved permanently in the files of any department. All material should be classified for filing by this central department and such data, reports and records are of peculiar interest to a particular department would be returned to that department as a permanent charge. This should bring about a uniform filing system, and not involve the inconveniences of a

central filing location, and would make the library records the logical and direct source of information regarding the existence and disposition of all material. In the Detroit Edison Company we have the beginnings of such a system. The library is a blood relation of the research department, the latter bearing such relation to the organization as to know of or receive reports of practically all matters of importance that are under investigation. The librarian is the custodian of these reports as well as a great bulk of that material which constitutes the operating files of the power plants and the central heating plants. The librarian receives and directs the disposition of all correspondence, specifications, drawings of apparatus, engineering reports, etc., growing out of the operation of these plants. Construction drawings and specifications are filed elsewhere. This affords a natural and direct means of knowing a great portion of the current business of the company. The data thus collected are filed according to a special subject filing system which has been worked out to meet the particular needs of the company.

The Filing System

The filing system was evolved with the idea of making it direct in its arrangement and construction, and thereby make it possible and easy for persons to use it without a special study of the general scheme and with the further idea of "safety first" for all material filed. No number or color scheme has been employed and the system is capable of indefinite expansion. It is designed to accommodate only such material as does not lend itself to the general library shelves, such as blue prints, reports of tests, data on the equipment and apparatus of plants. This material is filed in vertical steel filing cabinets.

The material filed readily falls into two classes: that which is assimilated through correspondence, and this constitutes the largest mass; and, secondly, that which comes in the shape of reports of investigations, routine tests, original papers, codes, patent specifications of various devices, tables of constants, statistical curves, and, occasionally, clippings. I mention the latter in an undertone, for I seriously disfavor the practice of clipping as being faulty economy. If you count the energy and cost and annoyance necessary to put them into fit condition for filing, indicating their source and date, and classifying them for filing, and counterbalance the method of treatment which entails only the assignment of a subject to the article, the typing of a subject card to be placed in the library catalog, and affording shelving space for the journal, the latter method recommends itself as superior in compactness, orderliness and general satisfaction. To be sure, the shelves will ultimately become overcrowded, but the time soon comes when by reason of its age much of this material loses all but its his-

torical value and it can be disposed of by gift to the public libraries, where desirable, and yet be available. To clip an article from its setting is to practically devalue it, and invariably, if a clipping appeals to a patron, he will ask, "Can you get me the journal from which this was taken?" Furthermore, the existence of the article is insured permanence in the library catalog, even though the journal containing the article is destroyed, for it is nearly always possible to secure copies or reproductions from the larger public and technical libraries. On the other hand, if the clipped article is inadvertently destroyed or misfiled, its identity is lost, as well as the labor which has gone to making it "filable."

Let us consider the disposition of the first class of material, viz.: the correspondence. As previously stated, this comprises the larger and more complex group, as nearly every transaction involves some correspondence. Two duplicate copies are made of each letter written by members of the departments above mentioned, namely, the research, power plant and central heating divisions. The first copy is filed wherever its content logically demands,—as boilers, pumps, etc. The second copy (a thin sheet is used) is filed alphabetically according to the addressee in what is known as the correspondence section, which is a part of the general file, one section being assigned to the chief of each department; this copy bears a notation which indicates where the main copy has been filed. As the correspondence, drawings, specifications, etc., relative to any transaction accumulate, they are kept in one group and comprise the entire history of the transaction.

The second class of material—that is, reports, curves, etc.—are filed according to the subject of which they treat, and are cross-indexed according to author to a card index file.

The physical mechanism of the filing scheme which has been adopted may be of interest. The file outline, alphabetical in arrangement, is a typed document and has been developed so that each main subject entry is capable of secondary subdivisions, which in turn are capable of tertiary subdivisions, and these again may be subdivided into fourth divisions. The filing equipment is so arranged in the filing cabinets as to show at a glance how the subject has been subdivided. This effect is secured by employing so-called fourth cut filing supplies, using a first position guide for the main entry and second, third and fourth position folders to correspond to the three subdivisions. This filing material is all made up with visible tab guides. Each piece of material, when ready for filing, carries accurate instructions designating where it is to be filed. It is stamped with a rubber stamp which bears four lines to correspond to the four subdivisions. The filing attendant ascertains the section of the file to which

a particular piece of material has been assigned, from the caption on the first line; similarly, the second line caption corresponds to the first subdivision. The last caption designated indicates the folder in which the material is to be filed.

It is impossible, in this paper, to reproduce in its entirety the outline, which is of course the core of the system. But I will cite one section which is typical and will serve as an illustration:

BOILERS

- Baffling
 - (See Settings)
- Circulation in
- Codes
- Description
 - Babcock & Wilcox
 - Badenhausen
 - Milne Water Tube
 - Sterling
 - Yarrow
- Design
 - Theory
- Draft
 - (See also *Draft*)
 - Smoke Uptakes
 - Drawings
 - Price Quotations
 - Specifications
- Drawings
- Drums
 - Measurement
- Efficiency
- Feed Pumps
 - (See *Pumps—Boiler Feed*)
- Heat Transfer
 - (See also *Heat Transfer* for treatment in general. Class here only specific treatment of heat transfer in boilers.)
- Horse Power
 - Statistics
- Inspection
 - (See *Inspection, Boiler*)
- Metal
 - (Implying metal used for construction of boilers)
 - (See also *Boilers, Tubes, and Boilers, Drums*)
 - Research
- Operation
 - Cost
- Scale
- Settings
 - (Includes *Cleaners, Baffling, etc.*)
 - Baffling
 - Engineering
 - Research
 - Specifications
 - Bridge Walls
 - Engineering
 - Construction
 - Description

Drawings
 Engineering
 Soot Cleaners
 Drawings
 Specifications

Tests
 Babcock & Wilcox
 Edgemoor Water Tube
 Sterling

Tubes
 Research

BOILERS—DELRAY

(Subdivide similar to Boilers)

CORRESPONDENCE

(This group will be used for copies of all letters written by the department and for such letters received as do not permit of classification with other transactions. Theoretically every letter written belongs to this group, and affords a key to a great part of the material in the file.)

Central Heating Department

A
 B
 C
 Etc.

Research Department

A
 B
 C
 Etc.

POWER PLANTS—DELRAY

Ash

Analysis
 (See *Ash, Analysis—Delray*)

Ash Handling

(See *Ash Handling—Delray*)

Blowers, Compressors, Fans

(See *Air-Machinery, Blowers—Delray*)

Boilers

(See *Boilers—Delray*)

Coal

Analysis
 (See *Coal, Analysis—Delray*)

Coal Handling

(See *Coal Handling—Delray*)

Condensers

(See *Condensers—Delray*, also *Piping—Delray, Condenser Piping*)

Construction

Cost

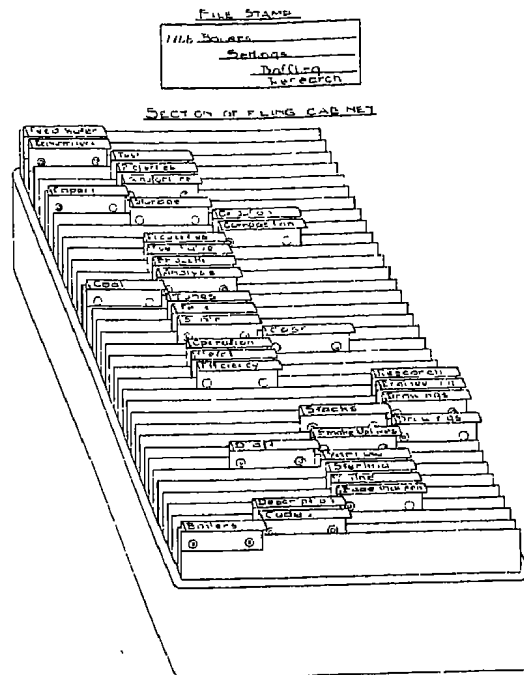
Description

House Service

Electrical
 Heating System
 Refrigeration

Operating Costs

Operating Records



Operation

Output

Load Curves
 Maximum Load
 Turbine

Pumps

(See *Pumps—Delray*)

Switchboards

In theory, all material pertaining to one plant or substation is grouped in one section of the file, with the name of the plant as the subject guide. Such subjects within this group as represent a large quantity of material and warrant a main subject entry are transferred out of the group and made a main division in the file.

Nomenclature

In order to insure consistency of development throughout the filing system, it is necessary to adhere strictly to the nomenclature adopted and to the meaning agreed upon. The following general sub-heads are among those used in subdividing subjects:

Analysis—The determination of what a given substance contains.

Apparatus—Equipment for performing an operation or obtaining a certain result; mechanisms not of sufficient importance to warrant main headings may be grouped under this heading.

Bibliography—

Building—A subdivision to be used to cover minor building details, as Fire Doors. Gal-

- eries, Partition Walls, Pump room, Roof, Stairways, Store room, Structural Steel details, Windows.
- Charts—Maps, diagrams, guides for standardizing.
- Construction—(See note under *Cost*.)
- Corrosion—
- Cost—In case of question as to which should be subordinated, *e. g.*, Maintenance Cost, make *Maintenance* secondary head and *Cost* tertiary head; similarly, *Operation*, *Cost*; *Construction*, *Cost*.
- Depreciation—
- Description—This will include many papers read before societies, conventions, etc., which are more or less general and historical. However, such papers as are pure theory, or as are better classified under another heading, should not be characterized as *Description*. Blue print drawings and photographs of apparatus or mechanisms which accompany catalogs and descriptive matter sent by firms will be classified as *Description*.
- Design—
- Drawings—
- Engineering—This pertains to the plans, studies, calculations, etc., leading up to a particular construction or portion of same. This will be used for the most part to apply to activities of the Detroit Edison Company.
- Installation—
- Maintenance—(See note under *Cost*.)
- Manufacture—
- Measurement—This must not be developed in a manner to usurp the field covered by instruments.
- Operation—(See note under *Cost*.)
- Output—To cover all output data such as Average Load Curves, Load Curves, Load Factors, Maximum Load, Total Output.
- Photographs—(See note under *Description* qualifying use of this subdivision.)
- Price Quotations—(Includes preliminary cost estimates.)
- Properties—Designed to cover such properties as:
- (a) Composition—Must not be confused with Analysis. Composition should be construed to mean the content of a given substance, but not directly ascertained as in the case of *Analysis*; rather, a statement of the content.
 - (b) Conductivity.
 - (c) Density.
 - (d) Fusion Temperature.
 - (e) Oxidation.
 - (f) Specific Heat.
 - (g) Strength, Physical.
 - (h) Strength, Dielectric.
 - (i) Thermodynamic Value.
- Repairs—Implies small repairs, painting, etc.
- Reports—Official statement of facts, may be somewhat statistical in their nature, but more limited in scope than statistics. This should not be used to cover reports of *experiments*, *tests*, etc., nor a report which would be more suitably classed under *Description*. Include here society or committee reports not elsewhere classifiable.
- Research—This term will be used to apply to the testing of materials or apparatus partly or wholly new or novel. Do not confuse with term, *Tests*, which will be used to imply the testing of materials or apparatus according to an accepted or routine method, that is, following a "beaten trail."
- Specifications—
- Statistics—Collections of facts or figures, or both, regarding the condition of a certain business, people, etc., not elsewhere classified.
- Systems—*e. g.*, Systems of Accounting, Filing, Ash Handling, Feed Water Purification, Water Distillation.
- Tests—See Research for distinction between *Tests* and *Research*.
- Theory—Abstract treatment of the principles of an art, science, etc. Should include tables of constants, formulas.
- Uses—
- New subjects or subdivisions should not be created in the files to accommodate new material without at the same time making entry of same upon the file outline. This practice will check any tendency to inconsistency and, at the same time, makes the filing outline a running commentary of the contents of the file.
- #### Advantages of the Filing System
- The method as outlined may sound like an unwieldy, cumbersome one, but in actual operation, it has not been found to involve any more complexities than any other systematic method of filing. It has shown, in practice, several distinct advantages:
- (1) Of prime importance, it is next to impossible to lose a piece of material through forgetting where it was filed; neither is it necessary to depend upon or charge the memory with its location.
 - (2) The grouping of all material on one subject in one section of the file makes it valuable to such persons as wish to examine all the available data on a certain subject.
 - (3) The advantage of having all the correspondence, figures, estimates, etc., of a certain transaction together in one parcel, is most satisfactory. As additional correspondence comes in, that matter already in the files is raised, attached to the newly received letter and placed on the desk of the person whom it concerns; he, thus, has before him the complete history of the trans-

action, when he is ready to give it his attention and to dictate his reply. This is advantageous in an affair which is more or less involved or of indistinct recollection, or more especially in cases in which the completion of the transaction falls to a person other than the originator.

(4) A change in the filing or stenographic force is not accompanied by chaotic confusion. A new attendant has at his command a ready means to produce any material called for, with comparative ease and the certainty that it is entire, regardless from what angle he is approached.

(5) With a filing outline as a guide, the tendency to inconsistency is eliminated to a great extent, as well as the danger of classifying according to one standard today and a less or more rigid one, tomorrow.

Technical Periodical Literature

A salient feature of the Detroit Edison Company library is what is termed a technical periodical service. In meeting individual members of the organization, I found a general sentiment among them of their sheer inability to keep informed thoroughly of the current trend of their particular line of interest and a keen enthusiasm for any method which would give them the assurance that their interests were being watched and items of special importance brought to their attention. In this connection I have built up a schedule of the interests of the various individuals of the company, and through the company publication have announced that upon request this service will be extended to any person who will thereby receive automatically such articles as interest him whenever they appear. This service brings directly to his desk the gleanings of one hundred thirty picked journals. This schedule embraces such subjects as coal, piping, pipe corrosion, recording instruments, storage batteries, electrical distribution and transmission, cable testing, factory lighting, boilers, their operation, design and efficiency, overhead and underground construction, plant operation, insulation, construction costs and estimates, electric and heating rates and many others. Individuals may have their names entered to the mailing list to receive regularly those journals which they particularly wish to examine as issued; these are sent to their desks, if desired, with the request that they be returned at a specified date, depending upon the demand for the journal. A date signal is placed on the card which carries the charge and prevents it from being held unduly long on any desk.

The Preservation of Articles of Value

The matter of preserving published articles is one which demands thoughtful treatment. I personally examine all of the journals, including those of French and German publication, that come into the library. In estimating an article I consider whether it

is of remote or immediate interest. In the case of the article which deals with a subject that the company might be interested in at some distant time, the time necessary to look it up would be of negligible concern to the person requesting it. Articles of this type are readily available through the several periodical indexes, and a business library does well to avoid this unnecessary duplication of effort. On the other hand, if the article is of such a character as to make it desirable to place it at the disposition of any individual at a moment's notice, a card is placed in the catalog bearing the citation. The card used for this purpose is of a special form, drawn up for the purpose of reducing the amount of typing to a minimum.

TITLE

AUTHOR

JOURNAL

Date 19..... Page..... Vol.

Comparative. . Descriptive. . Experimental. . .

Historical.... Mathematical.... Practical.....

Illustrations.. Tables.... Curves.....

After considering the article from this angle, the particular article is directed to the list of persons which the schedule shows are interested. Frequently, if it is an article of general interest, it is directed to a responsible person with the request that it be circulated to all those in his department who may be interested. In this connection I might mention the point that valuable specific items are frequently to be found in articles which are general in their treatment and which in many cases are not analyzed in the regular periodical indexes; such data should of course be noted in the library catalog.

I have found it especially helpful to enlist the assistance of specialists in the company, to the extent of sending to their desk regularly certain technical journals and asking them to indicate those articles which are worthy of permanent preservation. It is thus possible to effect an economy, too, in that the department is relieved of the necessity of preserving data and at the same time is assured that any data which it may wish to accumulate will be properly classified and will be available on call. The practice of requesting the library to perform this service has grown to some proportions in the Detroit Edison Company, and the economy of it is apparent when you consider the cost of a multiplicity of effort.

Closely allied to this service there is another service which the Detroit Edison Company library is organized to perform. It functions in the capacity of an investigator, submitting briefs and the authorities supporting the opinions, and is also prepared to

furnish bibliographies, compile data on particular subjects and make any necessary translation from foreign texts.

Books and Trade Catalogs

Books and government publications are fully indexed as to subject matter and are classified according to the Dewey Decimal System of Classification. Subject headings follow the list of the American Library Association, with some necessary expansions.

Catalog literature and trade publications are given considerable attention in the Detroit Edison Library. We aim to keep complete files of new trade literature and to acquaint interested departments of new features and equipment as they are announced. The members of the company are coming to feel that they may apply to the library for any catalog they wish, or all trade literature on any particular equipment, and that if not on the shelves the library will take the necessary measures to obtain them. These are numbered in the order of their receipt and indexed alphabetically according to firm and subject matter.

Publicity of new books, catalogs, journals and pertinent articles is secured through the company's house organ. This reaches every employee and gives the most distantly stationed person an opportunity to know of the additions to the library equal to that pos-

essed by the person to whom the library is readily accessible.

Summary

(1) The development of an industry is largely determined by the character of study given its problems and scope.

(2) An active and efficient cooperation with those individuals and departments engaged in this study is the primary function of the library which serves that industry.

(3) There should reside in the library:

(a) A comprehensive knowledge of the company's interests and problems.

(b) The capacity to survey the progress of the world's industries and to interpret its significance with reference to the company's business.

(c) The ability to meet legitimate inquiries which arise in the administration of the business with promptness and satisfaction.

(4) Effective and direct means to this end are:

(a) An adequate filing system for the preservation of the records of the company.

(b) An economical and dependable method of preserving valuable technical periodical data, books and trade publications.

Reading Course for Bankers

To the banker who wishes to increase his knowledge of foreign trade an ample opportunity is presented in a reading course on this subject which has been prepared by the Business Training Corporation of New York. The course will be under the direction of Dr. Edward E. Pratt, Chief of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, who has designed it to meet the need for systematic means of training men to handle export work. In preparing the course, Dr. Pratt has had the cooperation of men prominent in the various phases of export activity, including:

E. A. deLima, president, Battery Park National Bank of New York; Phanor J. Eder, member of New York Bar; J. F. Fowler, vice-president, W. R. Grace & Co.; Grover G. Huebner, University of Pennsylvania; Emory R. Johnson, University of Pennsylvania; Philip B. Kennedy, Commercial Attache at Melbourne, Department of Commerce; Paul R. Mahoney, foreign department, Remington Typewriter Co.; E. C. Porter, secretary, American-Russian Chamber of Commerce; C. A. Richards, manager, export department, Bowring & Co.; J. Santilhano, foreign department, Guaranty Trust Co., New York; Chauncey D. Snow, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce; Carl W. Stern, M. J. Corbett & Co.; Henry A. Talbot, secretary, R. F. Downing & Co.; Edward Neville Vose, edi-

tor, Dun's "International Review," and Walter F. Wyman, export manager, Carter's Ink Co.

The first text book of the course is entitled "Economics of World Trade," and is written by O. P. Austin, statistician foreign trade department, National City Bank of New York. The volume sets forth the underlying factors which control the world currents of foreign trade. Such subjects as the export of surplus production, export of capital, control of transportation, colonization and emigration, trade routes and trade centers, seasonal movement of commodities, artificial stimuli to trade, protection and free trade, are all discussed in an authoritative way.

Other texts of the course, it is announced, will cover the practical features of export work, such as the world's markets, considered from the standpoint of trade routes and strategic trade centres; export problems and policies; the functions and methods of the various classes of professional export houses; organizing an export department for direct foreign selling; the selection and training of salesmen for the foreign field; shipping; financing; export technique; foreign and home law in their relation to export business; importing; factors in foreign trade-building, such as the tariff, merchant marine, uniformity of laws, etc. [Bankers' Magazine, Book Talks.]

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Library Service to Business Men

Speaking of preparedness—and everybody is these days—did you notice the kind of men President Wilson called to advise him in the present crisis—each one a specialist and an authority in his own line?

In certain respects individual problems and national are much alike. In a man's business the best way to meet a crisis is to foresee it and prepare. And the best way to prepare is to do what the President did—get expert advice.

To the ordinary business man, Edison, Maxim, and experts of their type are not personally accessible, but specialists of their caliber are available through the books they have written.

When Lord Bacon referred to libraries as "the shrines where all the relics of the ancient saints, full of virtue and that without delusion or imposture, are preserved and reposed," he was speaking of the institutions of his age. There are still, we hope, a few saints reposing upon our shelves, full of that ancient virtue which is the heritage of civilization; but there are also many volumes of a character quite unsaintly, designed to meet the hurried needs of the modern practical man of affairs.

This literature of the day's work is a new thing in the book world. An older generation did not have these compilations of ready, practical, accurate information relating to industry and to commerce. Some of the material is highly technical and it has grown so in range and in quantity that libraries have been forced to open new departments and to employ specially trained assistants to care for certain collections and to help the public in using them.

This has been the case in Seattle. We have the departments, the assistants, and the books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, and other materials, arranged and indexed in such a manner that a vast amount of information on a thousand practical subjects is almost immediately available to any business man who is willing to state his problem and to do whatever reading his case may require. Extensive research is not always necessary; many inquiries are answered each day on the telephone where a mere fact or figure is wanted.

What is the last Census Bureau estimate of the population of Seattle?

What firms manufacture transparent envelopes?

How much wood pulp do we import from Canada?

Who is the cashier of the First Bank of Valdez?

Questions of this kind can be answered in a minute or two by telephone while the inquirer holds the line. But there are others not so simple:

Where are the kelp beds of Puget Sound, and what are the methods of kelp utilization?

Names and addresses of all commercial organizations in Washington.

What is the best way to file trade catalogs?

How much sulphuric acid is produced in the United States? What are the methods of manufacture and cost of production?

These subjects and many others are in a different class. They require some research and, on the part of the investigator, some time spent at the library. Whether a business man will make this investment of time and effort depends very largely on his idea of the value of printed information, and this in turn depends upon whether he realizes that the world of business is not what it used to be.

We do not hold that individual shrewdness, initiative, self-reliance, or close contact with the job are less essential to success now than formerly. What we do believe is that modern business practice is coming to rest more and more upon a broad basis of scientific fact and tested principle; that no man is so big nor any job so small that some help can not be found in print.

[Seattle Library Poster, Sept. 11, 1916]

Sources of Information for Business Men*

By D. C. Buell, Director, Educational Bureau of Information
Union Pacific Ry, Omaha, Neb

Until your past President, Mr. R. H. Johnston, began corresponding with me some two and a half years ago about the work of this Association I had not known that such an Association existed.

I was familiar with the fact that a number of large concerns had special rooms set aside for library purposes. I had had some correspondence with one or two men who styled themselves "Special Librarians" of the firms whose letterheads they used, but the proposition meant little or nothing to me.

I had quite an extensive library which was used in connection with my own work, although the size of the library and the conditions under which it was used did not indicate the necessity of a special employe with library knowledge to handle it.

I believe I will be pardoned for mentioning my own specific case when I say that I believe my lack of knowledge concerning the situation corresponds to a similar lack of knowledge on the part of the average business man.

The Special Libraries Association has done notable work in the past few years in increasing the efficiency of book usage. Its records indicate it to have been a pioneer in the field of making the library of practical value to the business man. Its growth is indicative of the immediate and hearty response accorded the librarian who has injected life and service into his shelves of books.

In reviewing the excellent articles that have appeared in the Association's valuable publication, "Special Libraries," a practical man who has not given this subject previous consideration is struck with the importance of the matter and the possibilities of applying such service to his own line of work. Unfortunately, the average business man has never heard of the Special Libraries Association, has never seen the pamphlet, "Special Libraries," and has but a vague knowledge, if any, of the possibilities of the special library as an aid to him in his own business.

The average business man takes one or two of the technical journals pertaining to his trade, meets and talks with men in similar lines of business, possibly is a member of his local commercial club and of several business and technical associations and gets more or less value out of such memberships, according to the energy that he personally puts into the association work.

This same average business man, when he wants information, may have a vague idea that he saw an article on the subject that interests him in some past issue of one

of the technical journals, but valuable time is lost in trying to locate this reference. He may have friends and associates who can give him some information on the subject before him, and he may be able to get some help from the secretaries of the clubs or associations to which he belongs, but in most cases the last place the average business man would turn to for specialized information is the public library; whereas the business man who has awakened to a realization of the importance of the library when properly adapted to the needs of his business by a librarian qualified in this special field, turns first to that special librarian for the information desired, and, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, gets it the way he wants it, without delay or annoyance.

Only a small percentage of the business men of the country can afford a special library or a special librarian. Those business men who can afford a library and librarian in their organization are rapidly waking up to the importance of the matter and taking the necessary steps to perfect this feature of their organization; but it would seem that there are so many fields still untouched in this connection that one is justified in saying that this Association is but in its infancy and has a future before it the bounds of which are almost unlimited.

If it is a fact that a large majority of the business men in the country are not in a position to be able to maintain a special library and a special librarian, it would seem that some method should be worked out whereby the benefits of the special library and its librarian could be made available to the average business man in some other manner. Several suggestions along this line may not be out of place.

Almost every city of any size has a commercial club, or business men's league, or city club. No matter what the name may be, the object of the association is to provide a clearing house through which the interests of the business men of the town may be served.

It would seem conservative to state that very few, if any, of the large number of such associations throughout the country have installed a special library, or if they have a library, have put it in charge of a special librarian of such caliber as to bring to the average business man's attention, or give to him the service of which the special library is capable.

The commercial club or other similar association of business men is but one of the

*Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Special Libraries Association, Asbury Park, June 28, 1916.

many associations that can be found in any American town or city having a population of twenty-five thousand or more. There are civic associations, retail credit associations, branches of the Rotary Club and hundreds of other similar institutions the object of which is the betterment of business conditions in various lines of activity. In addition to this, there are the national and international organizations of men in practically every important line of business in the country. But with a few notable exceptions, none of these associations—local, national or international—have as yet awakened to the realization of the importance of the special library and the special librarian as an aid to their members.

The question immediately arises: Why should a commercial club need to establish a special library and appoint a special librarian when the city library is already established and its service available to its members? Why, indeed? But the fact remains that though the city library is there, in many cases it either does not have the service desired, or else has not sufficiently advertised that service so that its facilities are used to the advantage of the business men of the community.

Let us suppose, for instance, that the commercial club of a city would cooperate with the local library authorities to the end that a special librarian was appointed, given space in the library and provided with direct telephone lines and facilities to furnish information quickly to business men. Let us then suppose that the appointment of such a man was advertised to the business men of the town and that the importance of the opportunity to use such a source of information was fully explained to, and understood by, the business men of the community. Such a step would bring the local library to a place of importance in the community that few such libraries occupy today. Service such as this would make the business men of the community willing to support the library, and would make them willing to scheme out methods of providing sufficient funds for the library so that the efficiency of this special department could be continually increased. Books would be donated, information offered and results obtained that would make the library a factor in the business life of the community instead of its living on as a colorless institution as it does in so many localities at the present time. Under the new plan it would be enthusiastically supported as a necessity—not half-heartedly, as a traditional institution.

Perhaps these are strong statements. Also it is a fact that in some cities today the library is one of the most important city institutions, is live and progressive and is a factor in the civic life of the community; but in such cases it has been made so by injecting real service into its dealings with the public, by the introduction of modern methods, by the realization on the part of

the librarian and his staff of the needs of the community, and by the working out of service to meet such needs.

The success or failure of any library, but more particularly of a special library, is due to the qualifications, energy and adaptability of its librarian to the needs of the peculiar situation or situations which confront it. The average business man looks on a librarian much as he does on a college professor or school teacher; that is, as some one who is not particularly approachable, who is more or less impracticable, and who is not at all the kind of person one turns to in an emergency for help. The special librarian should be a man among men, a mixer and a member of organizations where he can meet men in different lines of business and call on them for help when he needs information that they can furnish. As a Rotarian, I would strongly recommend membership in the local Rotary Club for a special librarian, as such membership would bring him in touch with every important class of industry in the community.

It may seem that the writer is wandering far from the subject of his paper, and yet there is a purpose behind all this discussion. If you want a delicate instrument made, you will not take the job to a shop where you know they have poor tools or insufficient equipment. If you are bothered with a problem, you do not go to some "weak sister" for information and advice. Far from it. You take your work to a shop where you think they have the best tools and equipment. You take your troubles to a friend—some one you look up to, respect and whose advice you will be able to count upon and willing to heed; and until the local library is looked upon by the business men of the community as well equipped with efficient tools, and until the local librarian is respected as a friend and counselor, the business man will look elsewhere for information and aid.

Coming back to the real subject of this paper. The business man who has come into contact with a good special library, presided over by a competent special librarian, needs no advice as to where to go for a great deal of helpful information. The business man who is not so situated that he can call on the services of a special librarian should get in touch with the librarian of his local library and cooperate with the librarian in an endeavor to make use of such facilities as are locally available. The local librarian may not realize the special needs of the business men of the community, but may be willing and competent to cooperate to the fullest extent, and may have many available sources of information that could be used to good advantage if the business man would cooperate to increase the effectiveness of the service. The business man today has numerous sources of information available for his use. The great trouble, however, is that such sources are scattered and difficult of access, and the special library and special

librarian seem to be the solution of the difficulty.

There is a great economic waste due to a lack of proper sources of information of this kind. One firm conducts an elaborate series of tests on a certain device, or works out an elaborate method of accomplishing certain desired ends. Mention is made of the results of such work in the technical press, data covering the tests are published, but another business man who has not known of these tests or who has not seen this data may go ahead and spend considerable money experimenting along similar lines. I believe no one knows better than special librarians the willingness of broad-minded business men to furnish information which will help others. Of course, certain information as to sales methods, manufacturing processes, etc., is kept secret as far as possible, due to its being an asset to the company which has developed it, but there is so much information that is available, that can consistently be given to others, that would save so many hundreds of thousands of dollars in experimenting, developing and perfecting methods,

or, on the contrary, that would save so many hundreds of thousands of dollars which are needlessly spent in investigating methods which are not productive or satisfactory, that it would seem that the economic requirements of the situation would justify any reasonable expense whereby business information would be available in a practical way through the ordinary library or a special library.

The time has come when the vast regiments of books, standing on the shelves of our libraries, should be mobilized into units which would insure continued economic peace and prosperity for the business men of this country by giving them a standing army of information, ready at all times to respond to the call of service, to protect their interests, increase their fields of productivity, secure them from trade invasion and back them in trade expansion. Such units of our standing army of books, commanded by efficient special librarians, would go far toward insuring continued business prosperity in this country.

News and Notes

The Fore River Shipbuilding Corporation at Quincy, Mass., has established a library which includes fiction and reference books

Miss Jessie Douglass, formerly librarian to Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, has been appointed librarian of the Farmers Loan and Trust Company of New York.

Miss Edith McWilliams, a graduate of the Pratt Institute Library School, has charge of the Data Department of the Association of National Advertisers, New York.

World-wide information on corporations is to be a special feature of the Library of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, which is being developed by Miss Rosa Mestre, formerly at the St. Agnes Branch of the New York Public Library. Miss Ida G. Bauman is first assistant.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters, New York City, has issued "Dwelling Houses; a Code of Suggestions for Construction and Fire Protection." This is a pamphlet of 115 pages, illustrated with photographs and diagrams of construction details. It can be obtained upon receipt of 10 cents to cover postage or if a considerable number is desired, they will be sent by express collect.

An interesting account of a novel publicity campaign in St. Paul by means of which an energetic club of advertising men, an up-to-date public library and enterprising business men of the modern type, aided and supported by the public, established the Business Branch of the St. Paul Public Library, may be found in Public Libraries, March 1916. The great feature of the whirlwind campaign was a "Library Edition" of the St. Paul Daily news devoted to the new project. The generosity of a leading business firm in the center of the business district in giving free space in their building for the new branch is but one of the many evidences of the public interest aroused.

The Goodwyn Institute of Memphis, Tennessee, in its Year Book, 1915-1916, makes a special appeal to the various classes of people to whom its library is able to be of service, giving a page or so to what the library has for the manufacturer, for the farmer, for the housewife, for the mother and the teacher, for the architect, engineer, chemist, for the real estate and insurance man, for those interested in civic problems, state institutions, the great war, etc. In each instance a glimpse is given of the kind and amount of material the library has in that particular field, the best things are mentioned specifically and instances cited of occasions on which the library has proved itself of practical value.

On account of continued illness, Mr. F. N. Morton of the United Gas Improvement Co., Philadelphia, has been forced to resign as President of the Special Libraries Association. To fill the vacancy, the Executive Committee by a referendum vote elected Mr. C. C. Williamson, the Vice-President of the Association, to the Presidency and Mr. O. E. Norman, to take Mr. Williamson's place as Vice-President. Mr. Williamson, formerly head of the Department of Economics and Sociology of the New York City Public Library, has been since October, 1914, Municipal Reference Librarian of New York City. He was President of the Manhattan Branch of the Special Libraries Association, 1915-1916. Mr. Norman was formerly connected with the John Crerar Library of Chicago, going from there to the People's Gas, Light and Coke Co. of Chicago where he has been Librarian for a number of years.

The State Civil Service Commission of Illinois has advertised an examination for November 4, 1916, open to residents of Illinois, which should be of a great deal of interest to librarians.

The position occurs in the office of the Illinois Public Utilities Commission under the title of Digest Clerk, Librarian and Historian.

The person who fills this position, which pays \$250 to \$300 a month, should be able to digest the orders entered by the Commission, take charge of its library and, if necessary, supervise its publicity work.

Details concerning the examination may be secured by addressing the Commission.

Importing merchants in the Manchester consular district are offered facilities for obtaining information concerning American manufacturers in the waiting room of the consulate, which has been provided with a reading table on which are placed all the trade publications and other periodicals containing trade information which may be of interest to persons visiting the office, or the public generally.

All catalogues, price lists, and trade circulars of American manufacturers received at the consulate are carefully filed, indexed, and catalogued. The work of trade extension is in the charge of a competent clerk whose special duty it is to assist persons making inquiries about American manufactured goods, and to make reports of these opportunities for the benefit of American manufacturers.

[U. S. Commerce Reports.]

The American-Russian Chamber of Commerce in New York has decided to publish a handbook of information in regard to the United States, to be printed in Russian and distributed among Russian business houses through the Russian-American Chamber of Commerce in Moscow.

The chief difficulty in the development of trade relationships between Russia and the United States has been the lack of a medium by which American and Russian firms could make direct connections. The handbook of the United States will serve the double purpose of furnishing American business houses with a means of placing their products before the Russian customer and of enabling the Russian customer to open direct connections with American firms in a position to meet his requirements.

The handbook will present a concise survey of the principal features of commerce and industry in the United States. It will contain a selected directory of American firms interested in the possibilities of the Russian market and in a position to meet the requirements of Russian buyers, and it will devote a special section to advertising American products. The material for this handbook is now being prepared. All American firms interested in having their names placed in the directory or in reserving advertising space should write to the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, 60 Broadway, New York.

[U. S. Commerce Reports.]

To the agencies which the Dominion of Canada, the Canadian Pacific railway and the large Canadian manufacturing industries have called into being, since the war opened, for the investigation of national resources, and for making industry and commerce more efficient, will soon be added the bureau of research of the University of Toronto. Thus will Ontario's leading institution of learning and investigation begin to do for the province and for the nation what the state universities of the United States have been doing of late, and what great schools like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston and Mellon Institute of Pittsburgh have done for years, namely, serve society in collaboration with practical industries.

Canada's nationalism will find expression for its deepened and heightened activities following the war in making workable just such schemes as the University of Toronto officials in this case have conceived and stand ready to execute. Universities and colleges that have given so lavishly of their alumni and undergraduates to the overseas army, will see to it that the institutions are as vitally related to the state hereafter as the standard of civic duty always has demanded they should be. Canada is to emerge from the war with a huge debt, and the sooner it is paid off the better. There will be special need of increased transformation of the ample stores of natural wealth into taxable property; and the most disinterested servants the state can have at such a time are trained students, such as will man this university's bureau of research.

[Christian Science Monitor.]