LIBRARY TECHNIQUE

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CONTENTS

IN THE TEXT

PREFACE

SOME apology would appear to be necessary for a work on library technique, since this subject has already been discussed in some detail.

The present work is not intended to serve as a manual to explain the methods of library practice. It is devoted, rather, to an examination of some of those methods and an assessment of their value against the background of the complete service.

Such an examination is particularly necessary for the librarian of a small system. Practices that are accepted in the larger systems are not necessarily the most economical or useful in the smaller organizations. The librarian must acquire the habit of looking at the whole and assessing the value of each part according to the contribution it makes to the efficiency of his service. Library processes have a habit of becoming complicated and wasteful of staff time, so that their value, under examination, is sometimes found to be suspect.

A bias may be traced towards the simplification of routines, and the suggestion is made that the influence of branch libraries should be extended. The temptation to discuss branch library policy has, on the whole, been resisted, although with difficulty, for the subject is absorbing. Any librarian, looking back, cannot fail to note how the extensive rehousing drive between the two world wars, and the growth of suburban housing estates, concentrated attention on the need for branches. The growth was continued from 1946 onwards, but modified by the hand of the planning authority. To-day, the planning of branches must be co-ordinated with the provision of housing estates and other amenities. Not only does this affect the siting of branches, it also affects their layout and design, for the architectural design must conform with that of the planning authority. On the whole, this is a happy state of affairs and conforms with many of the recommendations of the earlier branch planners.

One other conditioning factor must be mentioned. The final chapters of the book, which are concerned with the development of a branch, serve in effect to summarize much of the preceding material. Some duplication was necessary for this purpose. The harmony of the work probably suffers in consequence, yet it is hoped that convenience of handling will compensate for this.

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Bethnal Green — Eastbourne
Cambridge — Islington
Coulsdon and Purley

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Mr. A. R. Hewitt, Secretary and Librarian of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, read the section on Legal Provisions. I am indebted to him for valuable suggestions and for permission to quote from his published work.

Mr. I. D. H. Dawson, Chief Cataloguer at the Shoreditch Public Libraries, read the manuscript. I am grateful to him for his friendly co-operation and assistance.

C. A. ELLIOTT.

CHAPTER I

ROUTINE METHODS

THE librarian of a modern system is often called upon for independent judgment and action. It is, therefore, essential that the tools of his craft should be efficient and workable. Efficient routine processes and standardization of duties will greatly assist towards achieving this end. Most of the processes with which we deal from day to day have evolved by an empirical method, yet it is probable that many would benefit by examination and revision, for many features are retained by virtue of long practice. Examination sometimes proves that actions and methods once valuable are so no longer. These should be dispensed with; no process should be retained which cannot be proved to be beneficial to the system or to the readers.

Some care is required here before wholesale changes are made. The librarian, confronted with a regulation or procedure which seems to be pointless, should ask why it was originally formulated. Every method must have had its origin in a practical need, yet the original purpose may no longer operate, in which case the instrument designed to cope with it can safely be discarded. On the other hand, a certain provision, such as the right to refuse permission for tracings to be made from reference books, although rarely called into use, may be necessary to safeguard against possible eventualities. In such cases, retention should be considered. New methods must always be justified before they are adopted. Novelty is not justification; any projected change should promise increased efficiency or greater economy in time or labour before it is allowed to oust existing and proved methods.

The basic processes of library practice are simple in essentials and built around common principles. They are, however, often elaborated beyond reason by local customs and by appendages gathered through the years. Modifications devised to cope

with special circumstances become redundant when the circumstances change, yet the modification may not be revoked and may continue unnoticed through the years, thereby exerting a deleterious effect on routine.

For this reason all processes and methods should be examined with care, for time saved on mechanical routines can be put to good use for work of greater value. Labour and space saving devices should be welcomed; for example, cash registers could, with advantage, be used to replace the old-fashioned ticket system of dealing with fines. An automatic register would save time and would economize on the administrative work of checking and recording. Alternatively, the observation fines box, or some such variant, may be used. This fitting allows the reader to drop his coins into a glass-sided receptacle where they remain in view, for checking purposes, until a plate is released to allow them to fall into the box below. The key of the box is retained by the Borough Treasurer, so that receipts and recording ledgers become unnecessary. The box is emptied regularly by a member of the Treasurer's Department. A small sum of money is retained as a "float" for the purpose of giving change.

The entrance counter is the bottle-neck of the lending library; the routine of discharging a book is a comparatively lengthy process which results in queues during busy periods. Any method that can reduce the waiting period should be studied with care.

The essential record of stock is the stock register. This may be kept in ledger form, but is better arranged in a classified sequence on cards. The main topics of the arrangement should be separated by guide cards on which should be recorded the number of volumes added and discarded during the year. Thus, if the Dewey Scheme is used, there will be 100 guide cards, each showing, at a glance, the state of the stock in that section. Little effort is required to keep these section records up-to-date when adding or withdrawing cards, while the saving in time during the preparation of statistics is quite appreciable.

A classified stock register obviates the need for a shelf register. Classified shelf registers came into use to supply information not readily obtainable from the unclassified stock ledger. A

method that combines the advantages of both of these records is obviously to be preferred. Accession registers are, likewise, unnecessary in cases where accession numbers are added to the invoice at the date of purchase. This method is often stipulated by the Treasurer and, where this is so, the numbering of books and invoices must be the first process to be performed.

Collation of new books is not now widely practised. It is not an economic proposition, for the number of books found to be imperfect does not justify the time spent in their examination. Moreover, readers are quick to point out imperfections, and works found to be blemished are usually replaced by the bookseller in spite of their having been labelled.

The stamping of books is more widespread, and has been given a further lease of life by recommendation of the Metropolitan Librarians, a surprisingly retrograde step by a normally progressive body. It is doubtful whether stamping acts as a deterrent to thieves, but the point cannot be proved either way. It is certainly a costly business in staff time and could well be discontinued, together with the embossing of covers, an unsightly practice which is quite superfluous. Perforation of a few selected pages will establish the ownership of a book; notation lettered on the spine, and the accession number written on the back of the title page, will indicate the fact of public ownership. Why over-elaborate these safeguards?

The recording of issues takes the form of a day-by-day tally in classified sequence. In order to make this process worth while the analysis of issues should be as complete as possible. A simple division into the ten main classes of Dewey is inadequate, the first hundred places should be used at least. In some libraries, certain of the divisions in Dewey's classes 600, 700 and 800 are split even further, so that up to 150 sections are shown in the full analysis. Such division gives a more concrete guide to the extent of reading in the various subject groups.

This, alone, is not sufficient. We should not be concerned merely to record the number of books issued in each section; such a record has little intrinsic value. After discovering such facts we should make them work, that is, we must ask whether the issues indicate good or bad provision, and whether the

use of books can be increased by the addition of further stock in the sections concerned. This point is considered later in more detail.

Even the daily recording of issues has been queried and, in some systems, it is the practice to substitute a monthly count of books on loan. The saving in time of such a method must be considerable.

Mr. H. G. T. Christopher, librarian of the Penge Public Libraries, where the system is in operation, has kindly submitted the following report of the working of the method over a period of two years:

"The system was instituted primarily in order to save time. The normal system requires the counting of the issue daily, the entering of those details in a ledger, and the summarizing of those details weekly, monthly and yearly. The system in force at Penge requires the counting of the total books on issue once a month, the entering of this one set of figures in a ledger, and the summarizing of only twelve sets of figures for the annual report, which gives the average number of books on issue throughout the year.

"No particular virtues are claimed for the system, but three points do emerge from the use of this system for a period of over two years. A better comparison of the use of fiction and non-fiction is allowed, since no account is taken of the frequency of the issue of works of fiction. In other words, the monthly count reveals the correct proportion of users of fiction stock to the users of the non-fiction stock.

"Secondly, the system reveals the 'liveness' of a library's membership. In Penge, the average number of books on issue is 10,000 and, assuming a use of two tickets per 'live' borrower, it would seem that approximately 5,000 readers are using the library throughout the year, whereas our membership figures show 7,200 readers. This 'liveness' is not revealed by the ordinary system. Incidentally, it is felt that most librarians would be greatly shocked if they applied this test, for from knowledge of the issues recorded and the membership clamied by many libraries, a percentage of 'liveness' of membership of 50 per cent. would be common.

"The third point which emerges is that the system interprets

more correctly fluctuations in reading. The Penge system does not show great fluctuations in totals, as does the ordinary system. Where neighbouring districts have shown great differences in yearly totals, the Penge figure remains almost constant, and proves, it is thought, that large increases or decreases in actual issues are due to lessening or increasing of the intensity of reading by the same number of readers, rather than increases or decreases in membership. This, of course, would not be the case in special circumstances, such as the opening of new branches, etc."

The insistence throughout of the record of books on loan rather than of a tally of issues would, indeed, appear to provide a more accurate estimate of work achieved and a more favourable basis for comparison between classes. Mr. Christopher is too modest when he claims no particular virtues for his system; the three advantages noted in his report should be studied with care, for they represent virtues of considerable magnitude.

A further daily record must be made of money transactions. Great care is essential with this record since it takes first place in the estimation of both local and government auditors. Every receipt and item of expenditure, no matter how small the amount, must be recorded. Receipts must be given for every sum received, except where a special method, such as the observation fines box, is in use. Receipts must also be received and retained for all money spent. Any mistakes in cash books should not be erased, but should be plainly crossed through, corrected and initialled.

In addition to these basic records there are the standard routine processes. The first of these is concerned with the filing of issues. There are two methods of filing commonly used with the Browne system of book charging:

1. Arrangement by accession numbers, and
2. Arrangement in classified order, with a sub-arrangement alphabetically by authors' names.

Of the two methods the latter is to be preferred. The advantage of speed in discharging books is claimed for the former method, but the validity of this claim is doubtful.

Outweighing any possible advantage of speed, if indeed it

exists, is the fact that the classified sequence acts as a valuable method of instruction for the staff in the arrangement of books and the identification of subject notations. Assistants accustomed to discharging books from a classified sequence become acquainted with the notation for subject groups. An accession number has no meaning in itself; a notation is the key to the subject of a book. Moreover, the classified arrangement facilitates the analytical survey of issues and makes the recording of them more simple. The searching of the issue involved in the reservation of books becomes less of a problem. When a library has several copies of a book to be reserved reference must be made to several places in the numerically arranged file. In the classified file these charges would be grouped together, thus requiring one reference only in each day's issue. Experience of both methods has taught the value of the classified arrangement.

The Dickman system of charging, used widely in America and in some libraries in this country, does not rely upon the marriage of book card and reader's ticket.

With this method the reader's number is embossed on a metal plate attached to his ticket. When he borrows a book his ticket and the book-card are inserted in a stamping machine and a lever is depressed, thus causing the date and reader's number to be impressed upon the book-card. The reader's ticket is returned to him and remains in his possession. The book-card is filed as record of the issue.

By this system of charging one ticket serves for the issue of as many books as may be required. Thus the necessity for writing a number of tickets is avoided and space for the charging files is reduced. On the other hand, a numerical register of readers is required, in addition to the alphabetical index, because a reader's name must be traced from his number when queries occur. A great advantage of the method is that there is no delay at the entrance counter, for the reader does not have to wait for his books to be discharged before choosing others. Staff time is not saved because of this fact, for the accumulation of books represents a considerable problem during busy periods.

The system is unlikely to gain many new adherents. Any

authority desiring to change its charging method has the opportunity now of choosing a photographic system which, according to reports in the American professional press, appears to possess all of the advantages of the Dickman system while being less cumbersome.

An important factor with regard to all systems that allow a reader to take an unlimited number of books is that the conclusions drawn from issue analyses will be less accurate than when the Browne and similar methods of controlled issue are used. Where the choice is limited to two or four books the reader's selection is made with a degree of discrimination. Where, however, an unlimited choice is offered, selection is less rigid and books will be taken which, on closer examination, will prove to be unsuitable and will thus be returned unread.

This aspect has a certain significance but too much importance should not be attributed to it. The physical labour of carrying books operates against the tendency to choose too many at one time. Yet the possibility is there and it must be considered; an error of between 5 and 10 per cent. in issue analysis, due to this cause, could not be considered unreasonable.

Delay at the discharging desk is the fault usually quoted against the Browne system. There undoubtedly are queues during busy periods but the delay is not often protracted. A method has been devised so that readers can pass through in a steady flow, leaving their books on the counter and getting in exchange a receipt instead of a ticket. This reduces the waiting period considerably, for the time taken to find tickets in the files constitutes the greatest factor in the delay.

The method is as follows. At some time before the busy period a series of book-cards and pockets are prepared, both card and pocket of each pair carrying an identical number. When books are returned, a numbered book-card is placed in each book and the pocket with the corresponding number is given to the borrower. This acts as the receipt for the book. The books are not discharged immediately but are put away to be dealt with during a slack period.

When the borrower leaves he hands in his numbered pocket; the book-card of the book taken is placed in this and filed in a

numerical sequence of pockets. As soon as convenient, the books previously returned are discharged, and it is then a simple matter to match numbered card with its corresponding pocket in the numerical file. The book-card for the book taken is extracted from the numbered pocket, inserted in the reader's ticket and filed in the usual manner. Numbered cards and pockets are then available for further use.

In connection with issue methods it is necessary to maintain a file, in alphabetical order, of readers' application forms. A separate numerical register is sometimes provided and this serves as a permanent record of readers, showing age, sex, address and any other information required.

The value of this record is not apparent, so far as the Browne and similar systems of book charging are concerned, and it might well be discontinued. The only information of value not immediately available in handy form from the alphabetical file of application forms is the number and location of readers and the number of tickets in use. These, however, are statistics and need not be related to individuals. Such information can easily and quickly be recorded without the encumbrance of useless information.

The numerical register of readers is a heritage from the indicator period. When the indicator yielded to the method of open access, used with the Browne method of charging, the numerical register became superfluous. Yet it continued in use for years before its value was questioned. It is a good example of a routine that became unnecessary through change of circumstances but which continued in use long after its purpose had been served.

In some places details concerning new borrowers are recorded, not only at the branch of joining, but also at central and at all other branches. There seems to be no need for such duplication. We take great pains to attract readers and persuade them to read, then exert ourselves further to ensure that they do not register at more than one branch. Does it matter if re-registration does occur, and does the supposed danger warrant the expenditure of staff time to combat it?

The only concern need be with defaulters. These people should be blacklisted and note of this action should be included

in the register of each branch. Blacklisting should be practised only as a last resort but, when the decision has been taken, it should be rigorously enforced throughout the system. Rules which are easily flouted are soon brought into contempt.

A factor to remember here is that regulations are made for the benefit of readers as a whole. If any regulation is disregarded by any one member of the community, the breach is bound to operate, directly or indirectly, to the detriment of other citizens. We are assuming, naturally, that regulations are reduced to a minimum and include only those that are essential for the smooth working of the system.

The recovery of overdue books is a time-consuming process with which all librarians have to deal. Methods of recovery vary from place to place in detail rather than in principle.

The first notice is usually sent at the beginning of the third week after the expiration of the normal loan period. A second notice is sent, if necessary, a fortnight later. Successive steps include a letter from the librarian, a letter to guarantor and, finally, a personal visit. If none of these efforts succeed in effecting the return of the book the matter is placed in the hands of the Town Clerk. A letter in legal terminology sometimes produces results where other means have failed. Quite often, however, none of these efforts avail and the only further course is a prosecution. This step is not often taken; books not returned at this stage are usually given up as "lost by default", and the reader is black-listed.

It is possible that the dispatch of the first notice could be delayed with little effect on the return of books. To send out the first overdue notice on the twenty-second day of overdue rather than on the fifteenth day would probably result in a saving of time and labour.

Little else can be done to reduce the amount of time consumed by these processes except to keep records to the minimum compatible with efficiency. For example, it is the custom in some places to maintain an overdues register to record all notices dispatched. Where legal action is contemplated it is necessary to have a record of previous communications, but the clerical work involved in writing up the register can be cut down considerably. The majority of overdues are returned

after the second notice, and do not come to the attention of the Town Clerk. If, therefore, the register is maintained, entry should be made from the dispatch of the third notice, thus effecting a useful economy.

Further time-saving is possible when entering details of overdues in the postage book. A block entry should be sufficient for the first and second notices, thus reducing considerably the expenditure of staff time. Local practices vary in this connection and, in some cases, the Borough Treasurer insists upon detailed entry of every item posted.

Discussion concerning the policy of levying fines for overdue books has no place here. Fines were originally imposed to discourage the retention of books after the allotted period of loan. In some libraries fines are regarded as a necessary source of income, and cases have been known where a reduction in receipts has led to an increase in the amount of the fines charged.

The aspect of the problem that will concern the librarian is the borrower's attitude towards this charge. Some readers regard the fine as a fee to be paid for permission to break the rules. Every effort should be made to prevent this attitude. Rules may be good or bad but, if established, they should be respected and not brought into contempt. Perhaps a change of terms would help. The term "fines" could be discarded and "overdue charges" used instead. "Fine" has a police court connotation and is associated with a levy which, when paid, makes amends for a certain action. This is the wrong attitude. All assistants should try to demonstrate to readers the anti-social behaviour involved in the prolonged retention of books. This is probably the best way of tackling the problem, for changes of terminology can have little effect without an attempt to convey to readers the inconvenience caused by their actions.

Difficulties often arise in connection with overdue books and those supposedly overdue. Many of such queries occur as a result of a too hasty decision to write out a temporary ticket or book-card. During busy periods a pencilled ticket or card may have to be provided in order to avoid delay, but this should be the subject of investigation at a less busy period. When an assistant is satisfied that all means have been tried in the search

for the missing record, a substitute may be provided. To reduce the margin of error a duplicates register should be maintained, and this record should be consulted before overdue cards are dispatched.

Reservation of books is another lengthy process. Little can be done to economize here since the method of reservation can hardly be further simplified. In some systems attempts are made to save time by restricting the privilege to the use of factual works, but this is an arbitrary choice and not to be recommended. Books must be reserved if an adequate service is to be maintained and the recording of the reservation must involve periodical searches through the issue.

Attempts have been made to economize on the time spent in such searching by filing the whole issue in a single sequence, or by combining the charges for two days, thus reducing the number of sequences by a half. Time is undoubtedly saved in searching, but against this must be balanced the time required for blending. Moreover, the amalgamation of two or more sequences into one will result in the crowding of staff at the discharge counter, since a single file will often be required at one time by more than one assistant.

A problem arises here with regard to the length of time allowed to lapse between dispatch of reservation card and collection of the book. A period of two clear days is the normal time allowed, but quite a number of libraries allow three days or more. Such liberality is not to be recommended, for this enforced delay represents a complete loss of time, which is rendered more serious by the fact that the majority of books reserved are those for which there is a public demand. Such demand is often of a temporary nature, being stimulated by some current event; its very nature demands satisfaction as soon as possible.

Any method that can be devised to reduce this loss is to be welcomed. Little can, in fact, be done except to try to persuade readers to collect reserved books as soon as possible after the receipt of notification. A note, in heavy type, on the printed card can help in this direction.

Books not collected within the prescribed time should be made available for the next person on the reservation list.

B ..... PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Hours of Opening

Address
Telephone Number

The following book is now available and will be reserved for you until

.....

.....

.....

Other readers are anxious to read this book. Please help to reduce the waiting period by calling as soon as possible.

Fig. 1
Reservations Card

The reservation system is of great convenience to readers and it should be recommended whenever a wanted book is not immediately available. But the facility can be abused if readers are allowed to regard it as a method of monopolizing the recent additions. To prevent this it is a good plan to insist that no individual is entitled to have more than two cards in the reservation file at any one time.

A different type of process is concerned with the care of stock. This process covers the routines of binding, replacement and mending. All demand high priority.

A competent assistant should be made responsible for deciding which books are to be bound and the material to be used. The time of selection is an appropriate stage for a thorough examination of books. It is a mistake to bind too much light fiction, a better method is to discard and to purchase fresh titles, since ephemeral matter does not retain its interest and is not likely to be read twice by one person. The

binding of such material results in the accumulation of books of little worth which have become over-familiar to readers. Moreover, the paper used for the cheaper works is of poor quality. It will not stand up to prolonged use, it quickly absorbs dirt and presents a shoddy aspect. Such material should not be retained any longer than necessary.

In some cases it happens that the binding is too strong and durable for the effective life of a book. Binders sometimes try to push their wares by pointing to the strength of their bindings. We do not want excessive strength. It is quite a common sight to see well-bound books discarded because their contents are out of date. A less durable, and consequently a cheaper, binding would appear to be indicated.

This development would also avoid another fault often seen, that of retaining books with soiled pages because the binding is still in good condition. Soiled books should not be bound. Trimming will freshen the edges but cannot have any effect on the page as a whole.

Another point to be checked before rebinding is the date of publication. When new editions are available it is not reasonable to give a new lease of life to older stock. This applies particularly with regard to books on economics and the technical subjects. Libraries cannot afford to deal with out-of-date information.

Recording of books to be bound in the binding book can be dealt with by a junior assistant, who would also be responsible for checking on return. The binding book should be made with duplicate pages, with the top sheet of each pair perforated. The upper sheet can then easily be extracted for dispatch to the binder, leaving the bottom, carbon copy, as a permanent record.

Books withdrawn from circulation are dealt with in one of two ways; by discarding or by replacement. Total withdrawal is a straightforward process; it involves the deletion of the record of the book in stock register and catalogue and in any other registers maintained, such as shelf lists and accession books.

Care must be taken to remove all catalogue entries which have been made for a particular book. Details of these may be

ascertained from the tracings on the back of the main entries concerned. *It is important*, however, that no reference should be removed without prior permission from the chief cataloguer. References are employed to weld the subject entries into a coherent and workable aid, and are made in respect of subjects, not books. The chief cataloguer should be informed when the *last* entry under a subject heading is to be removed; he will then instruct the assistant or branch librarian as to which references, if any, to that subject heading are redundant. This precaution is necessary because only by consulting the master list of subject headings in use can it be determined what references to a subject have been made in the various catalogues.

Discarded books are stamped and sold as waste, except where provision exists for a central pool or for transfer to a specialist collection. Where specialist schemes are in operation, records of books available for disposal are sent to co-operating libraries. These records can take the form of typewritten lists, book-cards or cards previously used as catalogue main entries, according to the method in use at the system concerned. Where book-cards or main entry cards are to be used for this purpose they should, naturally, not be destroyed at the time of withdrawal.

The record of discards, necessary for the auditor, may be in the form of typewritten sheets. Where the stock register is maintained on cards, individual entries may be transferred to form a separate withdrawals file. Other ledgers, in which details of withdrawals are recorded, are still retained in some systems, but the typewritten sheets with brief details, or the transfer of stock cards, prove to be quite as satisfactory and much more economical in time and labour.

Where replacement is preferred to discarding it is usual to leave all records untouched and to treat the book as being still in stock.

This practice can very well be queried. Post-war delay in replacing books necessitates the retention of cards in the catalogue unrepresented by books on the shelves, a position which is misleading to the public. Even stronger arguments against this practice are: (*a*) many books now out of print are unlikely ever to be reprinted and are difficult to obtain through

second-hand channels; (*b*) replacements of scientific and technical books will take the form of the most recent editions, often with added material. The bibliographical data, in such cases, are so different as virtually to form, from the point of view of the cataloguer, a new work; (*c*) many books are re-published by other than the original publishers. Circumstances visualized by (*b*) and (*c*) necessitate re-cataloguing.

It would appear, therefore, that a good case could be made for surgical treatment of replacement catalogue entries; they should be treated as withdrawals so far as the extraction of entries is concerned. This method need not affect the remainder of the replacement procedure. On the other hand, economies in staff time become possible, inasmuch as the main entry can serve as a replacement record. Furthermore, reservations cannot be accepted for those books, represented in the catalogue, but which are, in fact, awaiting replacement. A common source of annoyance to readers is, thereby, eradicated.

A record of the books awaiting replacement should be maintained in all cases. This can take the form of a separate list or, when the stock register is on cards, it may consist of the cards transferred from the stock register.

The latter method is not to be recommended. The stock register is the most important record in the system. It is a convenience to have this record on cards, yet it must be admitted that this form is subject to the criticism of impermanence when compared with the ledger form of register. This criticism is not entirely without foundation; to reduce its effect, the rule should be adopted that stock cards should not be moved from their sequence, for cards removed are sometimes not returned and their loss is not apparent. A separate record for replacement is, therefore, to be preferred and, as previously noted, catalogue main entries can be used for this purpose in systems where catalogue entries for books awaiting replacement are removed from the catalogues.

In systems where such cards are allowed to remain in the catalogues, speed of replacement should be a prime consideration. It is an annoyance for the reader to ask for a book from the catalogue and to learn that the book is not available. Sometimes this cannot be avoided, but the inconvenience can

be mitigated, and the waiting period reduced, if replacement lists receive regular attention. Books should be purchased new if possible, the practice of waiting for a second-hand copy has nothing to commend it.

Most systems could be improved within existing circumstances by attention to minor details. Reduction of the waiting period for replacements has been mentioned. Also in this category comes the need for keeping shelf stock in active circulation. No book should be allowed to remain on the open shelves if it has not been issued during the preceding twelve months. In branches of less than 10,000 stock this period may well be reduced to six months.

In order to determine the frequency of issue over the course of years it is possible to date-stamp books on issue with the year as well as the month and day, thus providing an immediate check at any future time. Alternatively, inking pads can be charged with a different colour of ink at the beginning of each year. Probably a better method than either of these is to add the full date at the head of every date label. Examination would quickly reveal the number of issues made during the period covered.

Another possible improvement concerns the mending of books, which is fast becoming a lost art. Cheap paper, and the use of transparent tape, have combined to provide a means of annoyance for all who are concerned with the appearance of books. "Invisible" mending is no longer practised; instead, a transparent strip is gummed across a tear, making a useful but ugly patch upon the page.

"Invisible" mending can be carried out quite simply by the use of a flimsy mending paper or tissue that need not be transparent. The edges of the tear are *very lightly* pasted and set together sandwiched between two strips of mending paper. The book is left to dry under a weight and, when dry, the mending paper can be peeled off. The paste on the joint spreads under slight pressure and adheres to a minute portion of the mending paper, so giving a strong, neat joint that is invisible except under close scrutiny. Carefulness and neatness in mending, and attention to small details, differentiate the efficient assistant from the sloven.

Similar precautions are required when processing books. Labelling and carding are necessary but they do represent blemishes on the covers. No more time is taken to fix a label in an upright position than at an angle, yet crookedly placed labels are often seen. The use of too much paste is another common fault that results in unsightly marks and the tearing of pages. Stamping, where practised, should not encroach on the text nor on to plates, while book-cards should be typed or printed in a neat hand.

The lettering of notations on book spines is a process that is often badly performed. This is regrettable, for it is the spine which faces the reader, and which assists in forming a good or bad impression in public estimation. All such lettering should be performed with binder's tools or with an electric stylus. Gummed labels for the purpose are unsightly and unreliable but are still to be found. Lettering should be of a uniform size, at a standard height from the bottom of the book and, preferably, should be the responsibility of one person. Attention to such details will help considerably in reducing public prejudice against the institutional appearance of a library book.

Another routine process which will absorb much time is the satisfying of readers' inquiries and suggestions. The inquiry service forms a first-class means of discovering readers' tastes and requirements. It is possible to gauge the value of a stock, and its completeness and deficiencies for a particular purpose, by analysing and studying the requests and comments of borrowers. Contact with the public in this connection should never be left to the most junior assistant. This is an important task which should receive the attention it demands.

Other important routines are concerned with the compilation of the weekly branch report sheets and the recording of any accidents to staff or readers. The reports are complete records of the week's activities; they should be written so that the chief officer is able to get a clear picture of the work performed at the branches and to gauge the progress of set tasks and routines. The sheets form permanent records which may be referred to at any time in the future. The necessity for accuracy and for the inclusion of all relevant detail is, therefore, apparent.

A desk diary is an important item in each department and in this should be recorded details of all messages, callers, events, and so on. At the back of the diary the assistant-in-charge should note his deficiencies in equipment as these become apparent. At the end of the year these requirements should be brought to the notice of the chief librarian for inclusion in the estimates for the coming financial year.

A record of anniversaries and special days should be maintained. This could be incorporated with material specifically local, and could be made to serve a useful purpose as a vehicle for displays and articles for the local Press.

The accident book is, fortunately, rarely used. For this reason it is often overlooked with results that can be serious. Any mishap to staff or readers should be noted, with full details of time, date, nature of accident, cause, names and addresses of those concerned, including witnesses, and action taken. Later developments, such as insurance claims, often make it important that exact details concerning minor accidents shall be available, and time spent in recording these cannot be considered wasted.

A first-aid box should be provided for the treatment of minor injuries; immediate attention to a small cut can often prevent more serious developments. Every member of the staff should know the elements of first-aid and, more important, should realize the limitations imposed on amateurs in such matters.

Fire drill is another important routine that can be the means of saving lives and property. Exercises at regular intervals are essential, especially when new staff have been appointed. The position of fire extinguishers and their method of working should be known, and these appliances should be examined regularly. The method of giving a fire alarm should be understood by all. This involves knowledge of the location of the nearest fire alarm, which would be used should the telephone be out of order.

With all routines the emphasis must be on use, for the only value of a routine is that it is part of the machinery designed to extend the use of books. Routines are not invariable and all should be designed to make it easy for the assistant to increase the value of the service.

The librarian, for his part, must attempt to increase use by analysing books to reveal their contents; by co-ordinating both books and the facilities available for their exploitation; by displaying stock according to a methodical plan and by spreading the news of the service as widely as possible. The object throughout should be to give an excellent service, having regard to the nature of the system and the clientèle to be served, and to ensure that any provision made is efficient, reliable and related to the needs of the people.

Every system is limited, to a greater or lesser degree, whether by lack of money, staff, buildings or by all three. These factors will inevitably impose definite restrictions on the type and extent of the service to be offered. But, within the framework of the limitations, a librarian should strive until further improvement is impossible. This stage will not be reached, for the enthusiast will never agree that the ideal has been attained. It is this constant striving for something better than the best available that makes for progress and efficiency.

Continual compromise between the desirable and the possible is necessary. Solutions to problems under these circumstances are never constantly satisfactory, for conditions vary and people change, so that a working and effective compromise at one time may degenerate into an effective barrier to service at a later date. Limitation of the number of tickets allowed to each reader, which had its origin in the existence of inadequate stocks, is a case in point.

Degeneration into complacency can be avoided by a critical observation. The librarian should make it his business to study new trends in the professional Press and to take every opportunity to study the methods of work in other systems. Nothing but the best is good enough and, while the ideal may not always be possible, a nearer proximation can usually be attained if the effort is made.

CHAPTER II

PUBLIC RELATIONS

PUBLIC relations should not be confused with publicity. Good public relations must be established by a combination of adequate stock, efficient staff and willing service. Publicity is one of the tools used in the process of spreading the news of facilities in order to increase the credit of the system. Every public relations policy will utilize the methods of publicity in order to achieve efficiency.

There can be no rigid pattern for the development of a library system because every library depends for its well-being on the encouragement received from local inhabitants. Local interest is essential for healthy growth, and with this must be allied a progressive policy on the part of the library committee and vigorous co-operation from the librarian and his staff.

A reader who has been assisted is sometimes ready to assist the library in return by personal recommendation. Moreover, satisfied readers feel that they have a stake in the service and are ready to press for its maintenance and improvement. On the other hand, a community cannot be expected to concern itself with the welfare of a service if its value is never emphasized or demonstrated.

It follows that one of the chief aims of the librarian should be to build a circle of goodwill towards his service. It has long been accepted that a satisfied reader is the best form of advertisement, but it is less frequently noted that the creation of good relations demands more than technical efficiency. An assistant may be efficient and quick to serve, but unless he also possesses warmth in his dealings with the public, his chilling air of officialdom will prevent the accretion of goodwill. Personal contact between staff and public must be stressed. A trained and efficient staff can make the most of limited resources; politeness and willingness to assist create the ideal relationship

between library and reader, and this is not obtainable in any other way.

This friendly atmosphere must be engendered. Technical efficiency there must be, but this must be accompanied by a deliberate attempt to achieve friendly relations. For this reason it is important that the assistant should regard his daily work as a social service rather than as a task to be completed as correctly and as speedily as possible. The librarian must develop this theme constantly in his dealings with his staff and, by his own actions, must set an example for them to follow. There can be no place for the "official" attitude in a successful library service.

Relations between staff and public can reduce the effectiveness of a good system and increase the value of one that may be defective in other respects. A system cannot ever be first-rate unless the staff are keen on their jobs, able and willing to assist and seeking always to increase the value of the service.

Every member of the staff should be encouraged to work for the extension of the service and to regard such a development as an objective in which he has a personal stake. One man cannot make a library service, although one man can do much to discredit it. Every assistant should act as an ambassador; each, in his own way and to the best of his ability, can add his quota of service to the sum total. Only by such co-operative endeavour can a progressive system be developed.

The nature of a small system, with a limited number of assistants, lends itself readily to the development of the team spirit. A small body of workers, each of whom is fired with the desire to give of his best, can make a vital force of a library, even though it is handicapped by deficiencies of stock.

Tact, when dealing with people, will go a long way towards establishing good relations. For example, every assistant has heard the complaint: "I can't find the book I want"; or, "the best books are never in". How should these complaints be handled?

From the point of view of the reader the complaints appear to be justified. The total stock of a library might be 10,000 or 20,000 volumes, yet, of that number, only a small proportion will be of interest to any one reader. The number of additions to this relevant portion will be correspondingly meagre.

A positive explanation is the best method to adopt. It should be explained that a fixed sum is allotted for the purchase of books, and that this money must be spread over several departments and must provide for many subjects, so that the amount available for any one subject—be it fiction or factual—is obviously limited. The remedy should be indicated—an increased allocation, which will involve an increased rate.

This explanation is not likely to fail, and it has the advantage that it places a possible means of remedy in the hands of the reader. He may not take advantage of it, yet there is no doubt that if enough people concerned themselves sufficiently to complain about low book allocations increased funds would result. It is the apathy of the public, partly due to ignorance of the economics of libraries, that is one of the prime causes of the failure of local authorities to supply larger book grants.

The object should be to encourage in library users a proprietary attitude, to make them understand that they are entitled to a good book service and, at the same time, to recognize their civic responsibility with regard to it. This atmosphere can be engendered only by personal service towards readers as individuals.

Personal service is, indeed, important since it plays such a vital part in the use of books. There are three factors in the life of a book:

(*a*) the thought of the author,
(*b*) the receptive reader, and
(*c*) the librarian, who is the link between book and reader.

The librarian has a duty to introduce books to readers and, even more specifically, to ensure that the needs of a reader at a particular moment are satisfied within a reasonable period with the best available book. To further this purpose he must arrange for the contents of books to be effectively displayed and analysed for the use of his public.

From this it follows that the library staff have an important part to play. Unless they are capable and prepared to fulfil their duties the system cannot operate to any effective purpose.

The librarian himself will frequently be called upon to display his powers of resource and understanding in order to assess a given situation and make decisions based upon his

knowledge and experience. He must understand the implications of the gap between theory and practice and know the best means of compromising between one and the other. The required expenditure for books may be 2*s*. per head of population, but if 1*s*. only is available discrimination is required.

The ability of his assistants will be tested by the daily routine of the service and by their contacts with the public. They must develop the confidence born of their training and their grasp of basic principles. In this sphere each man must be his own tutor, to a large extent, for circumstances change and textbook situations are rarely met in practice. Always there are qualifying factors that demand the exercise of judgment and the power of decision on the part of the individual.

Another point for consideration is the impression formed on the reader by the attitude and appearance of assistants. Tidiness and personal cleanliness are, of course, essential and are hardly likely to be overlooked. Sartorial eccentricities should be avoided. Bearing is important; lounging and gossiping within view of the public should be rigorously prohibited. Politeness in all contacts should be a prime consideration.

At one time it was commonly accepted by all shop assistants that "the customer is always right". This attitude has been considerably modified to the benefit of all concerned; hypocritical subservience is not a quality that should be encouraged.

Library assistants could still learn a lesson from the shop assistant in this respect. The customer had to be placated and soothed when his feelings were ruffled, even though he himself was demonstrably in the wrong. A similar willingness to tolerate the peccadilloes of readers would often be advisable in libraries. It is often forgotten that library stocks can present bewildering problems to readers; the intricacies of catalogue and classification are not always easily mastered, or their value readily appreciated, by people unaccustomed to their use. A tolerant staff can make use of the occasion presented by the complaint of an irate reader. Such an event would be regarded, not as an opportunity to score a hit, but as an incident which could lead to an explanation of library methods and policy. The smooth answer, besides turning away wrath, can also assist in building a reputation for courtesy and efficient service.

The art of speaking into the telephone should be cultivated. Apart from the obvious, time-saving method of immediately announcing the identity of the library, there is also the important factor of "telephone personality" to be considered. Normal conversation between individuals is made up of a blend of speech, gesture and impression. Many sentences can be said with a smile that robs the words of any suggestion of rudeness or harshness.

In the case of telephone conversations, gestures are absent, and only the words remain. All assistants should remember that words will be assessed literally in telephone conversations, and that the impression formed by the recipient will be greatly affected by the tone of voice adopted. How many business men, telephoning the library for the first time, have been prejudiced against the service by the uncouth speech mannerisms of a young assistant?

Long periods of waiting on the telephone should be avoided. When it is obvious that a query will involve a search, the inquirer should be asked to state his telephone number so that a return call can be made.

A splendid opportunity exists, particularly in the branches, for work with adolescent readers. It is probable that this section of the community is least represented among our members. Other attractions, and the poor selection of suitable books available are, no doubt, contributory factors. The intimate branch atmosphere would appear to suit the needs of the adolescent, who requires individual attention. Such a development would also serve to bind together the various units of the system into a complete whole and so prevent the feeling of isolation that sometimes pervades branch libraries. Branches are often regarded as stations for the issue of books and have little share in extensional activities. If appropriate books can be supplied, the youth clubs, churches and local organizations should be approached with a view to co-operation.

Efforts made by the staff to ensure the satisfaction of readers should be reinforced by the material factors of building and equipment, as far as this is possible. The building itself should be clean and fresh. We can have no control over existing

designs, and many buildings will never be other than unsuitable. But something can always be achieved by decoration, lighting and general freshness. Windows should always be clean and shelves tidy. Books tend to straggle when moved by searching borrowers, and the difference in book sizes is not conducive to neatness. Too much can be made of this point, books are intended to be read, not to be looked at, but a certain degree of regard for appearance must apply.

Dust on books, shelves, ledges, lamp-shades and tables indicates poor supervision and should not be tolerated. A similar indication of bad staff work is the continual presence of books out of sequence. A book misplaced cannot perform a useful function; if it is not present in its correct position it might as well not be in stock. Care in shelving returned books and in the daily inspection is, therefore, very necessary.

Other matters that cause irritation are often the result of simple oversight. Clocks should always be accurate, the practice of setting a clock a few minutes fast to ensure prompt closing is reminiscent of public-house practice and should have no place in the routine of libraries. Some libraries have their own peculiar practices in minor details. While these may appear harmless enough to the librarian accustomed to them it may well be that they provoke severe irritation in the readers.

Posters and notices that become out of date, torn and ragged should be removed. They give evidence of untidy habits and careless, slipshod routine. Posters displayed should not be too obviously the work of amateurs. The branch librarian who wishes to hold displays is often forced to design his own notices, but it is far better to forgo the advantage of a notice than to exhibit the crude attempts sometimes seen. Incidentally, such ventures often fail because an indifferent performer has attempted an elaborate design far beyond his capabilities. A more restricted plan, simply carried out, would be more pleasing and more successful. There can be no excuse for poor notices, for there are several instruments on the market, such as the *Econasign*, which make it possible for the youngest assistant to produce a presentable notice.

Lighting and heating are usually beyond the control of the

librarian in so far as their initial installation is concerned. But, if either is unsatisfactory, continuous pressure should be brought to bear on the central authority until the position has been remedied. As much as possible should be done locally to make the best use of existing resources, and it is obvious that lights should be switched on a little before they are actually needed rather than a little after. Electricity is cheap, and while economy may be necessary, it should be remembered that economy is wise spending; insufficient spending can be the reverse of economical.

Ventilation is likewise dependent upon original design. The ventilation of some buildings seems to offer a choice between insufficiency and draughts, but even here the worst effects can sometimes be mitigated by the use of screens.

Another annoying feature, which should never be allowed to develop, is delay in the filing of catalogue cards. Such work must always be regarded as of prime urgency, there can be no excuse for allowing cards to accumulate. Lack of staff is sometimes offered as an explanation, but this cannot excuse the neglect of the basic guide to the contents of books. If the catalogue is the key to the library its importance should be recognized and its maintenance given due priority.

It is important to remember, also, that the delayed cards are those for the most recently added books, for which there is always the greatest demand. Failure to find the entry for a desired book will cause discouragement, and will contribute towards building the impression, in the mind of the reader, that the catalogue is a mysterious tool of a complexity beyond the understanding of the average man. That belief is already widely held; librarians should not assist in its perpetuation by tardy insertion of entries.

Such basic provision is important; public libraries exist to give service, and routines and processes are devised to make this possible, that is their only function. Some routines have a minor value; their subordinate function should be recognized, and they should never be allowed to assume unjustifiable importance.

The library service is designed for the use of the people. This, indeed, is its only justification; all parts of administrative

machinery should be directed towards the end of increasing the use made of the service, and all methods must be judged by this objective. Smooth running in all parts of the system is essential for this purpose, yet possible public benefit should not be sacrificed for an advantage in administrative facility. So far as routines are concerned, the best criterion lies in the eventual welfare of the system; any routine that has only established practice to recommend it might well be superseded.

An example of such a method, established by long practice but without value to-day, is the custom of refusing to exchange a book on the day of issue. It is a relic of the indicator days, when all charges were carefully recorded in the little notebook belonging to each slide. There was some justification for the refusal at that time; exchange on the day of issue involved some slight disarrangement of procedure which resulted in a little extra work. The reason was never very weighty; to-day it has lost all validity and the practice should disappear from our routines.

A further example is provided by those systems which limit the number of books issued at one time to each person and refuse to increase this number. Fortunately, such regulations are vanishing; the tendency to-day is towards issuing as many books as can usefully be employed.

Narrow restriction of the number of books issued is a heritage from the past, when supplies were limited and care had to be taken not to deplete the stock. Yet few readers take more books than they actually require, the inconvenience of carryiug them effectually prevents this. There may be individual abuses, but these can be overcome easily enough by providing initially, say, three or four tickets for each person and by issuing further tickets on application. Known abuses can then readily be checked, while the student, who requires a number of books for comparative reading, will not be limited in his choice. Depletion of stock, to which the practice might lead, should be met by increased provision, not by the rationing of books.

Librarians doubtful of the wisdom of this practice should attempt to recall their own student days. Such recollection would quickly affirm the necessity for better provision for those

engaged in study. The desirability or wisdom of supplying text-books does not arise in this connection, for there are many books used for comparative reading of short duration that are required by all students. These should, undoubtedly, be provided.

Some systems refuse to renew books by telephone or by postal request, and insist upon the production of the books at the counter before renewal is considered. There can be no justification for this restriction. Any book not required by another reader should be available for renewal, and it should not be necessary to insist upon the presentation of the books on each occasion.

A similar restriction affects the renewal of overdue books. Where books may be renewed by telephone, an exception is sometimes enforced in the case of books that are overdue; these cannot be renewed until the fine has been paid. Once again, this seems to be an unnecessary obstacle to use, except in the case of the habitual offender. Under normal circumstances, a record of the fine due can be made and inserted in the charge, and the amount owing can be collected when the books are eventually presented for exchange.

In some cases, a debt of this kind may be repudiated by the offender, particularly when the books have been on loan for a long period. This cannot occur very often, for repeated telephone renewals are not of frequent occurrence. The imposition of a petty restriction to prevent a possible minor loss of revenue would not appear to be in the best interests of the service. Any slight monetary gain is far outweighed in value by the loss of goodwill from those readers who are inconvenienced thereby. Moreover, the people who make such use of the service are the very people whom we should attempt to serve as efficiently as possible. Any person who continually renews a book is almost certainly using it for a good purpose; ephemeral reading does not call for such a provision.

Consistency in all dealings with readers is necessary. For example, it may be good policy to issue a book for an extended period to an individual if he has a reason for the request. But, if this is done, the assistant must be prepared to grant similar

facilities to others under similar circumstances. Favouritism must not be allowed to exist, neither must it appear to exist.

Individual service should be featured and subject requests satisfied. This usually demands more than the provision of a single book although, too often, requests are allowed to become forgotten after the initial book has been provided. Additional works should be supplied, and attention given to the reader, until the demand has been completely satisfied.

Speed in the production of books is an important factor, especially in a small system or a branch where limitation of stock causes unavoidable delays. Desire or need for a book may vanish if its production is too long delayed. Such an outcome to a request leads a reader to form a bad impression of the service, and to refrain from further demands that involve the use of stock not immediately available.

Unnecessary delays of any kind should not be tolerated. The practice of making a reader wait for a day or more for his tickets is fortunately dying out but other, less obvious, annoyances still occur that are inimical to good relations. Bindings, for example, tend to become shabby with constant use and misuse. Failure to send a book to the binder is often due to the reluctance, on the part of the librarian, to lose the use of a book for several months. This is an unfortunate waste of time, but it can hardly be avoided under present circumstances. A delayed decision cannot put off the final choice but creates, instead, an impression in the mind of the reader of a shabby, dirty and neglected stock.

Cleanliness of stock is, indeed, vital. It is ridiculous to publicize a library if the shelves are filled with physically soiled books. The bogey of infection from books is always with us. Public libraries have for years been blamed as distributors of soiled books and, although the facts have been exaggerated, they have not always been entirely without foundation. Some libraries still house books on their shelves long after they should have been discarded, and the fear of infection must arise. Facts, as far as they are known, concerning the risk of infection from books seem to indicate that the danger has been much overrated.

The Public Health Act of 1936 covers the treatment of books

that have been in contact with notifiable diseases. Extracts from this Act are quoted in Chapter Eight (Legal Aspects.) Only the general principle is considered in this section.

Any book that has been handled by a patient suffering from an infectious disease is a possible source of danger to another person. But that fact has no particular significance. The air we breathe, the door handles we touch, the food we eat, are all similar possible sources of infection. The real questions to be considered are:

(1) Does a book constitute a *specially* receptive agent for the harbouring of disease?
(2) If so, is it easily transmitted from one user to another?
(3) If infection is present, for how long does it remain?
(4) What, if anything, can be done about it?

No evidence has been produced to show that a book is a specially favourable agent for the spread of disease. Books can easily become contaminated if a patient sneezes or coughs upon them or uses a moistened finger to turn over the pages. Disease can be spread from the book if another reader himself uses a moistened finger to turn pages.

Medical evidence, based on experiments, has shown that bacteria can live for periods of up to four months in the pages of a book. The danger of the infected book to the finger-wetter is, therefore, quite real and may be extended to cover a number of readers. Cleanliness of stock and the disinfection of contaminated books are the best precautions, together with an attempt to persuade readers to turn over pages in a more hygienic manner.

Of these remedies, the provision of clean stock is probably the most important. The essential fact is that, although a book may or may not carry disease, the suspicion of contamination is easily aroused in the mind of a public already confused by earlier prejudice, and this suspicion must be prevented by obvious cleanliness of stock. Readers are less inclined to be afraid of infection when handling a clean book than when asked to read a grubby volume long past its prime. No loophole should be left for doubts about infection and disease.*

* For a fuller discussion see Hill, W., *Books and Infectious Diseases*, L.A.R., 1950, pp. 144–146.

This factor is probably one of the reasons why 75 per cent. of the public make no attempt to use the library service. Another is the fear, largely groundless to-day, that stock is out of date. In technical literature, especially, only the latest edition will serve; this maxim is as important to the small branch as it is to the central library.

Another matter of importance to small systems and branches concerns the staff time taken up by inquiries. Ideally, there should be no limit set to the amount of time devoted to this work; in practice, a halt must sometimes be called when the claims of a borrower threaten to encroach upon the rights of others. In theory, we should supply all books required; in practice, we have to select and balance the claims of one against the other as, for example, when we refuse to supply text-books which will be required for use over a period of months.

Such discrimination must constantly be brought into use when dealing with readers' inquiries. The librarian should not allow his staff to be enveigled into long searches for material. The first duty of the assistant is to indicate the source of information, not to spend time obtaining it when this could be done effectively by the reader himself. Time passed in this way must be compensated for by restricting the time allowed to other readers, and this is prejudicial to the service as a whole. In some cases it is as convenient to obtain the information as to indicate the source and, in such circumstances, this course should be adopted. Yet the danger of such precedents should always be borne in mind, and a firm stand taken against the dissipation of staff time occasioned by the inquirer seeking to avoid the trouble of searching for his material.

It has been said that the purpose of an inquiry is no concern of the librarian and that he should pay equal attention to all seekers. But the doubt arises whether this is the correct attitude to adopt. Surely the librarian must be allowed to judge each case on its merits? If prolonged attention to one person leads to insufficient attention to another the value of the work must be questioned. Is it really as important to settle a slight query as to answer more vital matters? What is ephemeral? That the librarian must decide upon and act accordingly.

Such questions will be decided by the general policy of the system concerned but, whatever the final decision may be, it is certain that the maximum possible service is not practicable all the time. Libraries vary in their approach to the ideal, so much depends upon finance, staff and leadership. But an energetic librarian can do much to improve his own sphere of action and thereby help to energize the system, bringing it closer to the desired standard.

It is important to satisfy all requests with accurate information. The whole library service tends to be judged by the result of a single inquiry, and a bungled request may have the effect of vitiating much carefully planned publicity work, thereby provoking condemnation of an otherwise satisfactory service. It is, therefore, necessary that all requests should be scanned by a competent assistant before any final reply is given to a reader. The satisfied reader is the best publicity we can hope to obtain.

Difficulties sometimes arise through the keenness of assistants, and this is particularly noticeable in the case of inquiries. In a small system reference stocks cannot be comprehensive, while most branches are limited, more or less, to quick-reference material. Any assistant who holds on to a query, and who persists in trying to answer it with inadequate resources, is rendering a disservice to the system. An excess of zeal can sometimes be a definite disadvantage. Such difficulties can be avoided if assistants are taught to report to a senior whenever a query is undertaken which cannot be answered within a few minutes. A trained assistant can judge immediately whether the resources of the department are sufficient to cope with the problem, and much time can be saved by an immediate transfer of the query so that additional resources can be brought to bear.

Details of all requests should be entered in the inquiries book, and this should be examined daily by a senior. Any item that demands extended attention should be clearly marked so that it cannot be overlooked. There should also be provision for suggestions, either in the form of a suggestions book or as separate slips. The decision regarding action to be taken as a result of such suggestions should always be communicated to the reader concerned.

Readers' suggestions constitute a good guide for the librarian to help him to determine the adequacy of his provision. The service is always widely used and forms a genuine convenience for readers. As with many other methods abuses sometimes creep in, and there is usually to be found the individual who reads the reviews and suggests numbers of books that are automatic choices for selection. In this way he ensures that he will get first reading. This practice is contrary to the purpose of the facility, which is designed to ensure that a legitimate interest is not overlooked. Books that are certain to be purchased do not come within the scope of suggestion.

In order to end the abuse suggestions for books on order should not be accepted. If such a suggestion is made it should be returned to the reader with a note to the effect that the book is already on order and should, therefore, be reserved in the usual way. This procedure should be followed only in the case of known abuse and where the device is regularly employed. The isolated, genuine case should be passed without comment.

Every person who makes a suggestion should be informed of the result of his action. A simple card is sufficient. It should tell the inquirer that (*a*) the suggestion has been approved and that the work will be reserved for him when available; or, (*b*) the suggestion has not been approved; or, (*c*) the book has already been ordered and cannot be accepted as a suggestion but may be secured by reservation.

All books suggested by readers demand special treatment. When approved, these books should be ordered immediately and pushed through all processing stages as quickly as possible. The provision of suggested books is a potent method of creating goodwill, but this can be squandered by delay in the production of the book. A book supplied within a few days of the suggestion will give immense satisfaction to the reader; the establishment of such good relations between system and public well repays the little extra work involved. When delay is expected in the purchase of a book as, for example, when the book is reprinting, the borrower should be informed of the fact, otherwise the delay might be ascribed to negligence and inefficiency on the part of the system.

Any untoward happening of this kind that affects the smoothness and efficiency of the service offered to a borrower should be explained to him. Thus, if a reserved book cannot be traced, the reader should not be left in suspense; unless another copy is obtainable he should be informed that his reservation cannot be accepted. Notification should certainly not be delayed until the reader inquires about the book. The knowledge that his suggestion had been hanging fire for several weeks would convince any reader that the service was being conducted with little regard for public convenience.

A file should be maintained of all requests that deal with a definite subject. This could be blended with the file of readers' interests, mentioned in another chapter, so allowing readers to be notified whenever books dealing with their subjects are added to stock.

All efforts directed towards improving the service can be marred by an unsatisfactory stock. A shoddy stock operates against effective service, so that books should be examined regularly to ensure that they are clean, up to date and sufficiently used. Books that fail to satisfy these conditions should be removed from the shelves. Regular inspection is essential, and this can be achieved by ensuring that two or three shelves are inspected, book by book, each day. Continuous stock-taking can be included in the systematic check. As each book is examined it should be ticked against the shelf register or other stocktaking record so that, when a single circuit of the shelves has been completed, approximately two-thirds of the stock will have been checked.

Much time is saved and inconvenience avoided by this method. The service benefits since stock is kept up to date and in clean condition. Moreover, stock-taking is thorough and consists of more than a numerical assessment of losses which, in itself, has little value.

In addition to the routine shelf check there should be a brief inspection of books as they are returned from loan. It may be objected that this procedure is impossible during busy periods, but the difficulty can be overcome quite easily if the practice is adopted of putting all books aside for later examination when the date label has been half-filled. This rough

guide is sufficiently accurate to ensure an inspection after a certain number of issues. It imposes no demands on a busy counter staff, for the examination itself is carried out during the quiet periods.

Methods of renewing and brightening book stock should proceed in conjunction with schemes for attracting and retaining readers. It is worth while to go through the file of unused tickets periodically and to return to borrowers all tickets, except those retained for specific reasons, such as for default. Similarly, the borrowers' register should be examined every autumn for application forms that have not been renewed. A letter should be sent to readers who do not renew their tickets. The following has proved adequate:

> Dear .....
>
> I notice that your library tickets have expired and have not yet been renewed; I hope this does not indicate any dissatisfaction with the service.
>
> If you have experienced any difficulty in getting the books you want will you please let me know? If, at the same time, you care to make a note of your hobbies and interests I will send you a list of books about them.
>
> An application form is enclosed for your use. This form may be completed and returned to any of our branches to ensure prompt renewal of your tickets.
>
> Yours faithfully,
>
> LIBRARIAN.

Efforts of the library staff in fostering good relations with the public are best revealed by personal service, both inside and outside of the library, displays and, in some cases, by bulletins. A good opportunity is presented where libraries possess show windows facing the street since the windows offer the basic requirements for public display. The opportunity should not be neglected for a well-lighted window, effectively arranged, can compel passers-by to stop and see for themselves the attractions within.

It is a good plan to study the art of window dressing as

illustrated by the methods of the larger stores. Note the economy of exhibits and the contrast of colour, size, position and grouping. Profiting by this experience, the librarian should be careful to limit the number of books on view in his window display. He should include pictorial material and displays, and refuse to allow his books to be arranged in rows but should scatter them, some open, some upright, arranged singly and in groups. Background colours should harmonize; they should be bright but not designed to attract attention away from the books. Variety should be introduced by regular changes which could well reflect current events and interests.

One of the best methods is to study adjacent shop windows, and then to design the library window in a different style in order to make it stand out from other frontages. The demands of good taste enter here, and no purpose would be served by too great a clash. But the variety of backcloths, lighting and arrangement is so wide that a different style can well be achieved without a violent contrast.

Every library can act as the public information centre with regard to the activities of local societies. This need involve little expenditure of time. A bulletin board, set up in a prominent position on the library premises, would record future events in the social and cultural life of the community. Secretaries of local societies would be pleased to supply the necessary information for this calendar of events in order to gain publicity for their ventures. The library itself would benefit from the resulting public interest and also from the opportunity afforded for contact with the groups concerned. The extent of the gain accruing to the library service will depend, naturally, upon the zeal of the librarian in pursuing the contacts established.

Information screens lend themselves well to many forms of publicity. There is a distinct advantage in having a settled, well-chosen site for announcements and, if the screen is attractively maintained with real news and interesting items, readers will get into the habit of studying it on their way in or out of the building. But material must not be allowed to languish, nothing must be retained too long or allowed to remain after

its purpose has been served. Neither must too much material be included as copy, otherwise all interest will be lost.

In order to make the best use of the service it is necessary to evaluate facilities from the user's angle. Over-familiarity with resources makes it difficult for librarians to look at their service from the readers' point of view. It is not easy of achievement, but neither is it impossible, and it must be attempted if any system is to be of maximum value. We are apt to assume that facilities known to us are also known to readers, but this is not the case. Every feature must be stressed and stressed again, not only for existing borrowers, but also for the benefit of those coming from other departments and other areas.

Repetition of essential information does not nauseate. The propagation of necessary facts is accepted by those already aware of those facts, and the repetition is tolerated and made bearable by the bland feeling it provides of superior knowledge. Moreover, in these days of repetitive advertising, the mind's eye becomes conditioned to pass over the non-essential and known, without noticeable impression or irritation, and to be attracted only by the new and important items.

Proof of this can be demonstrated every day. Does repetitive commercial advertising nauseate? No! It makes *little* impression, taken item by item, and achieves its effects insidiously over a long period. There need, therefore, be no fear of boring readers by repeated news of facilities. Such repetition, within reason, is necessary and should be practised.

This, however, does not mean that the library building should be littered with notices, or that the walls should be plastered with posters on every free space. It is possible to have too many notices and to overwhelm readers by the mass of print exhibited. All facilities should be mentioned, but this is preferably effected by the use of a neatly printed booklet, which should be presented to new readers and, thereafter, continuously displayed. Extracts from this publication could form a feature of other bulletins issued, so that the matter as a whole is in constant process of circulation.

Surely this method is to be preferred to the attempt to explain everything by notices? It is true that public libraries, in the past, have been over-formalized, and it is not surprising

to find a reaction to-day. In spite of this, it is not necessary to treat library walls as barrack-room notice boards.

The library movement must go out to meet the public, but let it go proudly with a true estimate of its own value, not cap-in-hand with a supplicating outlook. Libraries have something of value to offer, and the public must be kept informed of such things. Librarians must serve the public with probity and efficiency, but not with servility. Methods must be revealing and effective, but aims will not be achieved by indiscriminate billposting in library departments.

CHAPTER III

AIDS TO READERS

THE best method of assisting readers is to provide them with a good book stock and to make it readily available. It is the duty of the librarian to introduce his readers to the contents of books and, in order to do this, he must know both books and readers.

The function of assisting readers is very wide and complex, yet the principle itself is simple. Basically, it consists in telling the reader of the resources available, in terms that he can understand. The reader cannot be forced to accept facilities, but if these facilities have been adapted to meet his requirements—and this involves book selection according to needs—then self-interest will lead the normal individual to make use of the resources provided.

To assist in this object all material must be readily available, so that there are no barriers between reader and books. Obsolete regulations, overcrowded shelves, catalogues that confuse with excess detail—all of these obstacles to use must be swept away and replaced by more logical methods. A library must be used if it is to be of value; the librarian's purpose is to facilitate this use. To offer a service is not enough; it must be interpreted and presented in terms of public requirements.

Branch librarians are favourably placed for helping readers since their area of service is small, their borrowers limited in number and, therefore, more intimately acquainted with the staff. Accordingly, the service can approach the ideal of personal attention to individuals. As literary adviser to a limited circle, the local assistant is able to get to know readers and so to base his comments on a fund of personal knowledge.

The limited area of a branch, therefore, although a handicap in many ways, operates beneficially with regard to the relationship between readers and staff. There are other circumstances

in which the branch has the advantage. The smallness of the building may be welcomed by many, for large rooms have a depressing effect on some people, while the central organization may appear to be too formalized and too complex for a person who is inclined to belittle the importance of his own requirements. Most people are more at home with the familiar, and will turn to an assistant who is known to them and accessible rather than to a stranger in an office or behind a desk.

This factor operates particularly with regard to readers' inquiries. One of the great difficulties of such work is to discover the actual nature of the request; this is a common complaint of all reference librarians. This obstacle is largely overcome at the branches, where the more intimate atmosphere is conducive to easier, less formal, relations.

The assistant who is keen on his job will soon acquire a detailed knowledge of the area, both with regard to industries and the habits and needs of the populace. He will get to know his readers as individuals, and will discover their tastes, preferences and aversions. He will know which books will appeal and to whom. In fact, it has been said that he can select books with individuals in mind. This is a procedure to be recommended provided it does not stand alone. As the sole factor in selection it can be grossly misleading, and can lead to poor provision for those readers who fail to make their requirements known. Supply creates demand in many cases, yet this principle cannot operate if the selection is limited to known demand.

Selection should certainly be influenced by the demands of individuals and groups of known tastes and requirements, but trial provision should also be made so that readers can experiment and branch out into new territory. All of the methods of aiding readers should be brought into use to assist in this purpose; book-lists, bulletins, displays, lectures and exhibitions should all play their part.

Personal contact between staff and readers, therefore, brings many opportunities, but the responsibilities are correspondingly great. If the staff neglect their duty the service will languish; if they are incompetent they will lose the confidence of their readers and bring discredit upon the whole system.

For these reasons, the assistant entrusted with the management of a branch should be a first-class librarian yet, too often, branches are considered to be the inevitable resting places for "lame ducks". It is a great temptation for a chief officer to keep his best men at his side in order to maintain the reputation of the central library. This is a bad policy, for a system's reputation can be blasted completely by the faults of an incompetent branch librarian. To the majority of readers, the local branch *is* the library, and its faults are the faults of the system as a whole.

A form of personal service is revealed by the record of the hobbies and interests of readers. There are three obvious sources that will aid in the compilation of this file: the printed notice, the application form, and readers' inquiries and suggestions.

A card similar to that illustrated in Fig. 2 should be provided and this will result in a number of direct requests.

I am interested in the following subjects:—

*.....

.....

Please supply list of books.

Name.....

Address .....

.....

* Insert names of subjects, e.g. gardening, cricket, motor-cycling, fishing, politics, etc.

Fig. 2
Hobby Card

The footnote is included although it is not, apparently, necessary since the blank lines are obviously designed for the insertion of headings. But experience has proved that an amazingly large number of people do not realize that books are available on their pet subject. Carpentry, for example, is one of those hobbies picked up over the course of years and improved by constant practice. Many amateur carpenters seem to know nothing of the vast amount of useful detail contained in books.

Provision should also be made on the membership application form as in Fig. 3:

NAME..... Mr. / Mrs. / Miss
(Surname first in block letters)

I, the undersigned, make application for tickets enabling me to borrow books from the B..... Public Libraries. I agree to conform with the regulations made by the Council.

SIGNATURE.....

ADDRESS..... DATE.....

INDICATE SPECIAL HOBBIES OR INTERESTS.....

.....

(You will be informed when books on these subjects are added to stock.)
If you are under 21 years of age please obtain the signature of a Ratepayer below.
I, the undersigned, being a ratepayer of the Borough of B..... recommend the above applicant as a fit and proper person to borrow books.

SIGNATURE.....

ADDRESS..... DATE.....

PLEASE WRITE IN INK

Fig. 3
Application Form

If the space is not utilized by the applicant the assistant checking the form should draw attention to it and attempt, without fuss or coercion, to ascertain whether the reader has specific interests. This is an important point, for many people are diffident and over-modest. They believe that such a service is reserved for technical, specialized or learned subjects

and do not assume, unless informed of the fact, that canary breeding and carpentry are included within the scope of the scheme. Some encouragement is, therefore, advisable.

The third source of information comes from readers' inquiries and suggestions. Each inquiry that indicates a subject interest should be recorded in the file. In this way an index of individual reading tastes is quickly built up.

When notification is received of a readers' subject request or hobby a record card should be compiled. Fig. 4 shows a useful card for this purpose.

READERS' HOBBIES AND INTERESTS
(Filing Card)

Classification	Subject	
Reader's Name	Address and Tel. Number	
Remarks		Date of Cards sent

Fig. 4
Hobby Filing Card

Before this card is filed in its classified sequence a book list should be compiled and sent to the reader. The following letter might prove useful in persuading readers to show appreciation by spreading news of the library service:

Dear .....

I have pleasure in sending a list of the works in the B ..... Public Libraries dealing with.....

As further books on this subject are added to stock you will be notified.

I trust that this list will meet your requirements, but if you should desire additional material please inform me.

An attempt is being made to spread the news of the public library service as widely as possible and to enrol all who live, work or attend school or evening classes in the Borough.

I enclose two membership application forms. Would you be prepared to assist by handing these to friends who do not use the service?

Yours faithfully,

LIBRARIAN.

Whenever new books are added to stock, reference to the hobby file will indicate the names of readers who will be interested, and these people should be notified. A simple card, as illustrated in Fig. 5, is sufficient.

Consistency in notification is essential, and unless this can be guaranteed the method is better not applied. There should, however, be no difficulty on these grounds in any well-planned system; a routine should be laid down and adhered to so that notification becomes automatic.

Such a file has many possibilities. It is obviously useful as an aid to book selection, for a certain number of readers for particular subjects can be guaranteed. It is useful, also, to aid in the compilation of a panel of lecturers, who would be prepared to discuss their particular interests before an audience of children, adolescents or adults. Such amateur enthusiasts are often able to give talks of great interest, and are easily persuaded to mention the books on their subjects. Of course, the scheme sometimes breaks down, and the lecturer proves to be a poor speaker or a bore. But little harm is done, and a note in the file can prevent a repetition.

The basic idea of the interest file can be extended to include the manufacturers and commercial concerns in the district. It would constitute a useful service to the community if the

The following work has been added to the stock of the Public Libraries:

.....

.....

.....

If you wish to reserve this book, hand this card to an assistant at any library in the Borough.

Fig. 5
Subject Notification Card

various shops and firms in the area could be supplied with lists of books relevant to their trades. Similarly, professional men could be approached, and the headmasters of technical and evening schools invited to accept lists appertaining to the syllabus of their establishments.

At this stage it is necessary to ensure that any promises regarding book provision can be carried out. It is obviously useless to canvass local traders, and to suggest the provision of books in subject groups, unless the system is well represented in such groups. Most branches, because of their size, will not be strongly represented in any one particular section. The solution here is to seek as full a selection as possible in subjects concerned, and to supplement this provision with a complete list of the works available in the central stock. Co-operation can then be sought on the basis of existing stock plus central resources, the latter effectively revealed by the subject lists. Such a method is effective, within limits, and represents the

most satisfactory compromise possible in view of the necessarily limited branch stock.

The whole problem of assisting readers is closely linked with that of internal publicity. Publicity and extension methods have been dealt with in a previous work,* and duplication is not required here. Sufficient, however, must be included to clarify the position for present purposes.

The over-riding maxim is that publicity should never be adopted for its own sake; there should always be a definite purpose in view and this end should be closely adhered to. It is very necessary to emphasize this, for publicity has an insidious quality; it can creep into the routine so gradually that an individual finds himself going on long after he should have stopped. It is easily possible to begin with the intention of publicizing one feature of the service and to end by attempting to publicize the whole.

Herein lies the danger. For the second rule of library advertising is never to publicize a poor or incomplete service. Publicity has a boomerang effect; advertise a poor service and the repercussion is alarming. It has often been pointed out that a satisfied reader is the finest form of publicity. But it is no less true that the dissatisfied reader acts as a publicity agent with the power of seriously vitiating good public relations. The rule should, therefore, always be adhered to that advertising ventures should be confined to those features that can stand up to use and criticism, for criticism is bound to occur as long as people's tastes differ.

It follows that the service should be put into good working order before any attempt is made to extend its use. Consolidation is required before elaboration. When that has been achieved a further maxim applies; that publicity should be beamed rather than diffused. This simply means that the whole of the available resources should be concentrated on a single point or aspect at a time and not spread over a number of different, though related, aspects.

These particulars are vital to the librarian, for he is concerned with books and the exploitation of their contents. Thus he will not be concerned to put on a display for the sake of

* Elliott, Charles A. *Library Publicity and Service.* 1951. Grafton.

display, but will use this feature for a definite purpose, such as to exploit a certain subject group. In this way he will be able to direct his instrument to his chosen end and so derive full benefit from the effort demanded.

Another factor with which he will be concerned is the co-ordination of his various media, such as displays, posters, lists and bulletins. These should be made to work together, so that the effect of each supplements the work of the others, thus achieving the harmony necessary to effect the greatest good.

All of these efforts lead to the one end, to lay bare the contents of books and to reveal the scope of the stock to the questing reader. Throughout it is necessary to bear in mind that the best of all publicity is an efficient service; all other efforts will fail unless this end is gained. The goodwill of the public is vital to any system; it is necessary for its welfare and the cultivation of such an attitude demands priority in any programme. The personal attention of the librarian to the problems of his public is, therefore, a vital consideration.

In order to smooth the path of the reader various internal aids are provided. These include the catalogue and the scheme of classification chosen. Catalogues should be adequately guided. Explanations should be simple and brief, and should include just sufficient instruction to enable the reader to find a book by subject, author or title, and to trace the book from catalogue to shelves. This information should be expanded, with examples, in the printed guide which should be provided.

Classification and cataloguing aids are too often allowed to remain out of reach of the borrower; they are treated as secret processes evolved for the use of the staff and of no concern to the members of the public. This attitude is wrong, of course, but the fault does not always lie with the reader. In some cases, no attempt is made to explain the catalogue and classification; in other cases, an initial lecture is given at the time of registration and the borrower is afterwards left to fend for himself.

Both methods are to be deplored. The reader must be made to realize that the processes have been devised for his benefit and he should be encouraged, even coaxed, to make the effort to understand them. Effort is necessary—that is why

understanding is still generally lacking—for man is loath to undertake unnecessary labour, and must be persuaded by self-interest. That, indeed, is the key to the problem. If self-interest can be aroused, if the reader finds it to his advantage to understand the methods of arrangement, there will be no lack of comprehension. How can this be achieved?

A method that has worked very well includes the co-ordinated use of a bulletin and leaflet. A printed leaflet, setting out the chief features of the classification and catalogue, should be provided and presented to the new reader. This will probably be hastily read and put aside, it is unlikely to be closely studied. That does not matter. Knowledge of the existence of this aid will be implanted and, if copies are always available on the catalogue cabinet, they can be acquired at a later date if desired.

The initial lecture should be omitted, it serves no useful purpose. A new reader does not want to be dragooned or forced to listen to what is, after all, a talk of limited interest at that stage. Instead, the readers' adviser, who should receive all new readers, should limit his talk to a few sentences, including in it just sufficient information to explain the layout of the stacks and the connection between stacks and catalogue.

The bulletin should contain details of new books, and entries should be well annotated. Notations should *not* be given. The annotations are the draw; if these are sufficiently well presented the reader is encouraged to look for the books concerned. He will probably inquire of the staff and, at this point, the lesson in the use of catalogue and classification is valid. The book required is *not* produced for the inquirer, instead he is taught to find the book for himself. Since there is an object in view, the lesson is concealed and is not resented or ignored.

The difference between this method and that of the initial lecture lies in the fact that the suggested method utilizes the self-interest of the reader. He wants a particular book and he will, therefore, be concerned to find out how to get it. The process is not difficult and the slight effort required is soon forthcoming when the interest of the reader is aroused.

This is the time when the printed leaflet is likely to be most useful. If now presented it will probably be *studied*. In-

cidentally, there is no reason why the scope of the leaflet should not be extended to include details such as hours of opening, telephone numbers and other facilities.

The real answer to the problem of persuading people to understand classification sequences undoubtedly lies in the juvenile library. Children are willing to learn, and the librarian should ensure that instruction in the methods of arrangement is frequently given. Such instruction should not take the form of a formal lesson, but should be conveyed by means of the library game, or book hunt, in which the children are given slips of paper bearing book titles and subjects to be traced from catalogue to shelves. Interest can be sustained by introducing the competitive element.

A further method, with a similar purpose, is to enlist the aid of children in putting books in order and in shelving them. The best way to understand a sequence is to examine it and correct any disarrangement. Most children enjoy helping in this way and regard it as a privilege. Their assistance should be encouraged.

Librarians are certain to meet the problems of printing when considering lists and leaflets, but this is not the place for a discussion of good and bad print. More can be learned of printing processes from a few hours spent in a printer's shop than from days of book study. The criteria that govern the production of good printing should be understood by the librarian and his principal assistants, for all should be able to give adequate instructions to printers when the need arises. The man who knows what he wants and what is possible is able to obtain the most effective production at the least cost. It should be a matter of concern to librarians to avoid uneconomical methods of printing and to achieve the maximum effect so that the limited printing budget can be spread as widely as possible.

The librarian is frequently limited in his choice of printer by reason of authority contracts and similar restrictions. Even in such cases, pressure can be brought to bear by the knowledgeable person. Type faces, within the limit of the printer's range, can always be specified and designs suggested.

Such an obvious factor as the use of space is frequently

neglected. Margins should be wide and of standard proportions. Lists of books should not be lengthy, otherwise they will not be read. Half a dozen titles in a block are quite sufficient, if more are necessary a sub-heading should be inserted.

The effectiveness of type depends, to a large extent, on the paper with which it is used. In fact, one of the proofs of good printing lies in the selection of materials such as type, paper and ink, and in the skill with which these are co-ordinated. All should be in harmony, so that each contributes individually and collectively to the perfection of the finished product. The purpose of the publication should always be considered in this respect, and this factor will materially affect design, presentation and cost.

Similar principles affect the production of duplicated lists, which can be quite effective where printing is not possible. A good plan is to compile lists of books of likely interest to the workers in the local industries. These should be sent to the managements concerned with a suitable covering letter. The extent of previous co-operation will influence the method here, but if earlier contact has been made, and good relations established, this step is easy enough. If previous co-operation has not been practised, a good deal of tact is necessary at this stage to prevent the swift transference of lists to the rubbish bin.

The object is to get permission for the display of lists in canteens, offices, work and rest rooms. Such lists may or may not be effective in action, much depends upon their contents. The belief is widespread that workers are interested in books on their trades, but this is not always true. For this reason, a general list of wide appeal is advisable at the initial approach.

Addressed cards should be provided, similar to that illustrated in Fig. 2 on page 51, asking for details of the individual's hobbies. Quite good results may be expected from this approach. Fig. 6 illustrates a cover of a general list that has given good service. About twelve to fifteen annotated titles should be included, and all should be chosen to appeal to a wide selection of people.

The use of lino cuts with coloured ink can provide variety

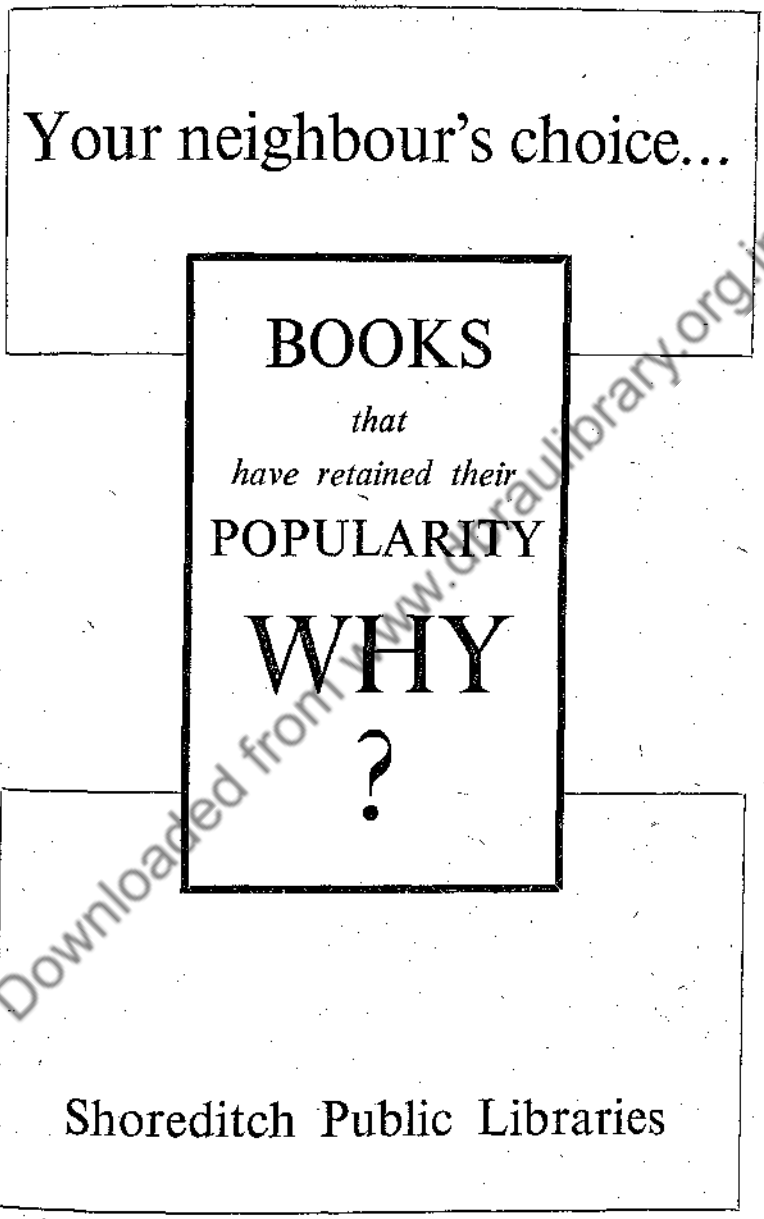


Fig. 6

where short runs are sufficient. Thin lines do not reproduce well, but block designs can usefully be employed to give striking effects out of the common run. Such lists are a great asset, especially when used in conjunction with displays, for the design can be made appropriate to the subject of the display. It is a cheap method of reproduction, for the blocks can be discarded when their purpose has been served.

These methods, if pursued with a definite purpose, can materially assist in raising the standard of reading. Too much attention is commonly paid to quantity in reading and too little to quality. We should also be concerned with the number of people who use the library service and not exclusively with the amount of each individual's reading. Efforts must be directed towards the task of implanting the library habit more widely.

People who use libraries will read when they want to do so, and we should not attempt to force them to read at the expense of other worth-while activities. The attempt, if made, will not be successful so that time and energy might, with advantage, be better used by trying to reach those people who do not use the service and by making more suitable provision for those who choose to read. If we double the number of books read by existing readers during the course of a year we may or may not have achieved something, the answer depends upon the type of reading. But if we double the number of registered readers we have definitely taken a desirable step towards community service.

Quality in reading is desirable, but those who would prohibit all but the standard works are attempting to restrict the service. Librarians have a duty to all who can make use of books; even a light work can form a mental exercise for some people.

It used to be said that novels would attract people into the library where they could be introduced to better material. This argument is scoffed at to-day yet, although it is possible to make too much of it, there still remains a grain of truth *if the introduction is attempted*. Too often readers are attracted to the library in search of something to read, then left to their own devices, so that they quickly exhaust the obvious supply. It is not entirely their fault if they do not proceed to the more

solid fare. Unless some guidance is given are they entirely to blame?

It is easily forgotten that the librarian has a function, not only to select, but also to analyse and make available. He should demonstrate to the casual reader, by means of imaginative lists, displays and by personal guidance, that the solid ranks of books have real value.

Another section of the population, sometimes overlooked, consists of the children below school age. Opinions differ as to whether provision should be made for the young child of five years of age or thereabouts. Such children cannot, usually, read but they can make intelligent use of a picture book. On the other hand, they cannot take care of their books and wastage is high.

An attempt to solve this problem by the provision of a Young Children's Collection in the adult lending library is an idea seen in action at the Penge Public Library. Books are provided for the children who are too young to use the juvenile library. Such books are available for loan to *parents* who are, of course, held responsible for their return in good condition. An extra ticket is issued to all adults who wish to make use of this service.

Another popular feature at Penge consists in the method devised for indicating the subjects of novels. Thus the letter "A" stamped on the spine of a novel indicates a detective story, "B" a sea story, and so on. These letters do not affect the shelving sequence of the books which are arranged, as is usual, in an alphabetical order of authors. There are about eight of such categories, and a guide to these is prominently displayed in the fiction run. The idea is very popular with readers and seems to have possibilities.

An alternative method would be to instruct the binder to use a distinctive colour for each type of novel. Thus all of the detective stories might be coloured red, the sea stories blue, and so on. As with the previous scheme, arrangement on the shelves would be alphabetical by the names of authors. A possible objection to this plan is that, since a large proportion of the novel stock comes under the heading "general", too great a preponderance of a single colour would give a

monotonous appearance to the shelves. This may not be true in practice, for the mass would be broken by the colours of the smaller groups, interspersed at intervals, and by those novels in publishers' cases.

The idea of a parents' collection is attractive in view of the fact that the young reader is the adult borrower of to-morrow. It seems obvious that the best way to elevate reading taste is to teach the children to appreciate the best of books and to understand how to use them. *Snow White* will not have much effect on the cultivation of taste but it will assist in the formation of the habit of using and caring for books. No more can be expected at this age. The child can be taught how to use a library, the adult will not always submit to tuition.

Children of all ages must be encouraged to use the library, of the necessity for this there can be no doubt. No one will question the desirability of spreading the influence of books, especially to-day when other attractions are so powerful and when mass entertainment and stimulation operate so effectively to discourage independent thought. Yet, although separate provision is made for children in many, and perhaps most, places, the actual work with children is less often pressed home.

The librarian must encourage the child to learn, not by the methods of the school teacher, but by arousing interest, curiosity and the sense of fun and adventure. Thus the library should be complementary to the school, but not suggestive of it. There should be no coercion, the child must be free, and must feel free, to pick and choose. The assistant's task is to make selection of the best and to guide where necessary. Compulsion is out of the question, but gentle persuasion is in order where the children are known to the librarian. Tactfully handled, children can be influenced along the right lines and encouraged to venture along the paths of literature. Work with children includes more than the supply and distribution of books.

In order to provide the tools for this work it is essential that a good selection should always be available on the shelves; this policy implies the duplication of those books which we know to be valuable. It would also be a good plan to include a copy of these works in the juvenile reference library so

that the children can be sure of access to every work required, but here the size of the system may operate to prevent such provision. Yet, notwithstanding the limitations of size, a planned policy of service to the juvenile population should be initiated, for no better means is available for ensuring library interest in the adult of the future.

A very important means of providing assistance for readers lies in the use of display, and such methods are discussed in the following chapter. There is another feature, frequently unexploited, which can be made to act both as an aid and as an attraction. Such a feature exists in the provision of magazines. Magazines are displayed in most libraries, but they are not often exploited in conjunction with the book stock. This is unfortunate, since it is well known that the latest technical information appears in the magazines. Another factor, less often stressed, is that many of the habitual readers of periodicals are people who do not read books.

It is suggested that periodicals which deal with definite subjects are likely to be more useful if sited in the lending library near to the books to which they refer. Back numbers should also be filed here so as to be immediately available. This method creates the opportunity for introducing the periodical reader to the books on his subject. Any system that limits its display of periodicals to the central library would probably find that the purchase of a dozen or so technical magazines for the branches, and used as here suggested, would materially increase the value of its service.

CHAPTER IV

DISPLAY

DISPLAYS can be of potent use in a library as a means of exploiting stock. Display is here considered in a restricted sense as meaning, in effect, temporary re-classification; that is, the discarding of the original characteristic of arrangement and the substitution of another of temporary interest. Thus displays may be designed with a characteristic of topicality, the result being to gather together those books, diverse in subject, but related by current interest. The characteristic of function may be chosen, or literary form may be ignored and a display may be arranged to bring together literary works of various forms linked by subject interest.

Display can, therefore, be used to link together subjects related, either permanently or temporarily, but which are normally separated by the scheme of classification. Display also operates to break down the subject unit by which books are classified in order to bring together the pure subjects that are, quite frequently, separated.

The co-ordinating function of this tool should not be neglected. It is the thread that runs through the classification scheme, linking together and revealing allied material normally separated, and bringing into prominence those aspects and topics that are of secondary importance from the point of view of primary classification. This feature can be used to bring out the hidden values of a scheme of classification by linking allied subjects, emphasizing neglected relationships, and stressing the importance of subjects enhanced in comparative value by the needs of the moment. Secondary subjects, which must be ignored by the classifier, are rescued from the oblivion of the catalogue and revealed together with related material. The use of display to supplement many

of the other processes and facilities should not be overlooked.

Display is only one aspect of the process that results in the revealing of the contents of books. The display, like the classification and catalogue, is a vital tool of the librarian in his task of stock exploitation. Both classification and catalogue have their allotted share in the process of revealing the contents of books. The display reinforces and supplements these efforts, and can be regarded as an agent for co-ordinating the analytical resources of a system. A good display consists, for this reason, not of isolated works, but of a series of mutually supporting contributions.

An example of the use of the display feature in conjunction with other processes is afforded by the routine of revision of stock. Stock revision should be a continuous process. Assistants-in-charge of lending libraries and of branches should aim at checking a definite section weekly, bringing editions up-to-date and adding fresh stock where necessary. This is a vital process, but the value of it is reduced unless the public are aware that revision is taking place. When a reader has exhausted the resources of the stock on his own subject he usually turns his attention to other sections of the library and, thereafter, often fails to make the necessary periodical check to discover the additions made, from time to time, in the section of his original interest. Display can ensure that this material is not overlooked. As each section is completed it can form the subject of a display; this will be of use to the person immediately interested and will also create the impression of efficiency in the minds of other readers.

Every library possesses a collection of pamphlet material which is rarely used to its best advantage. The flimsy make-up of the pamphlet is an effective obstacle to its exploitation, except where special methods are devised to bring the library resources of this kind to the attention of readers.

The display can be used for this purpose. The method can be adapted to reveal pamphlet resources in subject groups, both alone and in conjunction with the book stock.

In a similar manner, reference books can be exploited, their use encouraged and the barrier between lending and reference libraries broken down. It is possible to demonstrate the

correct use of a library by means of a display that gathers together books and pamphlets from both lending and reference departments. This combination would effectively reveal that only by utilizing the full resources of a library can the study of a subject be successfully pursued.

While these methods give an indication of the variety of use, the intention of the display should be constantly held in view. Co-ordination of material is necessary, for the display should not stand alone or its effectiveness will be diminished. Lists, preferably annotated, should be provided in order that the scope and selection may be represented even when the books themselves have been issued.

In order to achieve the best results a policy must be laid down initially, and this must be adhered to unless some good reason demands its modification. Enthusiasm is not enough; many displays are eagerly commenced and allowed to fade away in neglect. It is important to remember the primary objects; the desire to attract attention to valuable material, to exploit the contents of books, to link related aspects and to elevate reading standards. These objects should govern the display policy and should affect the nature of the displays themselves.

From this it follows that the feature can play an important role in the library's policy; it is not a stunt and it should not be regarded as such. It is not designed to trick a reader into taking a book he does not want; it does not depend upon false representation. It is based upon the principle of analysis and re-grouping in order to demonstrate hidden values and relationships. If this object is attained, the feature will have fully repaid all the time devoted to it.

Objections are sometimes raised, since it is claimed that the display takes books from the shelves out of their subject sequence, and so robs the classification of its effectiveness. If displays are too numerous at one time this is probably true, but it does not hold good for normal display work limited in number. Moreover, only a selection of the material on a subject is usually employed, so leaving subject representation on the shelves.

Opinions differ as to the maximum number of displays to

be featured at one time. It has been stated that too many simultaneous displays constitute the negation of librarianship. This is a sensible point of view since display is, in effect, temporary re-classification. Three or four displays at any one time are quite sufficient for all purposes; more than this number will destroy the value and meaning of the classified sequence. Advice to feature numerous displays is reminiscent of the argument that if a dose of medicine is beneficial, then a double dose must be twice as valuable. Multiplicity of displays can only result in the transformation of the library into a place resembling a jumble sale, with odd lots being pressed on all comers.

Having regard to these facts, the librarian may decide to limit himself to, perhaps, a series of four displays. These may consist of something like the following:

(1) *Recommended Books*

This would constitute a permanent display and would warrant the provision of a colourful poster to attract attention to it. The books would be circulating continually and both fiction and factual material should be included.

Strict attention must always be paid to the contents of this feature, and no book should be included which cannot be well recommended. Readers sometimes deposit their own favourite works in the display troughs, or use them as depositories for books no longer required, so that regular weeding-out becomes necessary. Given regular care, this form of display can serve as a very useful feature, for readers become accustomed to accepting the value of the suggestions, and will make the effort to read a difficult book purely on the strength of its recommendation.

The librarian who cares to accept this challenge to his selection will find a very potent weapon ready to his hand. A selection of recommended books is always popular. It may be that some readers are lazy and want to avoid the labour of choosing their own books; it may be that their knowledge of authors is sketchy, or the shelf selection limited. Whatever the reason, it can be asserted with confidence that a display of this kind will be successful provided it is regularly supplied

with suitable additions. It is, therefore, possible to ensure that a good proportion of the system's borrowers will be brought into contact with literature of a definite value.

The Recommended Books display allows the librarian an opportunity to gain the attention of the readers who normally limit their reading to the lightest of material. Such readers are often afraid to venture beyond their normal field of selection for fear of getting a "dry", uninteresting book. In many cases, their chief need is for guidance through the maze of literature.

It is no use pretending that readers of the ephemeral can be transformed into readers of the best in literature. This seldom or never happens, for discrimination in reading requires more than the desire for improvement. But most readers can be assisted to improve their taste, their chief difficulty is to know how. The following (15 in. × 10 in.) poster, attached to a book trough, has had a remarkably good effect (Figure 7).

Books by the recommended authors are placed in the trough. Experience has proved that these books gain an increased circulation. Moreover, other works by these authors are sought on the shelves. An experiment on these lines is easy to make and should be attempted. This display, in particular, is increased in value if a duplicated list is provided. The selection should be very full, because circulation of books is rapid and the trough must be continually replenished.

(2) *Current Affairs*

The scope of the title is very wide and allows for the inclusion of a diversity of subjects. The Bureau of Current Affairs wall map and bulletins were useful auxiliaries for use with this presentation. Their place can be taken by illustrations selected from the Illustrations Collection.

The sets of photographs, issued by the Central Office of Information, form admirable subjects on which to base selections. These photographs circulate from system to system at fortnightly intervals. The appeal of the illustrations and the admirable explanatory captions ensure an effective background to the selection of books. A corner of the lending library set aside for this feature would be certain of regular patronage.

A headline, news item or photograph, torn from a news-

If you Like Books

by

Pearl Buck

Monica Dickens

Gilbert Frankau

Naomi Jacob

Cecil Roberts

Nevil Shute

H. E. Bates

Geoffrey Household

Sinclair Lewis

P. H. Newby

Upton Sinclair

C. P. Snow

try

(Display Poster, Figure 7)

paper, can form the nucleus of an attractive poster for use with a current affairs display. Alternatively, an extract from the report of a speech by a prominent figure will serve a similar purpose. It is found that cuttings from local newspapers, or about local people or events, attract the greatest attention.

Very wide scope is allowed here, and the opportunity is favourable for developing the use of factual works. Normally, it is difficult to gain a reader's interest in subject material except when he has a definite end in view.

With current affairs, the interest frequently exists, although the reader may not develop the interest by reading unless the books are placed before him. A man who has read a newspaper account of events or people in countries abroad may read books or pamphlets on the subject if they are to hand, whereas he would not himself consider looking for them in the subject sequence. Little may be gained in many cases. On the other hand, the selection may be the means of introducing the habit of checking on facts and of using factual material.

Here, again, the material chosen need *not* be confined to books of pure subject interest. Material of value to the reader of current affairs is contained in novels, plays and essays as well as in the more usual sources. Magazines and pamphlets often contain useful material for display purposes in this section.

The following poster has proved its value, and calls for the exhibition of books, magazines and pamphlets from the lending and reference departments (Figure 8).

(3) *Hobby Display*

Little need be said about the contents of this display; the scope is wide and capable of great variation. It is, however, suggested that the form should be that mentioned in a later section, that is, that some practical aspect of the hobby featured should be presented with the books as a visual attraction. Thus a selection of books on cricket could be sited on a strip of green matting, complete with stumps and bat and a few action photographs as a background. Material for such purposes can be obtained on loan from local shops and would probably be readily supplied for the sake of the advertisement.

YOUR LIBRARY

— People living in to-day's world must learn facts fast. For without facts there can be no action —without action democracy cannot flourish.

— Books in the library can help you to be informed as is shown by the selection of news items and their related background reading.

BACKGROUND OF THE NEWS

Item — PERSIA ON ROAD TO RUIN. Mr. Morrison.

Background —
- Buck, P. *Asia and democracy*
- Payne, R. Journey to Persia
- Roberts, W. Story of oil
- Suratgar, O. I sing in the wilderness

Item — AN ELECTION IN OCTOBER. *Sunday Times* Article.

Background —
- Birch, N. The Conservative Party
- Cruikshank, R. The Liberal Party
- Jay, D. The Socialist case
- Joad, C. E. M. Principles of parliamentary democracy

Item — WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO STIFFEN OUR DEFENCES. Mr. Shinwell.

Background —
- Gunter, John. *Behind Europe's curtain*
- Hart, B. Liddel- Defence of the West
- Lippman, W. The cold war
- Padelford, N. Contemporary international relations

THE LIBRARY IS YOURS—USE IT—TELL OTHERS ABOUT IT

(Current Affairs Poster, Figure 8)

A small acknowledgment card must, naturally, be provided.

Another source of material is provided by the members of local societies, such as photographic clubs, who might be willing to loan material for a small display-cum-exhibition. This method has an advantage inasmuch as members of the society are attracted to the library and made aware of its resources in their speciality.

A fertile field of development exists in connection with the various arts and crafts commonly practised in the home. An example would be a selection of books on lino-cutting, but any other similar craft would lend itself as easily. The feature would consist of a lino-cut print, the block and tools used, a list of books and the books themselves. In effect, the display would say: "This is what can be done—read how to do it."

This exhibit quickly captures public imagination. The ideal is to have a corner of the library devoted to such "craft displays". These should be changed every two or three weeks and, where this is done, public interest is maintained, so that readers form the habit of visiting the corner in order to see what is new.

In one library, this series of displays proved so popular that an aquarium of fish was offered on loan by a reader. This was followed by the loan of native African carvings. This exhibit allowed the stock to be combed for factual works and novels dealing with Africa, as well as for material concerning native customs, art, religion, handicrafts and government.

Can there be any doubt as to the value of such methods? The books are used—and that alone makes the venture worth while. Yet there is still a further advantage. Such schemes bring the stock to the people. It is presented to them in terms they can understand. The library becomes alive, it takes on the aspect of a vital organization that really has something of interest to offer.

This is an important consideration. Librarians have no doubt as to the value of their service, but is that value so obvious to the minds of the citizens? To some, no doubt, but not to the majority. Any method, therefore, that can be devised to emphasize the value of the service to the community should be used to its full effect.

(4) *A Variable Display*

The topic here will be decided by the need of the moment. Thus the death of a famous man, an earthquake, war, crisis or celebration will all lead to a display. Topicality is the keynote and, when nothing of current interest suggests itself, recourse can be had to subject displays, such as ADVENTURING; CAREERS; OR GREAT NOVELS, POEMS and PLAYS.

There are two good reasons for stressing the topical. In the first place, people will read books having current interest that they would not read at any other time. Secondly, the provision of up-to-date displays gives an impression of alertness and efficiency that is worth cultivating. The daily newspapers and periodicals can again be used, and any one of the calendars of anniversaries will prove a useful aid for the purpose.

The close link between topical items and the current affairs display is apparent, but there is no reason why these features should be allowed to clash. The field is so wide that there is room for both.

The calendar of local events proves extremely valuable in this connection. Any display takes on an increased value when the subject featured has news value due to local social activities. Thus the local agricultural show, swimming gala or sports event would each give occasion for an appropriate display. An opportunity for mention in the local Press is presented in these circumstances, and the librarian should be quick to take advantage of this.

Another development would be to feature an author and his works. Photographs of authors can often be obtained from publishers, and these have considerable publicity value. Interesting notes concerning the author and his life and work should be provided, and efforts should be made to link his factual and fictional works when both have been written. Works of authors such as Upton Sinclair, G. B. Shaw, J. B. Priestley, Somerset Maugham and Charles Morgan lend themselves readily to this treatment.

Two points arise here to which special attention should be drawn. The first is that, as far as possible, all displays should be accompanied by book lists and by illustrative material,

such as book jackets and photographs. Books included in a successful display circulate freely, so that at no time will a reader see *all* of the available material. It is, therefore, important that he should have a record of the material for later use. Ideally, such lists should be annotated but, in practice, few of the smaller or medium-sized systems would have sufficient staff to cope with the vast amount of work entailed in producing and annotating successive lists on any large scale. This objection does not apply with such force to circulating displays, which are discussed later in this chapter.

Illustrations are fairly easy to provide for there are several sources of supply. Photographs from publishers have been noted. Book jackets are valuable, while much useful material is available from travel agencies and colonial offices. Perhaps the most convenient source is provided by the library's own illustrations collection, which is kept up to date by contributions from the magazines, discarded books and other suitable sources.

The second item of importance concerns the notification of interested parties of forthcoming displays. Thus, for example, the secretaries of local trade unions, political parties and debating societies should all be informed, in advance, of coming displays, particularly of those concerned with current affairs. Headmasters of schools and evening institutes should be notified of suitable features, such as those on CAREERS, HOBBIES, SPORTS and TRAVEL. The nature of the display will suggest suitable contacts, but enough has been said to demonstrate the principle that the display should be an active instrument of library policy, designed to assist in the analysis and exploitation of stock. Too often it is allowed to exist as a feeble and neglected stunt, put on without any definite aim and not directed to any particular purpose. It is not surprising to find that such attempts usually fail.

Whenever possible displays should be illuminated. It is not difficult to arrange for local lighting; the effect is to attract attention to the feature, and this is the first step toward attracting attention to the books.

Displays should not be crowded, they need space in order to achieve their maximum effect. Too many exhibits crowded together will be ignored. Better a single feature, which will

attract by its solitary positioning, than a number that will crowd each other into insignificance. There is nothing original in the idea of display, successful shops have been practising it for many years. It is possible to profit by this experience and, by observation, to learn the art of co-ordinating exhibit and background as contrasting but unifying features for the desired purpose.

There is no limit to the topics to be used as basic materials. The most important point with regard to contents is to build up public confidence in the standard of the exhibits and to maintain this standard. A librarian who succeeds in thus establishing the reputation of his displays has managed to forge a valuable weapon of instruction. Provided he keeps faith with his public, he is enabled to obtain an audience for many books of value which would not, otherwise, be considered as suitable by the reader.

The use of fiction for the purpose of leading readers to better material is not sufficiently practised. The novel to-day is the vehicle for much that can elevate and instruct as well as amuse, and the opportunity presented by this circumstance should not be overlooked. Graduated and annotated lists of fiction, selected displays, and the grouping of fiction by subjects, either on the shelves or in lists, are all methods that offer possible means of exploitation and advantage.

The *Radio Times* is an inexhaustible fount of ideas. A glance through the current issue suggests a number of displays in connection with the programmes featured. These should be produced as a series with a common heading and changing sub-headings to suit the different topics. Duplicated lists should be provided.

The British Broadcasting Company's periodical lists of talks, plays and musical performances all offer themselves as ideas to be presented, and such features have an advantage inasmuch as they are included in a series and receive adequate advance and continually recurring publicity. Too little attention is given to the possibility of capitalizing on the work of radio, television and the cinema. A little thought will show how easily features can be associated with books and made to serve as the vehicle for lists and displays.

Selections based on the broadcasting of talks, serials and plays are obviously useful, but these items do not represent the limit of opportunity. Other features occasionally serve, such as, for example, the "live" broadcasts from foreign countries and from various districts of our own country.

Books and plays that have been serialized by the B.B.C. are always in demand, and objection may be made to the display of such material on the grounds that it would serve merely to over-stimulate an existing demand and so emphasize a problem which cannot readily be solved.

At first sight, the objection appears to be valid. Serialized works are always heavily in demand during the course of the broadcast, but interest begins to fade as soon as a new serial appears. An experiment with the suggested display has proved that the feature, accompanied by a list of the works included, tends to alleviate the problem rather than to emphasize it, for it spreads the interest over a series of books and so relieves the demand on books currently being serialized. Instead of the disappointment of finding the work continually on issue, the reader is offered the choice of works previously broadcast, so that his interest is retained in a selection of books of good standard.

The exhibition of holiday guides performs a useful purpose, for it is possible to link this feature with a selection of other books relating to a district. Topographical works spring readily to mind, but other books can also be included, such as fiction with local interest, as well as books of archaeological and architectural interest.

Successful displays should be circulated throughout the system. A display that has proved its value in any one library is likely to be acceptable elsewhere, while the greater use derived from books, notices and lists reduces the cost-to-use ratio for each display.

In order to overcome any shortage of books on the topic concerned it is advisable to arrange for the temporary loan of relevant stock from library to library. Thus a display would travel from unit to unit, the books being transferred at intervals of two to three weeks. Books taken from the display could be forwarded when returned and would prove welcome refreshers at the site of the current showing.

Displays intended for circulation should be compiled on a co-operative basis. The original selection should be drawn from the whole system, and the books included gathered together and listed, preferably with annotations. The work involved in annotating lists is extensive, and is frequently neglected in the case of features designed for a short life of two or three weeks. But when the display is circulated, its active period is extended considerably, and the time devoted to annotations becomes economically justified.

The compilation of the feature should also be a joint effort. Each branch librarian should submit his suggested titles, complete with annotations, and by these methods all units will have a share in the activity. Apart from their value for readers, such combined efforts are useful as educational experiments for the staff. The stock of the whole system on particular topics is revealed, while the lists themselves form useful annotated bibliographies for future reference. Moreover, annotations compiled locally would probably have greater value than those provided centrally from a first perusal of a book. The local man should know his stock and should know the virtues and defects of each item in it. He, obviously, is the best man to describe his books.

Display in the children's library should not be neglected. The informative double-page illustrations from *Pictorial Education* and *The Illustrated London News* make excellent subjects around which displays can be built. There is no reason why the older children should not be allowed to form their own displays. Such work with books is entertaining and educational and, surely, to be preferred to the usual form of amusement, such as puppet shows.

The use of this method for children should not be confined to the library premises. The travelling display of books on careers has been described elsewhere, but the feature is so valuable that no apology is required for its inclusion here.

Arrangements should be made for the Ministry of Labour pamphlets on *Careers* to be displayed, together with all other available works. These, together with a list of the items included, should be circulated round the schools so that the older children can be informed of the vocations available to

them. At the same time they are reminded of the library service, and this applies also to their parents.

The books and pamphlets should be made available for issue by the teachers, and this indicates that replacements should be speedily available. This, however, is a simple matter of organization and involves no great difficulties. The pamphlets are cheap enough to be expendable, and should be purchased by the dozen.

Here, again, the library service forces itself on the consciousness of the population and reveals itself as making a timely and valuable contribution to the needs of the community. The object of every librarian should be to achieve a service of such efficiency that it will be regarded as indispensable in the life of the district and of prime importance among the social amenities.

The organization of this form of work should be directed by a capable assistant. In a small system it will probably not be possible to allocate a full-time assistant for this purpose, so that it must necessarily be linked with other duties, such as that of readers' adviser. Whatever the decision, the librarian must keep a close watch on the policy so as to ensure effective co-ordination with stock and with the work of the system as a whole.

Display work need not be limited to any particular section but can be used to exploit the whole stock. Both fiction and factual works should be included, and each should be used in combination with the other. The method has strong possibilities in the wider sphere of developing the service. It is also valuable in its more restricted function for introducing readers to new authors and for raising the standards of reading.

Some care is required when this is attempted, for the natural tendency is to hasten the process and to attempt to raise the standard too quickly. Reading is the sharing of experience, and background knowledge on the part of the reader is necessary to enable him to assess given facts at their true value. It is known that many people tend to choose their books at a level that is below their actual capabilities; the object should be to raise their level of choice, but not to a point that is beyond their power of assimilation. If such an attempt is

made it is bound to fail and will probably result in the loss of readers.

The co-ordinated display, well organized, can achieve gradual elevation. By bringing together books of graduated appeal, and linking them by annotated lists, the interest of the reader is captured and taken from one stage to another by easy and pleasant steps. This method is particularly valuable in the case of adolescents, and can be utilized to effect an introduction to the wider range of the adult library.

This fact, alone, should mark out the method as being worthy of development, for the service to adolescents is a weak point in the armour of every system. All readers need an individual service and adolescents, perhaps, more than others. Display is not entirely an individual service, but it can approach the ideal and should, therefore, be tried and intelligently developed.

Much has been said for and against the display feature. There are those who hastily condemn the method as an unsound attempt to persuade readers to take books they do not want. Nothing could be further from the truth, for the display enthusiasts believe that people will want books if their contents are brought to notice.

Display does not fail when it is correctly applied and when its significance and potentiality are understood. The medium has many uses for all sections of library users. It is capable of vast expansion and manipulation, and forms a worthy instrument for the librarian possessed of imagination and ingenuity.

CHAPTER V

THE READERS' ADVISER

THE public library's part in the adult education movement is, primarily, to make it possible for the individual to achieve self-education through reading. A system is neglecting its function when it fails to ensure that adequate opportunity exists for individual self-development. This fact is widely accepted, yet it is not always fully implemented, for adequate opportunity involves interpretation of stock. The provision of books is not, therefore, sufficient; they must be analysed, their contents explored, and assistance given to readers in their use. This function must involve personal attention from an informed staff.

Reading guidance is not widely practised due, no doubt, to lack of staff. Our work is with books and readers, and any assistant acting as adviser must understand both books and readers. He must know the stock and the wider resources that are auxiliary to the stock, he must be able to assess the readability of a book in order to link book and reader. He must be able to converse with readers and overcome their hesitancies in order to understand exactly their requirements and capabilities. The necessity for special training for this work is quite apparent. It is obvious, too, that the daily reports of advisers will be extremely valuable to the librarian by revealing the efficiency and deficiencies of the service and the stock.

A satisfactory name for this service is hard to find. The title of Readers' Adviser is far from suitable, it is pretentious and misleading. Readers' Inquiry Service might be more appropriate. It has a wider connotation than the original term, but this may not be undesirable in an organized system.

The actual title chosen may not be particularly important provided the service is established and conducted on the right lines. The guiding principle must be maintained that

the business of the librarian is with books. The adviser should be willing to assist where a knowledge of books can be utilized, but he should not force himself on to people and he should never tell them what they ought to read, an excess of zeal can sometimes be dangerous. He should tell them the best books for a particular purpose, but that is a different matter entirely. Finally, he should not offer advice too freely, and if his advice is requested it should be limited to an assessment of the books concerned as approved by the common consent of experts. The aim should always be to help the individual to help himself. The librarian should not teach, his duty is to make books available by exhibiting their contents so that the path is made easier for the person who wishes to learn.

In any system the lending library forms the focal point of the service, for it is here that contact is made with the largest section of the public. This is true of the central library, where the home reading department is one of several departments; it is even more true of the average branch, where the adult lending tends to overshadow the juvenile and reference, even when these are provided. The importance of good public relations, and the corresponding opportunity for fostering close contact with readers, is quite obvious.

Lending library work is judged, in many cases, by the number of books issued. This is unfortunate, yet the fault lies as much with librarians as with the critics. We attempt to describe work achieved by the yardstick of books issued; small wonder, then, that we are judged by these factors.

The question may well be asked: what other means are there of showing, in a convenient and easily perceptible manner, the amount of work accomplished? The answer, perhaps, lies in an assessment of quality as against quantity. In other words, the provision of service plus issues as a criterion rather than issues alone.

An approach on these lines is revealed in the work of the readers' advisers. Where such guidance is given the public are beginning to appreciate that the library assistant has a knowledge of books and that he is able to point the way through the maze of print.

This is a step in the right direction, but it is an initial step

only. The work must be continued and extended by further guidance until coverage is widespread, if not complete. The advisers must be capable; the task calls for a trained librarian, not for a junior assistant.

Such development is necessary and will probably be effected in time, but even this is not sufficient. It is necessary to continue and to inquire into readers' tastes and reading habits in order to serve them more completely. Not only must the librarian be an expert in the use of books, engaged in research concerning his craft, but he must allow the public to know of these activities. So many technical processes are carried out away from the public eye that it is not surprising to find the results ignored.

Research into readers' tastes is important, also, as a factor in publicity inasmuch as it can and must be carried out in co-operation with readers. The importance of this can hardly be over-estimated. Instead of being rated as a person whose main task consists in issuing books the librarian can be regarded as a skilled adviser and literary guide, who also makes an important contribution to social research. That change is worth working for.

The best field of activity for such work is where the assistant is known to the majority of readers. Experience and skill in understanding the often garbled accounts of readers' needs are more easily attained where assistant and borrower are known to each other.

Personal attention for readers is most important. Many cannot find the books they want among the number set before them, while the classified arrangement affords little assistance. Individual attention proffered to, although not thrust upon, a reader should be an accepted part of every service. If this is not provided the reader may be lost. A man who cannot find a book to interest him may take a substitute, but he will not continue to do that indefinitely, he is more likely to discontinue using the library.

The plea may be submitted that such a reader should ask the staff for assistance. This is not entirely valid since very many readers come into the library without any definite requirement. They want something of interest to read, it may

be fiction or factual, or both. Yet, unless they have a specific subject of sufficient urgency in mind, they will not approach a busy counter assistant for aid. The importance of the reader must be established; we must discover what he wants and help him to get it.

It is widely accepted that we have no duty to improve people, but that we have a duty to help them to improve themselves. We supply the facilities in the shape of books for information, education and recreation, accepting the fact that these are essential for the well-being of all men. Yet there are some who would deny this function, who insist that our duty ends with the provision of books, and that it is no concern of ours how the books are used and for what purpose.

Such people ignore the fact that books and reading have, in themselves, a limited significance. Books are important only when taken in conjunction with readers; reading is important only with regard to its purpose. Recreational reading is, for example, valuable as long as recreation is valuable. But a life devoted to recreational reading is as valueless as a life devoted to recreation. Reading demands a contribution from the reader, that is part of its value. Our concern, then, is with books *and* readers.

It is, therefore, necessary to visualize the public library as a place where the vast mass of printed material is unravelled for the benefit of readers, and where the loss of time and energy due to ignorance of the contents of books can be avoided. The library must serve as the central intelligence service in every town; it must be the obvious place to which people will turn when they need information and the opportunity for education.

Small systems are unlikely to have sufficient staff to maintain a full rota of advisers, but the function should be maintained, even though the work is coupled with other duties. Practical considerations must limit methods, yet the personal aid should be the last to be dispensed with. Printed bulletins, although useful, cannot cater adequately for the ever varying specific need. The bulletin can serve a general purpose and satisfy a standard requirement, but in many cases it fails altogether to appeal.

The personal adviser is not so restricted. The effectiveness of his service is limited only by his own capabilities; he can talk or listen, suggest or discourse, just as the occasion warrants. Nothing can take his place, his work forms an essential part of every system.

The librarian may believe that his readers are not interested in a systematic course of reading because the demand has not been expressed. A reader may not ask for reading guidance, but that does not mean that he does not want it. Needs are not necessarily absent because they are not vocal, if an experiment in provision is made the response may be wide and enthusiastic. But, even if limited to a small circle, the work will be worth doing. Only by trial can the demand be gauged; the extent of necessary provision will eventually depend upon the locality, type of reader, and other available agencies and resources.

Shortage of staff and lack of stock are definite handicaps. At branches, for example, the branch librarian may be forced to undertake the work alone and to rely on the central library for essential stock. But the important factor here is that such an initial experiment might expose a gap in the library service, so that the authority will be encouraged to increase the existing provision. These are practical incentives which must appeal to any librarian who is concerned with providing the best possible service. The experiment is worth making. Whatever the extent of the success may be the librarian must gain increased knowledge of his readers, and this is capital of considerable value that well repays the expenditure of time and labour.

In certain respects the branch library has an advantage over larger libraries, so far as the advisory service is concerned, for the branch librarian is usually more closely connected with his readers. He knows many of them personally and they, likewise, are accustomed to his methods. Such personal relationship is very important to the advisory service, the provision of which cannot be mass imposed but must be orientated to the need of each applicant. Furthermore, the overall stock of the branch is smaller than that of the central, and is better known to the staff. Exploitation is, therefore,

simplified to the extent covered by that stock. But where demands reach beyond the scope of the stock this advantage no longer operates.

However, some approach to the problem can be made by the keen branch librarian. If he is convinced of the necessity for the work, he will be able to give a large measure of assistance even with limited resources. It may mean some re-adjustment of methods and, quite often, a change in outlook on the part of the staff. These things can be accomplished within the system if leadership, ability and the spirit of co-operation are available. Complete and detailed guidance is not possible if the branch stock is taken alone but, when used in conjunction with an adequate central stock, most difficulties can be overcome.

This is especially so if the branch contains a core of standard works as recommended in a later chapter. A large proportion of requests can be satisfied by using the same books over and over again, since these requests are found to be concerned with background and basic knowledge. Other demands can be satisfied by calling upon wider resources. In effect, therefore, the smallest branch has the stock of the whole system at its command, and the chief problem is that of co-ordination.

It is clear from these facts that the smaller systems can confidently undertake to provide advisory services provided that trained staff and well selected stock are available.

An attempt will be made here to indicate possible lines of approach. Methods cannot be described precisely for these must vary according to persons and places. Flexibility is essential when dealing with individuals, so that any formula or code for the conduct of readers' advisers is out of the question. Principles only can be indicated, and these may be adjusted to meet varying circumstances.

A further difficulty concerns the use that might be made of such a service. There is no precise method of assessing potential demand. Present expressed demand for assistance may be negligible, but this cannot be accepted as proof that potential demand does not exist. Only by the provision of the service can the extent of the need be discovered. It is permissible, however, to assume that the need exists because of

the success attending advisory provision wherever it has been made.

Gradual initiation of the service is to be preferred. It is possible to gather bibliographical aids, to set up a special desk, and to open the service with loud publicity, but this method cannot be recommended. Many people would probably be deterred by such methods that are, in fact, quite unnecessary.

Bibliographical aids there must be, but no fuss. The service should begin with the adviser mingling with the readers at the shelves, watching the use made of books, and noting the hesitancies and confusions that appear. He should use his discretion as to whom to approach, not every person requires or welcomes aid. He should be quick to note this, and be ready to retire if he finds his attentions unwelcome. His assistance, however, will not often be refused, particularly when his readers grow accustomed to his presence. They will then approach him in their turn and, at this point, the service can really be regarded as established.

New readers should be informed of the existence of the advisory service when they join the library. A pamphlet setting out full details of the facilities available should be produced as a separate publication or as part of the general library guide.

If the work expands at the individual branches, so as to be beyond the scope of the branch librarian yet not sufficiently so as to justify the appointment of a full-time adviser, a case can be made for part-time provision. An assistant can be detailed to cover two or three branches. At each branch there should be a fixed period set aside for advisory work. The service would thus be allowed to expand gradually and naturally and would not be cramped by hurried attention from an overworked assistant.

So far as the actual working of this facility is concerned, one of the most vital principles is reliability. For this reason advisers should be careful when giving personal recommendations; since tastes differ so much it is dangerous to take upon one's self the responsibility of prescribing for others. Some evaluation is required, but this should be limited to the

accepted facts. Thus, it is permissible to say that a certain book has the reputation of accuracy; that is quite different from a personal recommendation. Even experts differ in their assessments of the value of particular books yet, since book selection is based on the authority of experts, to a large extent, any recommendations should also be based on that authority.

The first few weeks of the new service constitute the vital testing time. There should not be errors or bad service at any time but, should these occur when the section has become well established, the result would be regrettable but not disastrous. During the first few weeks, however, when the public are watching the experiment, any deficiency will become magnified out of true proportion. Therefore, although commencing without fanfares, the preparation should be so complete and thorough as to obviate error as far as possible.

One of the best ways of achieving this is to organize rehearsals between members of the staff. Each should prepare questions for the others to answer and each, in turn, should act as adviser to their colleagues who would represent members of the public. After each question and answer there should be a discussion as to the manner of approach and the efficiency and completeness of the answer.

The problem of siting the adviser's desk seems to cause some concern. The point does not matter very much so long as the principle is established that the desk, wherever located, is simply a base where essential tools can be found. The assistant himself should have a roving commission and should rarely be found sitting at his desk. In such a position he is badly placed wherever the physical location of the desk might be, for some people hesitate to approach a desk for fear of intruding.

A point that arises here is concerned with the discussion with readers. Some queries can be dealt with immediately at the shelves and, whenever possible, this is the method that should be adopted, for it is essential to encourage other people to regard the giving and receiving of assistance as a normal habit. Yet other requests as, for example, inquiries for reading courses, entail fairly lengthy interviews. Where should these take place?

If possible, the reader should be taken to a private office when a long discussion appears to be necessary. In this country there is a layer of reserve in the make-up of most people that makes them recoil from the prospect of sitting at an adviser's desk in the public lending library. A private room for such interviews is, therefore, to be preferred.

The actual conduct of the interview should be informal. It should take the form of conversation rather than of cross-examination. An arrogant or superior attitude is fatal in this work; it is completely unjustified when we consider that our own advantage over the reader, in terms of bibliographical knowledge, is insignificant in comparison with the vast area of knowledge of which we know little.

The statement in a previous section in connection with the advisory service as a whole applies here with particular force; there can be no specific rules governing the interview. A general principle could be fixed that the reader should be allowed to dictate the course of the conversation, but even this depends, to a large extent, upon the person concerned. Some people are garrulous, others timid and without expression; many will stray from the point and deal with their life histories unless brought into line. The guiding rule is to remember the purpose of the interview and to allow nothing to pass which does not contribute, in some way, towards the attainment of the desired end.

A necessary preliminary for every reader undertaking an organized course is to understand the classification and catalogue. Those responsible for the advisory service should include such necessary instruction in the early stages. Self-interest, the necessary preliminary to the acceptance of instruction, will be present in such cases.

Some personal details will also be required, such as hobbies and interests, experiences, type and extent of education, books read, object of the course, occupation and time available for reading. To these facts may be added the impression of the assistant regarding the capacity of the inquirer for sustained application.

Records should be kept of each interview, and this applies to the brief conversation as well as to the long discussion.

Readers helped in a small matter gain confidence to ask about weightier topics and it is helpful, on subsequent occasions, if a record is available of previous proceedings. This will necessitate a file under readers' names, and to this should be added a classified subject record. As the service develops, the latter can be of great assistance as a time-saver, since it will obviate the duplication of much work previously performed. Such duplication could occur quite frequently, for certain items, such as requests for reading lists on the classics, would crop up again and again.

The use of these files for staff training should especially be noted. The files should be studied by the staff and they should, in all cases, be examined by the librarian in order that he may ensure that satisfaction is given to readers. At the same time he can check on the accuracy of information, on the efficiency of his staff and on the progress of his trainees. Details of interviews should, naturally, be treated as strictly confidential. Under no circumstances should information obtained from readers be passed on to any unauthorized person.

The labour-saving value of the file is a great advantage, but it must not be used to excess. The temptation might be presented to standardize courses which are similar, and this is possible to a certain extent. But the essential point of the service, that it is individual, must not be overlooked. If a course suitable for one person will suit another there can be no harm in its use. But, unless the provision is exact, no good can be achieved and no economy claimed. The whole aim of the readers' advisory service consists in the mobilization of the whole of the resources of a library for the use of a particular person; that is the essence of the feature. In this way it differs from the general issue of reading lists, which are compiled around a subject rather than according to an individual's request.

A further difference lies in the method of compilation. The reading list for general issue consists of the best books on the subject, and this is so whether the list includes elementary or advanced works or both. The individual list is, at first, similarly compiled inasmuch as it consists of the best works. But then the capabilities of the reader must be considered.

Certain works must be omitted because they are too difficult or in other ways unsuitable. Certain aspects may be stressed and others passed over at the request of the reader. The finished course will be highly individual, quite different from a general reading list and, probably, completely unsuitable for the use of anybody but the person for whom it is intended. The danger of standardized lists, except as basic models is, therefore, apparent.

Examination of the books themselves must follow. The best book on a subject is useless to a man if the print is too small to be read! Such details are important; attention to them will result in a selection suitable in every way for the needs of the reader.

Order of reading should next be considered. This will depend upon both the subject and the reader, although elementary to advanced will be adopted in many cases. A good plan consists in prescribing first of all a good general work, designed to arouse interest and to give an overall, though not necessarily detailed, picture of the whole subject.

Annotations should be provided for each title listed. Such annotations form useful guides at a later stage for, once written, they can be consulted whenever the book is included in a list. Their use, without modification, may not always be advisable in view of the individual nature of the lists. The limitations of the book should be noted but, since the work should be the best available for the purpose, such limitations should not be serious, and should affect the scope of the work rather than its quality. Pros and cons should be recorded, and works dealing with one aspect of a controversial question should be followed by those giving the other point of view. The value of the work for different types of people should be clearly stressed.

Alternative readings should often be included, particularly when insufficient information concerning the reader has been made available. Some people are unable to express themselves adequately and, where this is the case, alternatives will do much to solve their difficulties. A set alternative will be of great value on those occasions when the original choice is on loan.

In order to preserve continuity in a reading course there should be set up a system of free reservation of books recommended. It should be a simple matter of organization to ensure that a reader's requirements, in this connection, are satisfied as the necessity arises. There should be no time lag between the return of one listed book and the receipt of the next. Such intervals are bound to occur unless steps are taken to deal with the position.

However, in spite of precautions, there will arise occasions when the machinery will break down, for stocks are limited. In this event, the adviser must be ready with substitute reading material. No harm should result from such an occurrence if it is foreseen and the effect mitigated as suggested. This is fortunately so, because an enforced break in the middle of a reading course serves to weaken interest and to reflect upon the value of the project and of the library service. In order to ensure the smooth working of the organization, readers who are pursuing selected courses should return their books to the adviser. He can then be prepared to furnish the next work on the list or, if this is unobtainable, to provide a substitute.

Attempts must also be made to keep in touch with those people, and they are likely to be fairly numerous, who commence a course and lose interest before the completion. It is not wise to pester them but a letter of inquiry should be sent, and this should indicate that the course can be adjusted if required.

Advisers are unlikely to be greatly troubled when advising on general subjects or when providing background courses. But requests for specialized and technical subjects might cause some apprehension if there is a lack of knowledge of the subject. The adviser assumes heavy responsibility whenever he prepares a course for a reader and this thought must often create some uneasiness.

In such cases it is possible to get in touch with specialized agencies, and to purchase books recommended if they are not already stocked. This is rather a speculative method and may not prove to be entirely satisfactory in practice. Specialists tend to remember the advanced manuals, to overlook the elementary, and ignore the popular. The librarian cannot

afford to do this. Perhaps a better method is to survey existing book resources and to present a selection from these for expert approval, adjusting and supplementing wherever required. After all, the librarian has access to information concerning the bibliography of special subjects; so far as this aspect is concerned, he may be more widely informed than the expert on the subject. The latter's knowledge should, therefore, be used, not for the initial compilation of lists, but for comments on the individual titles and for suggested improvements.

Facts such as these suggest that the successful advisory service needs to be staffed by assistants with specialist knowledge, or that the staff should have specialists within reach for consultation. Thorough knowledge is indispensable, and this indicates a limitation of the field covered by each assistant, since failure to provide specialist advice may lead to superficial, vague and casual service. Nor is it sufficient to supply the books, their contents must be analysed for the benefit of the inquirer. Books are forbidding to many people who have not learned the art of extracting the contents. Endless pains are taken to provide books; the logical, further step should also be taken in order to ensure their use to the fullest extent.

The specialist, besides selecting books and advising on their use, should also be responsible for the exploitation of his section. Thus, when books are added, he should ensure that adequate notice is given to all those who might be interested. An important development of this feature may be that recipients of such details will regard the library as the natural source of information. They will turn to it whenever they are in need, and will recommend it to others as occasion demands. Such personal recommendation is of the greatest value.

The specialist's task is, therefore, to exploit the contents of his section and to make his knowledge available for the use of the public. He should also be responsible for book selection and withdrawal within his own field. The allotment of sections to individuals would ensure the enrolment of an expert corps, and selection for the library would be on a sound basis. Book stock would be of a higher standard if each title were separately considered by an assistant with specialist knowledge before ordering.

Where such a method is in operation at the central the branch difficulty would largely disappear, for the branch librarian would have a corps of specialists at hand for consultation. The fact that a subject, or group of subjects, throughout the system was in the charge of a specialist, and kept up to date by him, would ensure that readers of all kinds would be certain of getting the best provision. This provision, adapted to individual needs by the branch librarian, would constitute a personal service which rarely exists to-day on a general scale.

The provision of specialist advisers would simplify close co-operation between public libraries and the many specialist libraries and agencies. Such co-operation frequently tends to be sporadic, but a specialist, working in a narrow field, would be in a position to further combined ventures and to increase in depth the resources of his own subjects.

The total of work achieved by the division of subjects between specialists will probably be greater, in both quality and quantity, than that effected by the general assistant. Special abilities of the staff are brought into use which might otherwise not be exercised in library problems. Investigations of readers' inquiries, and more thorough use of resources by librarians, must result in a better service for readers.

It is sometimes stated that librarians should encourage the publication of books in certain fields, yet it must be admitted that action along these lines has not been vigorously pursued. The reason may be that the demand is not sufficiently clear-cut nor urgently expressed. Specialists in limited fields, in close touch with readers' needs, would have greater authority for expressing demand, and would be able to narrow the specification for necessary provision to include particular topics and aspects. They would be able to speak with an assurance sufficient to command attention, and could throw light on the desirable treatment of subjects. In this way, influence could be exerted on the publishing world.

A further advantage arising from the provision of specialist advisers lies in the possibility of deeper penetration into the world of trade and commerce. At the present time inquiries from the commercial world are welcomed, and local workers

are encouraged to use the library. But the service in this connection is often passive. Provision is made by the supply of technical works in the hope that they will be used. They are used, but only by a minority of people. Any attempt to increase their use is often baulked by the lack of specialized knowledge on the part of the general assistant. The unfortunate effect of this is particularly noticeable when attempts are made to introduce news of the service to the factories and workshops, a venture which is essential if books are to be exploited to the full. An interview with the manager of an engineering concern will probably be inconclusive and lacking in drive if the talk is vaguely concerned with books in general and with the desirability of interesting the workers in the library service.

Such a talk should feature a few selected books dealing with the particular trade concerned. The assistant should have a knowledge of these books so that he can talk about them with authority. By so doing, he can convince the businessman that he is missing something of value by not reading them, and that his workers would benefit by their use. Only an assistant who has specialized in these sections can hope to have such knowledge and the confidence derived from mastery of his stock.

In this connection, small exhibitions of books, periodicals and pamphlets could usefully be held, preferably on the factory premises. These activities need not be expensive in staff time because the exhibitions could well be limited to the lunch periods when so many of the employees have idle time on their hands. Issue should be made from the exhibitions and this would necessitate replenishments being available from day to day.

Assistants encouraged to specialize in subject fields would soon prove their worth. Such a corps of workers would form a most valuable driving force and would banish staleness and apathy from any system. Their efforts would speedily ensure that the library would take its rightful place in the sphere of adult education. The linkage of readers and books would itself constitute an immense social service that would have repercussions in terms of increased library appreciation on the part of the public. Much remains to be accomplished before coverage of this kind is complete.

Such activities should always be linked with personal

assistance, for the various library developments, such as advisory work in the library building and contact with people outside of the library, should never be allowed to assume separate identities. Co-ordination between departments and personnel is always of prime importance if a service is to function to the best purpose.

In this connection may be cited the resources of the reference library, which should not be overlooked. Reference and lending library stocks should be complementary, and no attempt should be made to set up an advisory service without taking into account the fund of pamphlet and other material contained in the reference stock. The fields of reference and lending departments overlap at many points, but never so consistently as in the sphere of the advisory service.

Another important factor is concerned with the book itself and its suitability for the purpose envisaged. When suggesting books for study, it is most essential to consider the factors that make a book readable. Unless some such assessment is made it is impossible to select wisely or to match book and reader.

What are the factors that determine popularity in books? Is it possible to choose certain features as being more likely than others to arouse public interest? Probably, almost certainly; there is no set formula, but certain factors may be noted that tend to make for readability.

The question is important from the reader's point of view for, given two books, both equally sound in scholarship and factually complete, that one will be most suited to a reader that appeals to him most; in other works, the most readable book, *from his point of view*, will be of greatest use to him. This is self-evident, for the readable book is studied more closely and for longer periods. Understanding is assisted and the strain of application lessened, so that comprehension is achieved.

What, then, makes a book readable? An immediate question is, for whom? The two questions must be linked before any answer can be attempted, for there can be no abstract quality of readability. The logical appeal of any passage, and the degree of comprehension engendered in the reader's mind, must depend upon his experience and capability. The ap-

proach must, therefore, be from the point of view of the person concerned. Given an individual of known capability, it is possible to point to certain factors in a work and to predict that it will appeal to him and to others like him.

Factors that make for popularity include the vocabulary used, length and construction of sentences, manner of presentation, clarity of thought and exposition, development of the theme, degree in which the subject matter matches the reader's knowledge and experience, emotional appeal and physical make-up of the book, including type, paper, size and legibility. All of these aspects must be considered when an advisory section is being organized. These are specialized matters and demand training in the staff called upon to operate the service. The necessity for capable assistants is obvious. They should be efficient, and sufficiently numerous to cope with all demands without the undue haste that leads to superficial treatment.

A development of such personal service is very necessary. The library service will not be valued in public esteem because librarians want it to be valued, nor because it could be useful if only use were made. The service will be fully appreciated only when it has produced reasons for appreciation. It can be done given adequate support from authorities and a fresh approach to the problem of library provision and the use of resources.

As a preliminary, facilities offered should be examined from the reader's point of view. In the past, librarians have been largely concerned with the provision of material. This is essential, but it does not go far enough; stock must be organized and selected to suit the varying needs of people, having regard to the capacity of the reader and such further limiting factors as surroundings and leisure time. This policy demands that staff should be appointed capable of rising to the demands that will be made upon them. They must possess a sympathetic attitude towards people and be able to understand their reading problems, able to smooth the way for the inarticulate and for those who are not sure what they want. All of this is necessary if libraries are to fulfil their purpose as agencies for assisting the complete development of the individual.

Coverage of this kind will not be achieved for years to come. The development must be gradual, and as much as possible should be attempted with present facilities. This indicates the necessity for wise use of staff and resources and for the streamlining of processes, so that the extension may take place without adverse effect upon present essential provision. If this is practised, whatever facility is provided will be valuable preparation for future development, while the results of such preliminary work will pave the way for increased resources and further progress.

This progression will do much to solve the graduate problem. Any librarian with experience of the library schools will know of the difficulty encountered by graduates when seeking to enter the public library service for, at present, there is little scope for the graduate in this field. If he starts at the bottom of the grade he is underpaid; if he starts at any intermediate position he is favoured. The result is that graduates shun the public library service and much promising material is lost. Some find their places in specialist or university libraries, while others seek alternative employment.

The specialist advisory service would present an opportunity for these people. The experts required must be more than library technicians; they must know books and the methods of their manipulation but they must also know people. In such specialized departments the graduate and the assistant could compete on more or less equal terms; the assistant would have the advantage of technique, the graduate would have the corresponding advantage of familiarity in a specialized subject field.

All workers in the section must have some knowledge of psychology and of the art of dealing with people. The factors that promote readers' interests in books should be studied so that those books that possess these values could be utilized. The existence of other agencies must be known and machinery prepared for close co-operation. There should also be a knowledge of inter-related fields, since it is not advisable to have subjects contained in closed compartments.

The suggestion, therefore, is for a general adviser on duty in the public department, and specialist advisers who would

be available when required. The branch librarian would correspond, in his branch, to the general adviser, and would call upon the central specialists when necessary.

Although the branch librarian should be familiar with the organization of the central advisory service, the problem of specialization will not directly affect him since his resources in staff will be too limited to permit of great development. Yet often there will be assistants with special knowledge of some subjects so that, although complete specialization will not be possible, partial development in that direction will be within the branch resources in such circumstances.

The methods proposed may appear to be too grandiose in scope to be applicable to many public libraries, but this difficulty should not be exaggerated. Although few systems could afford to provide a complete panel of experts, the facilities for co-operation should not be overlooked. Co-operation is practised with regard to book provision and stock specialization, why not also for book exploitation? A few neighbouring systems could combine to build up a panel of experts. Each specialist would have a fixed period for consultation at each system and this time could be used, not only for assistance to readers, but also for assistance to the members of the staff responsible for book selection and the revision of stock.

Publicity for such a service would not be difficult for, more perhaps than any other facility, it would make its own advertisement. This is understandable, for there is direct contact between assistant and reader. Publicity that accrues in this way from the working of the service would be sufficient for most purposes; the expansion of the work would not be limited by lack of applicants, but rather by the need for sufficient staff to cope with the requests. Assuming, however, that staff are trained, the normal methods of publicity, by poster, bulletin and leaflet, can be utilized. Moreover, since the service is in its infancy in this country, a photograph and write-up could easily enough be secured in the local Press.

A fact to remember, when writing copy for this purpose, is that the public generally do not understand the provision, it is new to them. Therefore, an explanation that is too generalized will not be acceptable, neither will it be so effective as

specific points tersely made. The service offers definite advantages to the individual; the copy should state these explicitly and show how they may be obtained. Thus the best form of write-up should follow the pattern of the delineation of specific problems and the method of their solution. Actual requests should not be quoted, nor should the copy appear to be drawn from actual requests. It is essential that prospective users of the section should be assured that their confidence will be respected.

A bulletin could usefully be employed to further the work. In each issue there could appear one or more queries, together with all relevant information. This feature could be extended in co-operation with the local Press. Readers could be invited to send in their reading difficulties, and these queries could be answered day by day or week by week in the public columns. There should be no difficulty in gaining space for such a column. On the contrary, most editors would welcome the feature, which would certainly be popular. As evidence of this, witness the success of the columns devoted to advice on gardening and other household matters. Care is required in order to prevent the feature from developing into an advice column. Contributions should be confined to news of books, and there is abundant scope here. Librarians have access to bibliographical aids, they know the contents of books, and they can and should assist by the provision of books suitable for the satisfaction of diverse queries and needs.

CHAPTER VI

STAFF

IT is generally accepted that staff should be provided at the rate of one assistant for every 3,000 people to be served. This is a general rule and will obviously be affected, in particular cases, by the size of the system, the number of departments and branches, hours of opening, and activities undertaken. It is recommended that 40 per cent. of the personnel should be in the professional grades.

The smaller systems are well suited for training purposes provided that the organization is planned on rational lines. Many of the essential processes are there contained in a small space so that the assistant will, quite often, receive wider experience and shoulder greater responsibilities than his colleagues at the larger libraries. In this connection, much depends upon the policy of the system concerned. Centralization of processes is becoming increasingly popular, and this development must reduce the scope of branch assistants in certain respects, and so restrict the range of their training.

The librarian is responsible for the training and professional development of his staff. He should set an example of enthusiasm, courtesy and punctuality, and should be strictly impartial in his handling of every individual. His impartiality must be apparent to all, no hint of favouritism must be allowed to develop. He should not be content with seeing two sides of a question; he should look further and see all sides.

In order to further his purpose he must get to know the people under him and discover their interests and enthusiasms. If he is to get the best work from them he must know their capabilities and their aversions; if he is to train them he must know their limitations.

The assistant's work must be judged dispassionately. It is easy to fall into the error of assuming that there is something wrong with a man if his personality happens to clash with one's own, a temperamental difference can often be dressed up in an apparently reasonable form to serve as an argument against an individual. Only the actions should be assessed, the opinions are the concern of the man himself.

The librarian's load can be considerably eased if he has dependable senior staff who are able to assist with the work of instruction. However, if the senior assistants are to provide adequate training they themselves must be well qualified. Efficient instruction is necessary for the assistant, both for his own sake and for the benefit of the system that he serves, for all efforts directed towards improving the service of a library depend, in the last resort, upon the staff. They must be willing to assist readers, prepared to co-operate in experimenting with new ideas, and willing to share their own theories and experiences for the benefit of the system. Good staff training is, therefore, essential. All assistants should work together as a team, not as a set of individuals.

The librarian must always be alert and critically disposed in his attitude towards the service he provides. Complacency should never be allowed to dull his mind, always he should question the value and effectiveness of his provision and the validity of his beliefs. It is important that he should ask the right questions, for only in this way will the right answers be supplied. Clear and logical thinking is, therefore, essential while prejudice, and the too easy acceptance of conventional attitudes, should be held suspect.

Assistants are often inclined to be passive and to take things too much for granted. When they complain, the basis is often that the Chief Librarian, or the Council of the Library Association, should *do something* to create better conditions or to raise the status of the profession.

This attitude is entirely wrong; the initiative lies always with the individual. Each assistant has it within his power to raise the status of the profession; each branch librarian has the opportunity to do his share in making his branch a cultural beacon in the life of the district he serves.

Every individual effort will add to the sum total and improvement, when it comes, will be the result of the enthusiasm and work of the assistant, acting alone or as part of a group. Ideals must be maintained. The nature of the library service demands a continuous influx of men and women with the zest for public service. A branch library is best fitted to be the initial testing ground for such assistants; the branch librarian can be their tutor and so assist in building up the resources of the system and of the profession.

If branch libraries are to play their part in the task of training staff it is necessary that the tendency to collect the most intelligent personnel at the central library should be discontinued. The policy is bad in all respects, for it must necessarily exert a depressing influence upon those assistants who are stationed at the branches. If they are aware that the branch is regarded as the place for the second-best they will, inevitably, feel resentment, and this will be expressed by an apathetic attitude towards their work and towards the public. A source of contention is set up; as the best of the staff are transferred, so the remainder feel compelled to live up to the reputation implied by their position. Their efforts slacken and they give less than their best.

Injustice is done to both staff and system by this process. Compared with the main library a branch is weak in stock; it should, therefore, be strong in staff to balance the deficiency. Moreover, the branch librarian may hesitate to give due credit to any deserving member of his staff because of the fear of losing his services.

The only remedy is for the branch to be established in its rightful place in the hierarchy of the system. The initiative lies with the chief librarian, but the branch librarian can do his share by demonstrating the value to the system of an energetic and vital branch service.

It has been said that the secret of successful staff management is to keep assistants busy and happy. There is much truth in this. Assistants should be engaged in work in which they can be interested, and there should be sufficient variety to arouse and maintain that interest. As far as possible, the job should be suited to the man, more and better work

is produced when an assistant is engaged in work at which he is proficient. This does not mean that assistants should never have the opportunity to learn new routines, but it is applicable as a general rule for standard processes.

A contented staff reveals itself by the number of suggestions for service improvement voluntarily brought forward. These are the outward expressions of an enthusiasm for the work that will be revealed also in contacts with readers and will result in a large measure of public goodwill. The reverse is often true. Lack of interest can sometimes be traced to frustration caused by dissatisfaction with the service or with the particular daily routine.

Hours of work should remain stable as far as possible. Last-minute changes are an annoyance to the individual and to his family, and may frequently be avoided given a normal amount of forethought.

Branches and central should always work in harmony. Much depends upon the lead given by the chief and the reaction of each branch librarian. His attitude towards his colleagues at central, and towards his superiors, will be reflected in the attitude of his staff. Every assistant-in-charge owes a debt of loyalty towards the system as a whole, and he should remember that his opinions and outlook tend to be influenced by local conditions. Bias born of such prejudice is often difficult to detect, and few local assistants, especially if they are keen, are able to stand aside from the burden of their own immediate responsibilities in order to assess their problems from the point of view of the entire system.

Even when such impartiality of judgment is possible to the individual the act may yet be ineffective because of lack of facts. The local assistant may be thoroughly impartial in attitude but, unless he has possession of all relevant details, he cannot judge a case or assess a situation that concerns all departments.

The local librarian must, therefore, be trained to give due weight to the opinions and directives from headquarters. Discipline must be maintained, and absolute firmness in this respect is essential, for the system is greater than the individual.

A common complaint from branches is that there appears to exist a woeful disregard of local circumstances and needs.

This is particularly so where the branch librarian has wide powers for, in such cases, his actions are more independent of day-by-day control and there is greater likelihood of divergence of opinion. Whatever the circumstances, however, harmony between departments must be preserved, and directives that appear to militate against the welfare of a branch should be made the subject of discussion between the branch librarian and his chief. Such instructions should never be allowed to be disregarded or treated in such a manner that their purpose is circumvented. Both the spirit and the letter should be enforced at all times.

Regular meetings of the librarian and his heads of departments are valuable for the purpose of clearing the air of misconceptions and grievances, either real or imaginary, and such meetings would serve for the clarification of directives. The librarian is able to put the whole case for any decision before his subordinates so that they have a full understanding of the purpose behind his actions. Such an understanding should be sought by every branch librarian, and encouraged by the chief, whether or not a regular system of staff meetings is in operation. By such methods full compromise can often be effected.

The position is eased if the local assistant remembers always that the chief has his problems of administration to consider. When making his decisions he is guided by their value for the entire system and, quite often, actions must be taken that penalize, or appear to penalize, a particular branch. Resentment may be the result on the part of the branch personnel and such feeling, if left unexpressed, may vitiate good relations between branch and central. A man with a grievance cannot give of his best. Only by the exposure of resentments, and by free and open discussion, can they be prevented from assuming undue importance.

The chief librarian, for his part, must realize that objection to a central directive is often symptomatic of local zeal rather than obstinacy. Too often branch librarians are castigated as stubborn, unco-operative and unprogressive when their real error is faulty judgment caused by lack of knowledge of the facts. Willing co-operation is necessary on both sides if the best interests of the system are to be served.

Another common complaint is that assistants at branches lack the full opportunities for experience that exist for their colleagues at central. This is usually true so far as processes such as classification and cataloguing are concerned. Book selection, too, is often centralized although opportunities for selection, as distinct from book purchase, should always be provided at a branch.

However, to offset this, it frequently happens that training at branch libraries is more detailed than at the central library. Branch assistants, normally, shoulder greater responsibilities and profit by a more varied routine. Moreover, although little chance is offered in one direction, abundant opportunity is presented in another, for the branch assistant is able to get close to his readers and to assist them on a more personal footing than are the assistants at central.

Branch library service should, therefore, be regarded by the assistant as a means for the greater development of an aspect of librarianship which has vast future possibilities. The assistant who has learned about both stock and readers at a branch will probably be better equipped, professionally, than the assistant whose knowledge is limited in this sphere by the fewer opportunities at the central.

Centralization of processes is inevitable and necessary for the economical running of the system. But it has its advantages if the relief gained from routines is devoted to such work with readers. The local assistant should seize this opportunity for gaining an experience that will be of undoubted value and interest. Technical processes can always be studied, and efficiency in this work can be attained without too much difficulty. On the other hand, work with readers, and familiarity with the contents of books, cannot be studied in the same way. Such knowledge must be absorbed; it must be acquired gradually over a long period. Work at the branch involves the closest contacts with both readers and books; for the branch librarian, and for his staff, there can be no greater advantage.

Most systems experience some difficulty in binding the staff together in a common endeavour. The branch offers a useful unit on which to work besides offering scope for the branch librarian of personality. The staff is small and compact

and can be combined more easily into a united working party. Such cohesion will not come into being without effort and skilful direction, yet it can be achieved.

Knowledge of the problems involved in handling staff is important, for the librarian charged with initial training is responsible for creating impressions that might affect the whole career of a new assistant. The strongest influence in the early stages is, naturally, derived from the instructor. Human relations are extremely important for they enter into every aspect of library activity. This importance is recognized in industry, but it is not always sufficiently considered in the public library service. This is particularly unfortunate, for the service operates efficiently only when staff are working in harmony with each other and with the public they serve. In order to ensure harmony in the system a combined effort is required, and this can only be achieved if all staff become and remain interested in their work.

The personal factor is paramount. In any public service it is the steady accumulation of goodwill, brought about by capable staff work over long periods, that makes for good public relations. Nor can goodwill be obtained in any other way than by willing and efficient service from all staff at all times.

In order to achieve this it is necessary for every member of the staff to feel that his work contributes something of importance to the working of the system. A person regarded simply as a cog in a machine will not for long continue to give the best service. A keen assistant is more than a cypher; he is, in fact, an essential link in the chain of service. The required enthusiasm can often be induced, but the motive force must derive from the librarian, the inspiration must be his. It is his duty to lead rather than to direct, to set an example of co-operation, interest and efficiency, and so to train his staff in the true pattern of librarianship.

The importance of courtesy, tact and willingness to help people should be stressed, for the first impression of a reader is derived from his treatment by the staff. Deficiencies of stock may be overlooked, but lack of courtesy and an indifferent attitude will never be excused. Such defects may be accepted without complaint, unfortunately, for most readers are loath

to cause a fuss, but the inevitable result is loss of prestige for the service. An assistant may give inadequate service to the public either through lack of knowledge or lack of interest. He can remedy the former defect by seeking the advice of seniors, but the latter demands a complete re-examination of personal beliefs and ideals.

In order to increase his own efficiency, and strengthen his ability to handle staff, the librarian should endeavour to learn from the mistakes of others. In particular, he should treat his subordinates as he himself would wish to be treated. The temperamental or moody individual can never expect the co-operation or backing of those forced to work under him.

Authority should always be wielded with courtesy, for each person has individual pride to which respect should be accorded. Moreover, the qualities that are needed in an efficient assistant can only be encouraged by a polite and helpful attitude on the part of the senior. Just criticism may often be necessary, but it should be tendered in private and not given so that it rankles and causes discontentment. On the other hand, necessary reproof should not be withheld, for an error condoned and left uncorrected may occur again, and criticism at this later stage will probably be resented. Correction of any kind should be constructive and designed to demonstrate the pattern of correct behaviour and routine.

The first duty of the librarian is to ensure the finest service for the public. He must, therefore, guard against too many appeals for privilege and favours from the staff. This does not imply a rigid, unbending adherence to regulations in all cases, for it is often beneficial, as a long-term policy, to allow a certain measure of flexibility in staff relations. Abuse of privilege should not be tolerated; only experience in handling staff can allow the necessary discrimination to be made.

New ideas, and departures from regular routine, should be introduced gradually and allowed to settle slowly in the minds of subordinates. Such plans may mature for weeks in the brain of the administrator, so that they take on the guise of familiarity, and lead him to expect immediate response from his staff and an appreciation of the scheme equal to his own. To the staff, however, the plan may present a different

aspect; any hurried change of routine is unsettling and this, in itself, may cause some difficulty. Here, again, patience and tact are required.

Few will deny the value of leadership. In practice this means that the staff should be given some consideration when decisions are made. One man must make the final decision and accept ultimate responsibility yet, in spite of this, assistants should be treated as colleagues although they are subordinate in status. The librarian may be the best qualified man but he does not possess a monopoly of ideas. Staff suggestions should be considered, but it is not sufficient to wait for them, they should be invited and welcomed.

For this purpose regular discussions among the staff should be encouraged. All phases of the service should come under review. The youngest assistant should be able to air his views and make his mistakes, if necessary, with the knowledge that his suggestions will receive serious attention. A dozen suggestions may be made which will have no merit at all. These can be disposed of easily enough, and those responsible for the ideas will benefit by the knowledge of the better methods proposed. Yet always there is the odd suggestion of value that occurs and this arises, quite often, as an improvement on a previous proposal that, in itself, had little merit. Thus a poor idea can often start a train of thought in the mind of another person which may lead to a proposal of worth. General staff discussions should be given a trial in all systems in order to bind the experience and ideas of the individual assistants into a collective whole for the benefit of the service.

Such discussions must not be allowed to develop into time-wasting gossip periods. There should be a fixed agenda, and the chairman should ensure that business proceeds briskly and to good effect. If the discussion is held prior to the meeting of the heads of departments, the librarian will find himself in possession of the combined opinions of his staff. Ideas of value may be developed by this method.

Full credit for suggestions should always be given. Assistants require recognition for good work, and such treatment gives encouragement and adds incentive, both to the person immediately concerned and to others, to work for increased efficiency.

In order to ensure the reward of merit departmental heads should be instructed to watch the progress of their staff and to bring to the notice of the chief any assistant whose work shows aptitude and promise. Slovenly and careless work should likewise be noted.

Length of service should not be a major factor in deciding promotion; technical qualifications and suitability for the post should claim prior consideration. The knowledge that good work will be rewarded, and bad work punished, will do much to ensure alertness on the part of the staff. This attitude will be reflected in increased respect from readers, who benefit from prompt and efficient attention. The assistant who sits back and waits for promotion is one of the greatest hindrances to the well-being of the profession. The library service has no room for passengers.

Junior members of the staff are particularly apt to fly to extremes of enthusiasm and disillusionment concerning the ideals of librarianship. This is a natural process of growth in any person of imagination, and its incidence should not be repressed or discouraged. For, if training is suitably organized, and if example is freely given, the ebb and flow of enthusiasm is like the rising tide that advances and retreats, but always approaches nearer to its goal.

In such cases, the experienced librarian can best serve by demonstrating the general pattern of progress. There is a great gulf fixed between precept and practice and it is, unfortunately, demonstrated in many high places. This void is partly due to reasons beyond the control of the system, but blame cannot always be attributed to this account. Yet imperfections, as such, should surely be accepted as a spur and a challenge; the dead selves of past experience should lead to higher things. Every effort to end abuse, every urge to improve the service, will result in progression along the road towards the ideal of adequate and effective library provision for the encouragement and advancement of the individual human being.

Efficient training of assistants is not an easy task, for the basic material is sometimes completely unsuitable. Not every new entrant to the profession has the capacity or the temperament for public service. Choice of recruits is restricted by

unfavourable salaries, and by awkward hours of work, so that many school-leavers are not attracted. Some of those who enrol stay because they find something in the profession that appeals to their interest. Others, and the fact must be faced, are simply misfits, passengers who would be better elsewhere. These people may do their best, but their best is a poor effort which is bound to reduce the overall efficiency of the service. There are, too, quite a large number who are neither good nor bad. They progress to a certain standard, the elementary routines become known to them, so that they travel serenely without thought for ideals or further improvement. The extra drive required is missing; they are clock-watchers whose duty to the public ends on the stroke of the hour.

Such is the material with which the librarian sometimes has to contend, and upon his organizing skill and tact in handling the staff will depend the success of his system. He must be swift to recognize the shirker or the dullard, and be eager to encourage the keen and able. His ability will frequently be called into use in order to cover the defects of the mediocre and the incompetent.

One of the greatest weaknesses in staff management is concerned with deficiencies of the initial training period. This is probably due to shortage of staff, which results in a limitation of the time that can be spared for coaching purposes. Yet the first six months are vital, and it is essential that the whole of this period should be spent under supervision. Any curtailment of training is false economy and leads to poor results, but unless a definite procedure is laid down, and adhered to, it is difficult to provide for continued instruction to be maintained in all essential details.

To ensure adequate training it is not sufficient to teach how a thing is done; the reason why it is done in that particular way, and not in any other way, is also important. Principles, as well as practices, must be stressed. All assistants should be encouraged to view their daily work with an inquiring eye and to suggest methods of improvement wherever possible. A critical approach to all routines will result in the elimination of much unnecessary labour.

In order to ensure the maintenance of interest in training

over the whole period a series of monthly reports should be submitted by departmental heads. These should cover the whole of the field of the programme, and will eventually furnish a valuable guide to the worth and potentiality of new assistants. Every newcomer is appointed for a probationary term of six months and, unless he is obviously unsatisfactory, his appointment to a permanent position is, usually, automatic. From the point of view of the service this is a poor arrangement, for it allows too many people to be retained who are below the required standard. A detailed report, consisting of a cumulation of the monthly reports, would concentrate opinion for the benefit of the administrator and allow him to make a reasoned decision concerning the confirmation of the appointment.

From the assistant's point of view the method would be equally satisfactory. He would be aware that his future depended upon his own efforts, he would have an incentive to give of his best and would be assured that his strongest points would be noted and utilized and his weakest points strengthened. The knowledge that the administrative head was concerned with his welfare would serve to arouse a feeling of interest in the work and the system. Such interest, together with personal capacity, opportunity for the display of initiative and prospects for advancement, are all essential factors in the training of an assistant.

Deliberate basic training, and attention to the welfare of trainees, are important factors in developing a correct approach to the problems of librarianship. The relationship between staff and public frequently reflects the attitude of the staff to their work, while the atmosphere of a library is largely determined by the conduct of assistants when engaged in their daily tasks.

Periodical reports could well be continued throughout the career of an assistant. The National Charter makes provision for annual reports, and the details required could be adapted to make the record more suitable for the purpose envisaged.

Reports should be carefully compiled in the knowledge that they are permanent records by which an assistant will be judged. This, again, offers a measure of security to the individual, for he would be assured that his daily work would

be taken into account when promotions were being considered. The fear of being overlooked is a potent cause of dissatisfaction with branch assistants. The method proposed would remove the cause by ensuring that all members of the staff were considered on the performance of their whole period of service. This would tend to reduce the advantage gained by those working within the close orbit of the administrator. Moreover, the consistently dependable worker would not be penalized in favour of the spectacular individual of intermittent reliability. When a man knows that his future is in his own hands he is encouraged to take pains to gather credit by giving of his best service.

In spite of its importance, training given by seniors is not, by itself, sufficient. Assistants move from place to place but the system remains. A staff manual is, therefore, necessary to provide continuity and consistency of practice and to ensure the smooth working of a system throughout all changes. The complete manual is usually built up over a period of years and is added to and revised whenever necessary.

Material for inclusion naturally varies according to the size and methods of the system, but the minimum provision should be:

(1) Staff rules and regulations, such as the procedure for sickness notification or for emergencies, such as fire, etc.,
(2) processes and routines for all operations. This section forms the staff instruction book and official record,
(3) classification and cataloguing decisions that differ from standard practice.

The manual forms a valuable tool for saving time. It also ensures uniformity and accuracy of practice when assistants change from one routine to another or from one department to another. The printed word supplements verbal instruction and, in the majority of cases, reduces the time required for explanation. Another advantage is that the compilation brings to light those procedures that are outmoded and which have continued only by reason of long use. Before routines can be described they must be mentally analysed, and this scrutiny is usually sufficient to cause modification or complete rejection where necessary.

Its value for the new assistant is obvious. Here, again,

much staff time devoted to instruction can be saved. Methods in all departments are revealed, so that the new entrant is able to discover how his own work fits into the scheme of things and to appreciate the value and purpose of what he is doing. In this way, interest in the particular task, and in the system as a whole, is built up.

Another advantage is that the manual tends to break down the barriers between departments. This is one of its greatest virtues, which can be fully appreciated only by those who have had experience of its use. It is invaluable for giving an overall picture of the work of the system, thus allowing the important processes to be emphasized and the less essential to be assessed accordingly. With such a picture before him the librarian can examine each process in detail and delete all unnecessary items, while having the whole in perspective. The value of this can hardly be exaggerated. By clarifying routine processes and reducing them to the essentials, time is saved for work which might otherwise not be possible.

In order to be of use for training purposes, the manual must be written in simple language and with complete detail so that every part can be understood without too great an effort and without prolonged explanation. Some verbal instruction there must be to supplement the written word; the extreme simplicity and completeness of minor detail that would be required in order to make verbal instruction unnecessary would be out of place. In any case, a personal talk between new assistant and senior will always be essential in order to ensure that the junior appreciates the significance of what he has read.

Such a talk in the early stages of an assistant's career is valuable because of the possibility for building morale and providing a foundation for a sane and balanced outlook on library problems. This is fundamental to good service and is based on the following considerations:

(*a*) Complete understanding of the purpose of public libraries,
(*b*) agreement with the ideals expressed,
(*c*) co-ordination of the individual's activities with the over-all purpose of the service, and
(*d*) confidence in the administration, both with regard to methods and personnel.

The appreciation of these features may seem to demand a wide understanding on the part of a raw recruit. Full comprehension will not materialize immediately; it will, in fact, be achieved only through the course of years, yet the groundwork is laid in the first few months of service. Then, it is, that the vital outlook upon the profession is formulated. A librarian's attitude towards his public and towards his staff often reflects the training he received during his apprentice years. A consistent and realistic attitude towards the training of juniors, and the urge for increased technical training, will tend to alleviate staff problems. This tendency, combined with the distinction between professional and non-professional staff, might be a hope for the future.

The passing of examinations is not the summit of a librarian's career, it is the beginning only. So many librarians cease to take an active interest in any aspect of their work save the daily administrative routine; that way lies frustration and wasted opportunity. Each individual must decide his attitude for himself, but he can be materially assisted in his decision by the example of his seniors. Herein lies the value of the system where staff problems are shared by both seniors and juniors.

It follows that it is a mistake for the man in charge to try to make himself indispensable by retaining control of all matters. His principal assistant should really assist; he should know all details of daily activities and future policies so that he can, if necessary, take over the running of the system without serious dislocation of the service.

This principle applies to all details of the service, and not only to administrative matters. All grades are affected and every assistant should have an understudy ready to take over in case of need. If this principle is adopted there will always be a capable assistant available to help readers. Capable, in this connection, should refer to more than theoretical proficiency; the possession of personality and the urge to assist are basically more important than technical efficiency alone. The latter can be acquired, but the former must be inherent. Both are necessary in the make-up of the competent assistant, for we deal with both books and readers, and neither function can be separated from the other.

These factors assume increased importance when it is realized that the man on the spot is the representative of the system and that his attitude and bearing is responsible, to a large extent, for the formation of public opinion. Actions that may appear trifling, in themselves, may be responsible for repercussions that affect the whole system. Good librarianship is based on personal service.

Since this is so the importance of efficient organization becomes evident. A smoothly-running system can save many staff hours that can always be used to good effect. Normal routine affairs are easily dealt with in the well-planned library system, so that more time is available for work with readers. Yet, even with the best organizing ability, some difficulty in the continuous provision of skilled service is bound to be experienced, especially where a system has small branches. This is one of the chief arguments against the establishment of these centres, for an efficient service is impossible without adequate stock and sufficient trained staff to exploit it.

Delegation of powers can be achieved in other ways to the benefit of staff and service. One method is to divide the responsibility for the care of stock among the staff. Each should be responsible for a fixed section, from initial selection to final discarding, and this section should be made up of both fiction and factual works. The assistant concerned should straighten his own section each morning and examine the stock during the process. Books that are grubby, or that have not been issued during the preceding twelve months, should be removed. The decision for discarding or replacing should be made by the assistant, subject to the confirmation of the head of the department. He should also note the necessity for fresh stock or new editions. Greater keenness is aroused among assistants when they have their own section to care for. The stock is kept fresh and up to date, while the staff benefit from a more detailed knowledge of books and subjects.

All members of the staff should exchange responsibilities at stated periods. The frequency of the change should be governed by the size of each section, but sufficient time should be given to allow an assistant to become thoroughly conversant with his stock.

A similar practice that could, with benefit, be more widely adopted concerns the allocation of set duties to particular individuals. Thus one person should be made responsible for overdues, another for reservations, and so on. Even the smallest system could be planned on similar lines, although complete specialization would not be possible in all cases. Where this is so, each assistant should be allotted two or three routines, and should be allowed to retain control of these for a specified period.

This method has advantages for both assistant and system. The assistant gets to know his job thoroughly and is able to learn why as well as how. The system benefits by this proficiency as a matter of course. Moreover, it is useful to be able to place a query with a definite individual and to know that it will be handled efficiently. This does not always apply where specialization is absent.

There is a danger here, for too great an emphasis on special functions will allow, and even encourage, assistants to get into grooves, to become efficient at one particular job and indifferently capable at others. This can be avoided if all staff change routines periodically, as previously suggested, thus preventing any task from becoming boring by its over-familiarity.

This method has been widely adopted with success. A person encouraged to specialize in successive functions has the opportunity to develop into a capable, all-round worker, able to assess each process and routine at its true value, to know the comparative worth of each, and to understand their relationship and interdependence.

Such an organized plan of training lends itself admirably to the development of confidence. If the tasks allotted are graded according to responsibility, the assistant picks up his powers and duties gradually, and feels that he is pulling his weight in the system.

Staff in training must be encouraged to shoulder responsibility, they must be introduced gradually to the use of power and taught not to abuse their trust. A graduated course of instruction—and the well-organized system provides this in its daily programme—will lead the junior through specialized tasks of steadily increasing importance. Finally, having tackled

all of the routines, he can claim to be well trained and able to assume the wider responsibilities of a senior post. The hazards of professional examinations would be much less formidable if all students had the advantage of such systematic training.

Variety is essential in all training programmes and, for this reason, it is necessary that staffs should be mobile and should be transferred between branches and central at fixed intervals. A six-monthly period between transfers has generally been found acceptable, for this allows sufficient time for the assistants to learn the routine and, in some measure, to recompense the branch librarian for the time sacrificed for their instruction.

Branch librarians should also have the opportunity for transfer, but their changes should not be of frequent occurrence. The assistant-in-charge is responsible for the development of the personal relationship between staff and readers. The brunt of the work concerned with assistance to readers will fall upon his shoulders; he, and only he, will have a sufficiently wide knowledge of the public to ensure a satisfactory service.

In spite of this, it is not desirable that any man should be permanently stationed at one place, for the limitation of the service area will, inevitably, be reflected in his attitude towards his work. Staleness must develop in due course, and this may lead to apathy and neglect of duty.

For this reason, it is suggested that branch librarians should be transferred at the end of a two-yearly period of duty. Such a transfer could cause an upheaval in the branch service, yet this could be minimized if the branch librarian leaves behind a capable deputy, who can assist the incoming branch librarian, and shoulder responsibility during the uncertainties of the interim period of change.

If this method is adopted it gives added emphasis to the requirement that deputies at branches should work in close harmony with their seniors and should be aware of all developments and plans.

The transfer of branch deputies should take place at yearly intervals, and the change-over should be arranged so as to avoid any clash with the transfer of their seniors. If branch librarians change their stations at the beginning of each

second year, and deputies at the middle of each year, there will never arise any occasion when the transfer dates of librarians and deputies coincide.

As a method of teaching junior staff many American librarians favour the technique known as "in service training". The method is in use in some systems in this country, although it is not always designated by the American title. Library schools feature it as "Situations" but, whatever the title, the basic principles are similar in all cases.

The method consists in the development of situations that are likely to arise during the course of a day's work. Commencing with the simple events, such as lost tickets or mutilated books, the drill continues through the incidents on an ascending scale of complexity. The instructor acts as the troublesome or helpless reader, and is able to test the reactions of the trainees to the various incidents that arise.

Where time can be spared, there can be little doubt as to the value of this form of training. It does create awareness and demonstrates the correct action to be taken in given circumstances. It makes the assistant familiar with basic routines, and introduces a welcome variety to the training period. Although it cannot ensure that the correct action is invariably taken in unfamiliar or unusual situations, the method probably creates confidence in the assistant so that the occurrence is, at least, competently handled.

If it is true that the method can create a confident approach to library problems it should be welcomed. This, or some other form of training, should be adopted according to the circumstances of the system in order to instil confidence in young assistants, especially in connection with their dealings with the public. Quite often juniors are unable to explain clearly the functions of the catalogue, for example, not for lack of knowledge, but because of nervousness. An attempt could be made to overcome this, even in the smallest systems, by means of constant practice between members of the staff. Such exercises would assist in enabling assistants to be accurate and concise in their explanations. A rambling commentary on the use of the classification and catalogue does not encourage a reader to attempt to understand or use either of these aids.

CHAPTER VII

FITTINGS AND GUIDES

THE chief difficulty of many libraries with regard to furniture is to provide the maximum accommodation for books and readers within a building that is often too small for its purpose. The price of land, and the high cost of construction, have both contributed to the development towards smaller buildings, so that to-day one of the major problems facing the librarian is to provide sufficient space-saving devices. Reduction in the height of book cases has still further reduced shelving capacity, while storage space has dwindled as a result of the disappearance of basements from modern buildings.

Little can be done to offset this loss. The facts must be accepted and attempts made to utilize all available space, but this should not lead to the unnecessary reintroduction of island bookcases. In certain circumstances the necessity for shelving may enforce the use of such stacks. Quite often, however, the desired result can be achieved by the use of the alcove method of arrangement. Such a plan is much to be preferred to the ugly radial plan which clashes with the lines of any rectangular room.

Tall stacks can usually be adapted to make them more suitable for modern requirements. A high top shelf can be faced with hard-board, or similar material, and used for guiding and display purposes. Such boards are admirably suited for the display of book jackets, and these should be appropriate to the subjects in the bays concerned.

Low bottom shelves can be enclosed and used for storage purposes. Summer issues are less numerous than winter issues, so that the shelves tend to become too full. Temporary withdrawal from circulation is the obvious remedy, and the storage facility offered by the enclosed bottom shelf of each stack would be invaluable in these circumstances.

Such space could also be used to accommodate books for which there is a seasonal demand, such as those on summer and winter sports and pastimes. Alternatively, and this is a method to be recommended, the bottom shelf of each tier could be left exposed and used for the accommodation of filing boxes. These boxes could contain pamphlets in classified order, and their sequence would correspond to that of the bay in which they were situated. If space allowed, some of the boxes could be devoted to the filing of back numbers of appropriate periodicals. In this connection should be noted the suggestion, mentioned in an earlier chapter, that suitable periodicals should be displayed on tables in the lending library in close location to related books.

Reduction in size of the stacks, clearing of the floor area, and the provision of a few tables and chairs in lending libraries will do much to improve the appearance of any room, no matter how poor the original plan. Further improvement could be made by providing curtains for windows and by arranging for a regular supply of flowers for decorations.

Vases for flowers should be included in the fittings of all departments. Flowers have a wonderful capacity for brightening a room, and it is surprising to find that greater use is not made of floral decoration. Arrangements can usually be made with the Parks Department for the supply of cut flowers, in season, while a few of the indoor evergreens will serve to tide over the winter months. Indoor bulbs are available, and they will bloom from January onwards, while libraries supplied with window boxes can have a brave show for the major part of the year.

Public library buildings frequently suffer from so many adverse features, in poor planning, design and archaic shelving, that any form of decoration available at moderate cost should be eagerly accepted. The experiment should be made in every library; it is certain that few librarians would regret the decision or wish to return to the bleak drabness of their former surroundings.

Some provision should be made for display fittings, particularly at branch libraries which are frequently neglected in this respect. Furniture for display can take the form of fixed dis-

play racks, table troughs or mobile book cases. Special racks can also be built in the normal shelving sequence.

One particular type of display rack will accommodate about seventy volumes. It is 5 ft. in height, 4 ft. long and 2 ft. deep. An ample cork lined back-board allows for the posting of lists and illustrations.

The mobile case is another piece of equipment that should be acquired. Another type of rack is four feet in height, 3 ft. 6 in. in length and 1 ft. 6 in. in overall depth. The wheels allow the whole to be moved easily from place to place, even when fully loaded, and this facilitates the choice of items for inclusion. Another advantage lies in the possibility for regular display of different classes of the stock.

Elaborate equipment is not vitally necessary for the success of a display policy, yet the furniture mentioned can make the task much easier. There is a limit to the extent to which make-shift equipment will serve. Display racks and cases attract by their appearance and are eminently desirable.

Similarly, the use of the transparent plastic periodical covers should be encouraged. These allow the coloured covers of magazines to be seen, thus contributing to the brightness of the room.

A small department readily lends itself to original and unorthodox ideas in the matter of shelving, guiding, display racks and other fittings. Thus, the shelving sequence need not be continuous in a small area, but can be broken up by the insertion of sectional catalogues. Display racks, when fitted in with wall shelving, can often serve a double purpose by camouflaging radiators and similar appliances. Where island or alcove stacks are retained, the ends can be adapted to serve for display purposes. Tables and chairs can be informal, and rugs provided if care is taken to ensure a non-slippery floor surface.

Furniture that serves the double purpose of economizing on space and of presenting an attractive appearance is especially useful. The revolving turntable counter is a desirable piece of equipment in this connection for it reduces the space required for issue filing trays and allows the assistant to sit down when discharging books. It looks neat and efficient and presents an aspect of skilful design.

In use in the juvenile department of the Ladbroke Grove

Branch of Kensington Public Libraries is a revolving turntable counter, in which twenty long and twenty short compartments alternate, 11½ in. long and 4½ in. long respectively. The total length of filing space is 26 ft. 8 in. This is equivalent to the capacity of twenty-five issue trays, normally occupying from 6 to 7 ft. of counter space.

Clear guiding is essential in any library, whether small or large. Guiding, to reveal the location of classes, subjects and books, is a mechanical function which must be adjusted according to the size and layout of the department. Guides are usually provided for stacks, bays, topics and, in some cases, for shelves.

Before deciding on the guides to be used, the librarian should attempt to look at the library from the reader's point of view. The arrangement of the stacks is familiar to the assistant but not to the reader. For this reason all guides should be clear, simple, attractive and not so numerous as to cause confusion. The use of coloured plastic, now available, should be considered, for such plates add colour to a room usually deficient in this respect. Black lettering on a yellow background can be recommended, for these colours form a contrast that is effective and not unpleasing.

Individual plastic letters are obtainable fitted with pins that can be inserted into fibre board or any similar surface that is not too hard. These are manufactured in all sizes, and in many different colours, so that headings for displays and exhibitions can be set up in an attractive form. The letters represent a valuable acquisition to the librarian intent on pursuing a continuous display policy. They are effective and economical in use since they can be used over and over again given normal attention. The fixing pins are a possible source of weakness but, given care in handling, little difficulty should be experienced.

Undoubtedly the best overall guide to the layout of the stacks consists of a plan of the arrangement, and this should be displayed in every lending library. Librarians are, quite often, so accustomed to the sight of books and stacks that they are unaware of the dismay of the reader when faced with a vast accumulation of books. A plan can reduce the difficulty of

understanding and show, at a glance, the method of arrangement.

The sketch need not be larger than 12 in. × 18 in., but all essential details should be plainly given. The contents of both sides of double-fronted stacks should be noted, either by subject names or by notation. Preferably, both should be given, together with the main outline of the classification scheme. This design should also be printed separately in pamphlet or card form for the benefit of newly-registered readers. If a guide to the system is prepared this detail should be included.

The catalogue is not always considered as a guide, yet it is a most essential aid in tracing works. In many cases, catalogues are unused because people believe that they are staff tools. A note to dispel this belief, together with instructions for the use of the catalogue, should be plainly displayed and should also be included in the printed guide.

Understanding on the part of the public is particularly necessary when a union catalogue is in use. A union catalogue reveals its greatest value at the branches. Branch stocks can never be large enough to allow adequate representation, and the only guide for the reader lies in the provision of a record of the whole stock of the system.

It is, therefore, essential to teach the use of the catalogue, yet this cannot be done unless readers are willing to co-operate and make some effort to understand. All too often library staffs acquiesce in this ignorance, and assist in the neglect of catalogues by making it easy for readers to short-circuit this useful aid. By having his book found for him the reader is able to ignore the catalogue, and is thereby encouraged to deprive himself of the benefits of related subjects and the knowledge of books not on view.

In order to avoid this, and to make systematic reference a normality, the practice should be adopted of omitting the notations from all bulletins and similar lists that contain details of books likely to be in demand. The method has already been described in a previous chapter, and it proves to be much more valuable than the forcible introduction sometimes imposed upon newly registered readers. The new reader has little interest in any of our complicated aids; the reader

inquiring for a particular book has an interest and will benefit by the instruction given.

The undoubted difficulty experienced in teaching people to make full use of libraries lends weight to the opinion that classification schemes and catalogues tend to become real barriers to general use. The tendency is particularly noticeable when close classification is practised and when catalogues reach massive proportions. The view has been put forward, on more than one occasion, that the catalogue should be split up and sited at the shelves with the appropriate subjects.

Where a classified catalogue is in use the idea is tempting and should be fairly easy of application. A separate catalogue for each class should present a simpler aspect to the reader and might encourage him to make use of it. But where a dictionary catalogue is employed, any attempt to separate the classes in this manner would present almost insuperable difficulties.

Catalogue cabinets should be enclosed at the base so as to increase storage facilities. Plate glass should be fitted over the cards, especially in the children's library. This is an extremely important measure because the glass ensures that cards are handled at the sides and edges, so reducing the marks of dirty fingers. In addition, it is much more difficult to extract cards when the glass is present. This guards against irresponsible removal and ensures the continued accuracy of the catalogues. Guiding on the fronts of drawers should be clear and adequate, and fiction and factual entries should be differentiated by the use of different tints of guide cards.

Where cabinets are arranged in banks, the "each-way" type should be considered. The specially designed features of this form permit a greater number of readers to consult the catalogue at one time. The blank panels are very suitable for the display of guides, instructions for use, and so on. This obviates the necessity for notices on the tops of cabinets. Such notices are not always attractive in appearance and tend to move out of alignment.

Other guides include the class, stack, tier, subject and shelf guides. These have all been described so many times that it would be pointless to repeat needless detail. Of stack guides it is sufficient to note that two swinging signs, each showing the

contents of one side of a stack, are more easily understood by readers than the single sign containing details of both sides.

Tier guides should be large enough to be seen but not large enough to be unsightly; 12 in. × 3 in. is a good size. Headings used should be in popular terms and notations should be included.

All subject guides that project from the shelves should be dispensed with and their places taken by blocks of a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thickness, painted with a vivid colour, such as royal blue. The name of the topic should be boldly lettered along this spine with white paint.

Objection has been raised to the use of topic guides because of the shelf space they occupy. The objection is valid, but the amount of space involved is slight, being a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. for each topic. This sacrifice is worth making for the benefits that accrue. In practice, most shelves have some space that could be allotted to topic guides; any shelf without such space is overcrowded and probably in need of weeding.

There is another type of topic guide which makes no demand on shelf space. It consists of a thin upright strip of metal set in the centre of a metal base in the manner of a book end. The front edge projects over the edge of the shelf and carries the topic headings of previous and following subjects.

This contrivance can also be used as a shelf guide if necessary, but the labelling of shelves is of doubtful value when tier and topic guides are provided. It is possible to be over-elaborate and to cause confusion. Moreover, the contents of shelves are continually changing, and any method that requires constant supervision and frequent change should be avoided if this is possible without appreciable loss.

Visible indexing equipment can serve a useful purpose for the use of both staff and readers. Various types are manufactured. The equipment used consists of stands of various types on which are supported flat swinging panels. On each face of the panels can be arranged a series of detachable strips, each containing one or two lines of information. As a periodical index, or as a key to special collections, this installation has obvious value. It can also be used to provide information of recent additions.

CHAPTER VIII

LEGAL ASPECTS

THE librarian is responsible to his authority for the maintenance of his system and for the orderly conduct of its affairs. He should, therefore, be familiar with the provisions of library law and with his council's by-laws and regulations. It is, however, equally important that his staff should understand their powers and duties. This applies particularly to branch librarians who might be called upon to exercise independent action.

The scope of this section is limited to a summary of those points in library law that are most likely to concern the staff in the course of their daily work. Further provision is unnecessary in view of the existence of Hewitt's *Law Relating to Public Libraries,* to which acknowledgment is paid.

Regulations can be particularly troublesome. They are not enforceable unless supported by by-laws, so that it is obviously necessary to know whether any or all of the regulations in force are so supported. Any regulations, such as the imposition of a charge for readers' tickets and the payment of fines, which have not the backing of by-laws, can be maintained by consent only and cannot be enforced in law. The necessity for caution here is apparent, particularly in view of the provisions of the Public Libraries Act, 1892, section 11 (3), which states:

"No charge shall be made for admission to a library or museum provided under this Act for any library district, or in the case of a lending library, for the use thereof by the inhabitants of the district; but the library authority, if they think fit, may grant the use of a lending library to persons not being inhabitants of the district, either gratuitously or for payment."

The difference between a regulation and a by-law should be appreciated. A by-law is made by a local authority for

matters of local regulation. It must be approved by Government authority. Breaches of by-laws involve penalties which can be enforced in a court of law.

A regulation governs the management of conduct. It is a local affair for which no confirmation from an outside body is required. A breach of a regulation would not be punishable in law as regulations are not enforceable in the Magistrates' Court. Penalties for breaches of regulations are such as may be imposed by the Library Authority; for example, loss of privileges in using the library, exclusion therefrom, etc.

Circumstances which can be covered by by-laws are those specified in the Public Libraries Act, 1901, Section 3, which reads:*

"A library authority may make by-laws for all or any of the following purposes relating to any library under their control, that is to say:

(*a*) For regulating the use of the same and of the contents thereof, and for protecting the same and the fittings, furniture and contents thereof from injury, destruction, or misuse;

(*b*) for requiring from any person using the same any guarantee or security against the loss of or injury to any book or other article;

(*c*) for enabling the officers and servants of the library authority to exclude or remove therefrom persons committing any offence against the Libraries Offences Act, 1898, or against the by-laws."

The Libraries Offences Act, 1898, specifies the following offences:

(*a*) Behaving in a disorderly manner.
(*b*) Using violent, abusive or obscene language.
(*c*) Betting and gambling.
(*d*) After proper warning, persisting in remaining in the library beyond the hours fixed for closing.

* Mr. A. R. Hewitt draws attention to an interesting and important point here, as follows: "A local authority has fairly wide powers in the matter of by-laws generally; namely, to make by-laws for 'good rule and government'. If it were felt that the things specified in the Act of 1901 were not sufficient the Library Authority, as the local authority, could also invoke the wider powers under the Act of 1933."

These circumstances are fairly comprehensive, but not complete. All other circumstances that might arise must be covered by regulations,* authority for which is given in the Public Libraries Act, 1892, section 15, clause 2, which reads:

> "The Library Authority may make regulations for the safety and use of every library, museum, gallery and school under their control, and for the admission of the public thereto." The 1861 "Act to consolidate and amend the Statute Law of England and Ireland relating to malicious injuries to property" is also applicable.

In Scotland, power to make by-laws is included in the Act of 1887, clause 22.

The 1901 Act provides for the approval of by-laws by the Ministry of Education. A model set, based upon Library Association recommendations, has been issued by the Ministry. They are as follows:

(1) A person shall not engage in audible conversation in any reading room in the library, after having been requested not to do so by an officer or servant of the Library Authority.

(2) A person shall not wilfully obstruct any officer or servant of the Library Authority in the execution of his duty or wilfully disturb, interrupt or annoy any other person in the proper use of the library.

(3) A person shall not cause or allow any dog or other animal belonging to him or under his control to enter or remain in the library, or bring into any part of the library a bicycle or other wheeled vehicle or conveyance.

(4) A person other than an officer or servant of the Library Authority shall not enter or remain in any part of the library not set apart for the use of the public.

(5) A person shall not smoke, strike a light or spit in any part of the library.

(6) A person shall not negligently soil, tear, cut, deface, damage, injure, or destroy any book, newspaper,

* Offences against regulations are not punishable by resort to the Courts.

magazine, pamphlet, map, chart, plan, engraving, etching, print or other document forming part of the contents of the library.

(7) A person other than an officer or servant of the Library Authority shall not affix or post any bill, placard or notice to or upon any part of the library.

(8) A person who is offensively unclean in person or in dress, or who is suffering from an offensive disease, shall not enter or use the library.

(9) A person shall not lie on the benches, chairs, tables or floor of the library.

(10) A person shall not partake of refreshment in the library.

(11) A person shall not give a false name or address for the purpose of entering any part of the library or obtaining any privilege therefrom.

(12) A person shall not make a tracing of any portion of a book without the permission of the librarian.

(13) A person other than an officer or servant of the Library Authority shall not, unless authorized, take any book from any lending or home-reading department of the library.

(14) A person other than an officer or servant of the Library Authority shall not take any book from the reference or reading room of the library.

(15) Every person who shall offend against any of the foregoing by-laws shall be liable for every such offence to a penalty of five pounds.

Provided nevertheless that the Court of Summary Jurisdiction before whom any proceedings may be taken in respect of any such offence may, if the Court think fit, adjudge the payment of any sum less than the full amount of the penalty imposed by this by-law.

(16) Every person who shall commit any offence against the Library Offences Act, 1898, or against any of the foregoing by-laws may be excluded or removed from the library by any officer or servant of the Library Authority in any one of the several cases hereinafter specified that is to say:

(1) Where the offence is committed within the view of such officer or servant and the name and residence of the person committing the offence are unknown to and cannot readily be ascertained by such officer or servant.

(2) Where the offence is committed within the view of such officer or servant and from the nature of such offence or from any other fact of which such officer or servant may have knowledge or of which he may be credibly informed there may be reasonable ground for belief that the continuance in the library of the person committing the offence may result in another offence against the Act or against the by-laws or that the exclusion or removal of such person from the library is otherwise necessary as a security for the proper use and regulation thereof.

(17) From and after the date of the confirmation of these by-laws, the by-laws relating to libraries which were made by the Council on the day of and were confirmed by the Board of Education on the day of , shall be repealed.

By-laws, or the regulations based on them, must be publicly displayed if they are to be effective. Any person offending against any section should be warned that his conduct constitutes a breach of the by-law, and the appropriate section should be pointed out to him. Ignorance of the law may not be a legal excuse, but it must be the assistant's aim to end abuses and to prevent their repetition rather than to secure punishment for the breach of a by-law caused by ignorance of its existence. Most people are reasonable and law-abiding, and can be dissuaded from committing offences by firm handling backed by the evidence of the by-laws.

The view is prevalent that librarians have no power under the law to compel a reader to return books. Specifically, this is so, for there is no by-law to cover the point. But public property is protected under common law, just as is private property, and the rights of restitution apply. Difficulty may arise where the reader denies receiving or possessing the book,

for the card charging system is subject to error and may not, therefore, be accepted as proof of issue.

Notices of a prohibitory nature, featuring choice extracts from the regulations, are commonly seen on the walls of libraries. "No spitting, talking or sleeping", and notices of a similar nature, have no good effect on the library user at whom they are directed. Such notices are offensive and should not be allowed to disfigure the walls of a public building.

The problem of smoking in libraries can conveniently be considered here although it presents no legal problem. It has been suggested that readers should be allowed to smoke while choosing their books, and this is a proposal that deserves consideration. The obvious objection is that the floor will become littered with ash and cigarette ends. This is probably true, but the provision of ashtrays would do much to reduce this inconvenience. A more serious objection is concerned with the risk of fire. Opinions differ as to the amount of risk involved, but it is certain that some insurance companies would object if smoking were allowed. Where such a practice is introduced, item 5 of the model by-laws should be amended.

Local regulations with regard to fire precautions, and the necessity for unimpeded access to exits, should be known by all of the staff and should be rigidly observed.

The following matters are also of interest:

Election duties

A local authority has power to call upon members of the library staff at election times to assist the Town Clerk in carrying out his duties in connection with the registration of electors and the conduct of parliamentary elections. (Local Government Act, 1933, section 105 (3), and 106 (6), and London Government Act, 1939, section 76 (5)).

Damage

Under the Malicious Damage Act, 1861, section 39, it is an offence unlawfully and maliciously to destroy or damage any book, manuscript, picture, print, statue, bust or vase or any other article or thing kept for the purpose of art, science or literature or as an object of curiosity, in any museum, gallery or library.

Infection

The Public Health Act, 1936, section 155, requires that a person:

(*a*) who knows that he is suffering from a notifiable disease (smallpox, cholera, diphtheria, membraneous croup, erysipelas, scarlet fever, typhus, typhoid and enteric fever) shall not take any book or cause any book to be taken for his use, or use any book taken from any public library;

(*b*) shall not permit any book which has been taken from a public library, and is under his control, to be used by any person whom he knows to be suffering from a notifiable disease; and

(*c*) shall not return to any public library a book which he knows to have been exposed to infection from a notifiable disease, or permit any such book which is under his control to be so returned, but shall give notice to the local authority (or in the case of a county library to the county council) that the book has been so exposed to infection. The local authority or county council must have the book disinfected or destroyed.

Every precaution must be taken to conform with the Public Health Acts. Persons suffering from infectious diseases, or who are in charge of other persons so suffering, are liable to penalties for lending any article. Any librarian who knowingly accepted a book from an infected house and re-issued it would, therefore, be offending against the law. Regulations of the authority for dealing with infected books must be strictly maintained by all assistants.

Lotteries and Newspapers

The Betting and Lotteries Act, 1934, makes it illegal for British newspapers to publish lists of winners of lotteries and certain other prize competitions. Certain publications exhibited in British libraries, such as the Irish newspapers, are not affected by the ban, so that lottery lists may appear therein. In such cases, a librarian or library authority can be prosecuted for allowing the exhibition of the publication.

Betting

Betting or the writing or passing of betting slips is a nuisance frequently encountered in public libraries. Mr. A. R. Hewitt writes as follows:*

"If it can be proved that such behaviour causes annoyance or disturbance under the Libraries Offences Act, 1898, then a prosecution will clearly lie under that Act, involving a fine on conviction of forty shillings. The Police may, however, prosecute under the Street Betting Act, 1906, as was done in a case reported in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* (1932). In that case the defendant was charged with loitering in the reading room of a public library for the purposes of street betting. A fine of five pounds was imposed and the Magistrate stated that the defendant had no right to use a public place for the purpose of betting of any kind. In this instance the public library was clearly taken to be a 'public place' and in the absence of a higher judicial or statutory definition it must presumably be accepted as such."

* Hewitt, A. R., *The Law Relating to Public Libraries*, 2nd ed., 1947. Eyre & Spottiswoode, p. 35.

CHAPTER IX

STOCK: SELECTION

BOOK selection involves a knowledge of the sources of information, and these include current and past publications, as well as bibliographies; a knowledge of authors and publishers; a thorough understanding of the strength and weakness of the library stock, both in quantity and in quality.

In order to select a stock capable of meeting all demands the librarian must know books; he must also know how to make them work, for the selection must always take account of the projected use. He must understand processes, and should be able to provide effective machinery for the smooth working of his department. His task is to link readers and books, and his selection should be regarded as the initial step in this process.

A trained librarian will know something about books, but how much will he know about readers? Readers are individuals with widely varying tastes, habits, prejudices, capabilities, needs, education, occupations and background experience. Are these factors sufficiently known and catered for in book selection?

The collection of such data involves personal contact with readers, a thorough and continuous examination of analysed issue records, assessment of stock, and a knowledge of local interests and resources.

The size of the collection must be considered as well as the policy adopted with regard to completeness of representation in particular subjects. Needs of readers will be revealed by their requests, by the type of reader, local industries and interests, and by the use of existing provision. All such factors must be considered and judged at their true value so far as this can be ascertained. Bias on the part of the selector is a tendency to be avoided. Care should be taken not to allow selection to develop into the habit of catering for special

classes to the exclusion of any section of the population. The demand of all should be taken into consideration and every effort made to discover unexpressed requirements.

In order to avoid bias the selector should beware of the influence of conventional thinking. His methods must be based on reason; he should aim at a logical representation of subjects, that is, one adapted to the needs of his community, having regard to other sources of supply and other resources of the system.

How can an impartial attitude be maintained? How can the mind free itself from the insistence of literary cliques and superficial theorists? Only by the possession of background knowledge, by the exercise of individual critical faculties nurtured by personal experience; only by measuring current literature against the best specimens of the past. The use of such a constant standard is obligatory, for wise selection is a duty that is due to the public and to our integrity as librarians.

This does not necessarily involve the selection of the first-rate to the exclusion of that of lesser value. That policy would be priggish and ineffective, for there will always be people incapable of appreciating the best but able to make good use of substitutes. The best works should be provided for those who can make use of them, but there is still ample room for the second-best.

Since there are people who cannot cope with the first-rate, it follows that a work of this kind can have little value in these circumstances. The best work is not always the most difficult, of course, but very often it is so. This is easily understandable, for the necessity for concision and completeness requires a particularity of treatment and demands also, from the reader, deliberate and sustained effort for full comprehension. We do not get something for nothing; the finest works demand the sternest concentration. A tolerant attitude towards human deficiencies, and a wise understanding of the limitations of others, will result in a broad outlook which demands the provision of the best material for those able to assimilate it, with a selection of lower standard for those less richly endowed.

One of the chief problems to be faced is that there is, in this country, widespread literacy without discrimination or

understanding. The accompanying tendency is to pay homage to the material values at the expense of the spiritual and cultural, and to pander to the tastes of the lowest, as witness the predominance of low standards in popular entertainment.

For the most part, the librarian has reacted in one of two ways. In some cases, the line of least resistance has been followed and popular, frothy reading material has been allowed to flood the library shelves. At the other extreme, there has been a tendency to raise a barrier against all but "serious" readers, and to provide nothing but standard and solid works.

Both methods are unsound, for both ignore the full duty of the librarian, which is to make development possible for every man. The barely literate must be given their chance; their material must be provided in just proportion but, most important, a planned policy must be initiated to help and guide these readers in order to demonstrate the value of better books and to encourage them to attempt personal development.

The duty of the librarian is to serve his community as he finds it; to serve all of the community, not merely a section of whose opinions he approves. He has no authority to teach or to instruct, but he should encourage the improvement of reading tastes and make it easy for such an end to be achieved. Yet, although he cannot teach, he can help the individual to learn by providing all necessary equipment and by demonstrating the easiest paths.

This duty should be considered always by the selector and by those responsible for the formulation of policy. It is not entirely the fault of the adult if his reading tastes are low. Part of the blame must rest with the system of education which produced a scheme of training that failed to provide adults with the means of appreciating literature. A similar complaint could be levelled against the juvenile libraries where, even to-day, children are frequently entertained with puppet shows, and fed with books of little value, to the exclusion of necessary assistance in the use of books.

To exclude all but the "serious" readers is to perpetuate a ridiculous situation. Advocates of this policy seem to regard

librarianship as connoting the administration of a stock of books without regard for the varying levels of intelligence and ability.

The library service should not be exclusive in this sense; it may be very pleasant to dwell on the hill top, but the real work is to be found in the valley. The democratic basis of the service demands impartial treatment for all. Yet, while it is easy to speak of democracy, and the work for democracy, there is nothing democratic in a restrictive policy. The librarian's duty to society lies in the attempt to attract all readers, to demonstrate the value of good reading and to work for the development of better standards. To slough off this task may be convenient, but it cannot be justified.

Such action is tantamount to a refusal to accept social obligations, it is an attempt to solve the problem by ignoring it. Yet this problem, which affects such a large number of people, will not allow itself to be shelved in this way. The future of mankind lies in the ability of people so to develop their minds as to enable them to control the instruments of potential destruction placed within their reach. All concerned with education have a moral duty to perform their allotted function, to make it possible for mental development to occur in the people who look to them for service.

It may be that our present social and economic discontents are due to the fact that scientific achievement has outstripped moral development, so that man is no longer able to control the forces he has discovered. Yet, to cite the reason is not to remedy the condition, nor can any remedy be applied while masses of people continue to wear intellectual blinkers.

Has the public library service no share in the required awakening? Reiteration of the statement of function is undoubtedly necessary. The catholic nature of the service is accepted without question, yet its truth is denied every time we advocate the exclusion of any section of the population. It is, therefore, necessary to insist that, if libraries exist for all men, they exist for the semi-literate and the poorly educated. This must not be adduced as an argument proposing the supply of masses of the lightest reading material, but it *is* a demand for equitable provision for the uneducated and the

uneducable. When educationists plead for provision for the mentally unfit they are heard with sympathy, and no voice is raised in dissent. Yet a similar plea on behalf of the semi-educated is treated with scant respect. Why is this?

The attitude savours of humbug. It may be suggested that the uneducated have the means at their disposal for self-improvement, whereas the unbalanced lack this opportunity. This argument is demonstrably specious and shallow in the extreme for the adult person, whose education has been neglected, is fixed in his habits and cannot learn. His mental rigidity saps the will to learn, a state of being which constitutes a personal misfortune of considerable magnitude. We should not add to it by withholding the only material he is capable of assimilating. A tolerant and reasoned assessment of values will effectually prevent such prejudiced decisions. The library's responsibilities should not be artificially limited by selection of clientèle, nor can they be without risk to the democratic basis of the institution.

These facts must never be overlooked. New educational provisions may raise the standard of reading in the future, but the present need of the person who is just literate is for books suited to his mental capacity. Such books should, therefore, be provided as part of the service.

Unfortunately, light reading material offers an easy method of swelling issues. So much is this the case that its use has become its justification and, in some systems, ephemeral material claims a distressingly high proportion of the book fund. This cannot be excused; such pandering to issue value is not librarianship; it goes far beyond necessary provision and makes demands on book funds not large enough to bear the strain.

It is not possible to lay down any hard and fast rule on this question, yet the general principle can be stated that the proportion of the book fund set aside for this purpose should be determined by the amount of the demand coupled with its assessed value. The assessment must take into account the social desirability of catering for readers of limited interests. Such values must vary in different localities; the degree of value for the purpose must be determined by the needs of the

reader. Educated communities, with ready access to other sources of reading material, would receive meagre provision of the ephemeral, while the less fortunate communities would be adequately catered for.

Flexibility of judgment is essential, for the standard of education varies from place to place and the standard of intelligence from individual to individual. The ability of readers to make use of the stock similarly varies. The necessity for adaptation according to local requirements is apparent. The librarian's task is to gauge the capabilities and limitations of his public and to select and provide accordingly.

The difference between the best available and the best that the reader is capable of appreciating represents a challenge to the profession, and one that every librarian should accept with avidity. Book selection should take account of the reader as well as of the book. The task of the selector is not to select the best possible, regardless of circumstances, but to select the best compatible with the needs and capabilities of his readers. The selector who does not know his readers is, therefore, deprived of one of the essential factors, so that his provision cannot be appropriate to the requirements of his public. It is impossible to assess the true value of a book except in relation to the reader; the contribution of the book and the contribution of the reader are both means towards a particular end, and neither can be effective without the other.

Reading, therefore, is an instrument for a particular purpose. Its value must be judged by its effect on the life and mind of the individual, so that standards must vary between wide limits, just as the mental capacities of individuals vary. Any work that adds to our knowledge, experience, or power of understanding is valuable; the actual value varies from person to person and cannot be assessed by arbitrary standards.

The ideal at which every public library should aim is to supply all the printed material required for the satisfaction of cultural, informational and recreational needs. Since the service is maintained from public funds, and is a social service, it follows that these objectives must be desirable from the viewpoint of society in general.

Provision should be maintained at as high a standard as

possible. This indicates the answer to those who query the right of librarians to judge reading standards. Librarians try to encourage the use of reading material that will instruct as well as amuse, and to reduce the purely ephemeral to the minimum. They also try to show the value of the good in comparison with the inferior. That is a socially desirable objective and justifies the work in this connection.

The discussion is largely artificial for, as already indicated, there are no fixed standards by which to judge. Division into fiction and factual helps little, for much fiction is more instructive and socially valuable than many of the factual works. The high percentage of fiction read is often cited as evidence of misuse of the service, but high fiction issues are partly to be explained by the fact that novels are comparatively brief and easily read. A novel of 200 pages can be read much more quickly than the normal factual work of similar size. There is no harm in the reading of fiction, it has its place in our lives; the standard is sometimes too low, but that is a difficulty with which the librarian is constantly grappling.

Low standards of reading tastes might be accounted for, in part, by the fact that there is not sufficient provision of the right kind. When a reader reaches the end of his resources at his own level he will descend to a lower standard rather than attempt the difficulties of a higher grade. In either case, he is not contented or satisfied, and is easily attracted away from the library. The type of book published limits selection but, within existing resources, it is still possible to create greater demand by analysing stock and by bringing it to the attention of those likely to be interested.

Very little is known about the difficulties of readers grappling with a stock too far in advance of their capabilities, but it *is* known that a man's ability to read and understand is usually ahead of his taste or inclination. Here, then, is scope for encouragement and guidance. The gap between taste and possibility must be considered in book selection.

This is not easy ground, for it is not the librarian's function to dictate reading standards—although he may work for their improvement—nor should he try to improve people. But he *should* give them the opportunity to improve themselves; he has

a duty to serve as a link between book and reader, to make the best available for those who want it and for those who would want it if they knew of its benefits.

No book stock can be considered adequate unless it serves the needs of its users; the nature of the requirements must be known before wise selection becomes possible. Little is known of the reading habits of registered readers; even less is known of those who are not library users. We do not know whether we are providing the best possible reading material or whether the provision is merely tolerated as a substitute for something beyond reach. We do not know how many people have tried to use the book stocks, and found them wanting, any more than we know the real reason why such a large proportion of the population make no attempt to use the facilities provided.

Yet these factors must be known, for reading is not a static process, it is a vital function which consists of the transference of the experience and ideas of the author to the receptive mind of the reader. Experience in the reader is necessary for the true appreciation of any work; experience in the form of background knowledge which enables its possessor to assess given facts at their true value, to draw inferences and to recognize implications. Lack of such experience creates disharmony between author and reader that is harmful to the state of mind necessary for appreciation and comprehension.

If this is so, it follows that to set up an arbitrary standard of excellence in reading taste is wrong and logically unsound. The book must be related to the reader. Books should be selected to suit the needs of readers, a method which precludes the selection of readers to conform to the stock, this being the logical implication of imposed standards.

The object, surely, should be to encourage the reader to read those works which exercise his faculties to their fullest extent; to read within his capabilities, but not beyond, having regard for the limitations of vocabulary and the effect of environment. This type of reading will exercise and extend his talents, widen his mental horizon and make him eager and able to progress further. This seems to be one of the real tasks of librarianship, reading assistance to which so much lip service is paid. It should not be too difficult to develop this facility.

Perhaps, in the library of the future, we will not count the issues of the lighter material, any more than we now count the number of people who read the newspapers provided. This would be a step in the right direction, for it would operate against the tendency to over-supply in this section. Supply would be adjusted according to local needs rather than, as now, according to the state of the issue.

Bemoaning the fact of low reading tastes is a senseless procedure unless it leads to action. The facts should be faced; reading tastes are low—they must be raised, wherever possible, by the aid of graduated lists, displays and by personal assistance. The tastes of some people can never be raised. This, too, must be accepted and provision made according to the principles suggested. With this action must be coupled the policy of exploitation of stock.

Lack of personal guidance is a contributory cause of the present confusion, in which many readers are clamouring for the comparatively small stock of easily read material. Guidance would operate to direct the demand into more productive channels, to encourage those who can tackle the better material to do so, to reveal the value of standard works, and to demonstrate the enhanced interest to be obtained from the increased effort required. The work will involve a knowledge of readers which can only be obtained by direct contact and by an intelligent, sympathetic understanding of their problems.

Planning according to public requirements is inherent in the purpose of the service. A public library is intended to be used—for books have no value unless they are active—so that there is an obligation to make the service widely known. The necessity for publicity has frequently been stressed and no fresh emphasis is needed here. Publicity itself cannot create demand, but it can bring to light unexpressed demand or awaken a subconscious need. That is its value, but the use of such an instrument brings with it the complementary necessity for the satisfaction of the demand revealed. Such a statement is so obvious that it would appear to need no emphasis. This, however, is not so, for much publicity suffers from the lack of "follow through", that is, failure to build upon the advantage gained by the initial impetus afforded by advertising methods.

Consolidation of advantage is obtained by a wise policy of book selection. Demand should influence the selection but the amount of demand does not, in itself, provide sufficient evidence to determine equitable provision, since the largest volume of demand may be for sub-standard material. Such requests should not be allowed to affect adversely the provision of works of greater value.

Evaluation is, therefore, required. This cannot be precise, but can be achieved within practical limits if demand is measured in terms of social value. Books vary in quality, and their final value depends as much upon the reader as upon the book. Yet it is probable that few books are entirely devoid of value; a work educationally negligible may serve the purpose of recreation which, in its rightful place, is essential for the well-being of man and, to that extent, socially desirable.

The amount of the demand and its assessed value, taken together, will provide a working basis for selection. Although necessarily approximate, such a standard is to be preferred to a haphazard method of wasteful catering for unknown requirements. Every book purchased and not used, whatever its potential value, represents so much wasted money. This wastage is unavoidable under the hit-or-miss system of selection; it can be avoided, but only by a regularized method of purchase according to known requirements.

The danger to be avoided is that requirements may be unexpressed and, therefore, not catered for. To prevent this, every effort must be made to discover the reading needs of the community. Expressed demands can be discovered by the use of the information provided by (*a*) readers' requests, (*b*) analytical study of books issued, (*c*) examination of the shelves to determine which books circulate freely, (*d*) a similar examination to determine which books are not issued, (*e*) the index of readers' hobbies and interests, and (*f*) facts gathered by assistants and readers' advisers.

These sources will provide a large amount of essential information. Yet, taken alone, they give an incomplete picture, for no account is taken of (*a*) unexpressed demand of readers, and (*b*) potential demand from those members of the community who make no use of the library service.

Unexpressed demand of readers can be discovered, to a certain extent, by test provision, for supply sometimes reveals demand. At first sight, this may appear to constitute a retraction of the statement concerning the wastage involved in provision unrepresented by demand. Actually, this is not so, for there is a vast difference between the indiscriminate buying of books which we hope might be used and the deliberate provision, in carefully selected cases, of test purchases. Methodical experimentation of this kind can always be justified.

The need of the outside public is more difficult to assess. A useful pointer is given by the existence of local societies and groups, such as dramatic, literary and music circles, chess, philatelic and photographic clubs. The existence of such groups demonstrates subject interest which should be catered for.

A further method of discovery is by the use of a survey, but this procedure has not found favour in this country although widely practised in America. Yet only by test sampling can the reading tastes of a community be revealed, and even this method is far from representing perfection. Its chief defect is that answers to questions are so often unreliable; people tend to give the answer that, they think, is expected of them, thus innocently falsifying the returns and reducing or destroying the value of the evidence. However, this instrument, imperfect as it is, represents the best means available and should be used, although with discretion, in default of something better.

Evaluating the standard of a book is one of the most difficult tasks that the librarian is called upon to face. The advice of the expert is not always completely reliable, for his attention is often centred upon the standard works, and does not embrace the unofficial or popularized texts. It is true that the expert can sometimes help; the principle involved in such aid is sound if the book selector is aware of the limitations of the method.*

In theory, the schoolteacher should be able to advise on children's books, and the technician on technical works, but in practice, schoolteachers are frequently limited and biased in their views, and approach books from their own angle,

* See Gardner, F. M., *Letters to a Younger Librarian*, Clarke, 1951.

without reference to the librarian's regard for the purpose of books. Similarly, the technician often scorns the popular and elementary works in his immediate sphere of activity and is, in many cases, completely ignorant of the latest developments, even though adjacent to his own field.

That this is so is not surprising. An expert in a subject is not necessarily an expert in the literature of the subject. Moreover, it is in the nature of things that a man should be biased in favour of his own speciality of which he has the greatest knowledge. He is, therefore, unlikely to be able to give a balanced judgment over a field wider than his own immediate interest, any more than over the precise field of his own speciality.

The librarian should note these factors and, while seeking the assistance of experts, should assess the results in the light of his broader view, and not be too readily swayed by specialist recommendations. He, himself, is the best judge of the literature of the whole field, the condition of his stock and the needs of his readers. He should, therefore, evaluate such recommendations according to his requirements. Given the bibliographical data on which to work, the librarian is himself an expert. The need is for an authoritative medium, particularly in the technical field, to provide up-to-date and unprejudiced reviews. Reviews to-day have a limited value; often they serve only to provide the reviewers with an opportunity for mutual admiration or denigration. As a guide to selection they are often unreliable, taken as a whole, and should be treated with caution. Furthermore, dependence upon reviews cannot be made the basis of selection because a large proportion of the number of books required for stock are not reviewed. Reviews that do appear vary widely in value and, in any case, many of them appear so late as to have little value for selection purposes.

Such a position is undesirable but not disastrous; the selector can manage very well with his own resources, reinforced by the factors of extent and assessed value of demand. His provision will not suffer if based on these lines, and his assessment of value will be reasonably accurate if he remembers that the public library exists to serve all who need its facilities.

Those responsible for selection should make a point of

studying the weekly issue of the *British National Bibliography* in addition to the normal reviews. The B.N.B. is invaluable as a classified record of material published in this country. Assuming that the selector is aware of the weaknesses of his provision, and of the needs of his readers, he will be able to discover which material is being published in the relevant sections.

Unfortunately, the B.N.B. is not entirely suitable as an effective aid for initial book selection. The items included appear too late to be of value for this purpose, often there is a delay of several weeks between date of publication and date of listing.

This fact is regrettable, for the B.N.B. would, otherwise, form an admirable instrument for selection purposes. In the United States of America, copyright is granted from the date of deposit at the Library of Congress, and this fact operates to ensure deposit of newly published material on or before the date of publication. In this country, deposit is obligatory, but a wide margin is allowed regarding the date of deposit, and copyright is not dependent upon the act of deposit. Therefore, apart from co-operative arrangements to ensure deposit well before the date of publication, there appears to be no possibility for the use of the B.N.B. for selection purposes.

This would not apply in the case of those systems where books are purchased on approval and retained for several weeks to await inspection and approval by the library committee. In such cases the delay of the entries in the B.N.B. can have little effect.

Considerable economy in the processes of ordering and recording can be effected in systems where this publication can be used for selection. The serial number of the book can be quoted in place of the author and title, and this leads to an appreciable saving in time and labour.

In all cases, this new aid can be used to ensure that material is not overlooked, and it is invaluable for stock revision. Moreover, to place the matter in its true perspective, it must be remembered that the B.N.B. was not intended primarily to serve the book selector. It was designed to act as a bibliography of published material, as its title suggests, and this function it performs admirably.

CHAPTER X

STOCK: DEVELOPMENT AND USE

IN order to ensure that the stock of a library is developed so as to keep pace with existing and potential demand, it is necessary that selection should be carried out by those who have the closest contact with the members of the public. To make this effective, each branch librarian should be responsible for his own book selection, although supervision should be maintained by the central authority. At the beginning of each financial year a certain sum of money should be allotted for branch book purchase, and instruction given with regard to its allocation between fiction and factual works for both the adult and juvenile libraries.

The actual ordering of books and the management of accounts will be dealt with at the central library, but the branch librarian should, by his selection, indicate the items desired. Therefore, some record of expenditure should be maintained at the branch in order to ensure a regular supply of books throughout the year.

A record of allocation and expenditure should be maintained, but this should be as simple as possible. A suggested ruling is given in Fig. 9.

This sheet will show, at a glance, the amount of expenditure as compared with the allocation (which is recorded in the column headings). Expenditure on children's books is not recorded because the selection of such material should be performed centrally by the librarian responsible for work with children. Selection for young people is a specialized task that does not come within the scope of the branch librarian.

A difficulty which might arise is that the chief librarian may, at any time, overrule the selection of his subordinates, so that the amount given in the branch record of expenditure will be in excess of actual expenditure. Moreover, not all of the

Date	Adult Lending		Adult Ref.	Total	Cumulative Total	Credit
	Fiction £200	N. Fict. £275	£25	£500		
Apr. 1	15–6–0	26–4–0	8–8–0	49–18–0	49–18–0	
May 1	21–8–0	32–9–0	4–0–0	57–17–0	107–15–0	

Fig. 9
Branch Record of Expenditure

books ordered will be supplied. This, also, will involve adjustment. The final column, marked "CREDIT", forms an easy method of ensuring accuracy where such adjustments are required.

The routine of recording the selections should be simplified as far as possible. Slips should be written, in duplicate, for books required. One copy should be forwarded to the central library and the other retained at the branch. Cards for approved selections could be used as order slips, while the remainder, representing selections not approved, should be returned to the branch. The local assistant will, therefore, possess an exact record of books ordered.

In recent years there has been a tendency to question the value of a representative stock in branch libraries. There can be no doubt of the wisdom of dispensing with unused works, whatever their intrinsic value, for the limited stock of a branch cannot carry the weight of too much ballast. But, as frequently happens, the idea has occasionally been developed to extreme lengths, so that branch libraries appear with completely unbalanced stocks, representative only of literature in popular demand.

Some attempt at representation must be made. Readers have a right to expect the standard works to appear in a library. Full and complete representation is neither possible nor desirable in a branch, but every library should contain a hard core of standard works. The number of such volumes should vary with the size of the collection and the distance between branch and central, but in no case should they be dispensed with entirely.

It is sometimes suggested that in a stock of 10,000 volumes, half of which is fiction, a core of, say, 1,000 standard works would make the whole stock static and uninviting. This argument is based on the assumption, completely unwarranted, that standard works are generally uninviting. It is true that they may be used less frequently than the frothy, easier manuals, yet their value is certain. They are necessary and should be provided. Such works earn their place on the shelves even though issued only two or three times a year.

Any branch that attempts to be more than a deposit col-

lection should have this small central core of representative works. The number of these will vary, as already suggested, but, in addition, they should be constantly tested for use and changed where necessary. Furthermore, the size of the stock should never fall so low that its essential core becomes a burden. A total of 15,000 volumes is suggested as the minimum figure at which a stock can be even broadly representative. This will allow for 5,000 fiction, and 10,000 non-fiction, of which 1,000 should be standard works. The duplication of many small branches at the expense of fewer, more representative, libraries is not a favourable development.

A collection that falls below the minimum of 15,000 well-selected volumes can hardly be expected to give an efficient library service. This is not a quibble but a practical point of view since, to many people, the local library *is* the library. A small collection cannot possibly provide effective service, even with the benefit of inter-loan facilities. Such collections are necessary, in many cases, for lack of something better. Accordingly, they should be provided, in these circumstances, but it must be recognized that they are substitutes for the real thing and they should be labelled as such, otherwise the risk is run of having the whole system judged by the deficiencies of a sub-branch.

In the last resort, the value of a library service must depend upon the quality, extent and suitability of the stock, the adequacy of the staff, and the effectiveness of the efforts made to bring together reader and book. The number of service points with respect to the size of the area materially affects the problem. A system that is too small cannot afford the necessary stock and staff; a system that is too large may provide the stock, but may not provide sufficient trained staff to cope with the individual demands of the many readers dispersed throughout its area.

A very important factor, which does not always receive sufficient attention when the provision of branches and the size of stock is under consideration, concerns the density of population in a given area. A densely populated district cannot adequately be served by sub-branches with their accompanying small stocks. If the average of one book per head of

population is to be observed, it is necessary to plan for larger branches and, equally important, to refuse to countenance lesser provision.

Not only must the size of the branch stock be appropriate with respect to the population to be served but, in all cases, it is essential to ensure that the library is worthy of use. Stock chosen must be capable of meeting all normal, legitimate demands, and there must be provision for the speedy satisfaction of the occasional specialist demand. The initial stock must, therefore, be adequate in both quality and quantity to satisfy the immediate needs of the people included within the service area. In addition, there must exist arrangements for close co-operation with other sources.

Time should also be allowed for methods designed to discover unexpressed demands. If the number of staff supplied is sufficient merely to allow for the issue and return of books, the danger arises that assistants may grow accustomed to the role, and neglect the opportunity offered on the rare occasions when reader guidance becomes possible.

The question of large or small branches raises a matter of policy and, in such matters, the librarian will rarely have an entirely free hand. He will have his own opinion on the problem, but often he will be forced to accept the decision dictated by his authority. Librarians do not agree on this point between themselves, and no attempt will be made here to raise the controversy again. Much can and has been said on both sides. The point is of interest to the administrative head of a system, and to his branch librarians, because the extent of a librarian's stock must affect his actions and his service for the public. It follows that an assistant controlling a small branch must stress, again and again, to his readers that his collection is not representative, that it is incomplete, and that it does not claim to have a balanced stock nor to do the work of a central collection.

Such emphasis is necessary in order to prevent the disappointment of readers, yet it is often neglected. There are many small collections, with a total stock of between 5,000 and 10,000 volumes, masquerading as complete libraries. One of the most dangerous features of this situation is that the col-

lection is accepted by the readers at its face value as representative of the library service. Consequently, the inevitable deficiencies are regarded as deficiencies in the service as a whole and the system is condemned accordingly.

Small collections serve a useful purpose in bringing books to the homes of the people, but such service is not a library service, except at second-hand. The librarian must understand these limitations in his scope and direct his methods accordingly, developing to the full the use of the central library as a reserve pool to augment his own selection. Reservation of books should be made as simple as possible, while rotation of stock between branches and central should be utilized to unify the whole system and prevent stagnation.

The actual size of stock will not be decided by the branch librarian, but the selection of stock and the devices employed to make the stock available will be his responsibility. The use of books by the public is closely connected with their selection and is highly influenced by it. The selector should range over a wide field and choose his material so that his subjects are adequately covered by the best and latest editions. The use made of this material should then be closely checked so that the results can be used to modify or supplement future selection.

For this purpose issues must be analysed. Each class of the classification scheme must be broken down into its divisions. Thus, if the Dewey classification is in use, at least 100 sections would be shown. Classes such as Science and Useful Arts need even further analysis. Examination of books on the shelves should supplement the analytical issue record. The figures can reveal the topics that are being used or neglected; only an inspection of the shelves can give information about individual books. Thus a particular book may be neglected because it is badly written, poorly printed, misleading or not authoritative. It may be that the catalogue card for a particular book has gone astray, so that the work receives less attention than its neighbours. Only direct examination can reveal such causes.

Study of issue figures and stock should reveal many facts concerning the weakness of provision. Low issues for a par-

ticular subject may mean that more books are required at that point. If the stock is low, or the works out of date, further stock must be added. But, if the stock is adequate, the reason may be lack of interest in the subject or in its presentation in the books supplied. Poor display can retard use. Thus books relegated to low bottom shelves or high top shelves, or those sited in gloomy corners, are often overlooked. The remedy here is change of position, which is not always easy of accomplishment. Perhaps the best method is to reduce the amount of stock on open shelves and to discontinue the use of low and high shelving.

When issues and stock are compared in this way the stock figure taken should be that of stock available to the public. Allowance should be made for books in reserve, those awaiting replacement or binding, and those not available for any other reason. Only by a comparison of issues with circulating stock can a true picture be formed.

When action is taken as a result of the evidence provided by issue analysis, preliminary attention should normally be directed towards topics that are most neglected. The stock in these sections should be built up until the limit is reached. The limit can only be at the point where the subject is well represented by suitable editions and where further additions lead to no appreciable increase in use. Normal selection of current material, as published, can take over from here. No subject should be regarded as sufficiently well represented until this, or some similar method, has been tried.

Revision of the whole stock may be extended over a long period; financial considerations must govern this. But every librarian should be a selector rather than a collector, and only by experiment in his own library and with his own public can he ensure that his stock is adequate for his purpose.

There is much to be said for the organization of shelf examination as a continuous process, for readers change and their interests widen, especially where such development is encouraged by a progressive policy. A library with a serviceable stock to-day may be quite inadequate in a few years' time, and this may be due, not to poor selection, but to the extension of readers' interests and to the registration of new readers. It

is, therefore, a useful plan to set a definite routine and to carry it out regularly. Thus the checking of one or two bays each week would ensure that all stock received thorough inspection at effective intervals. Such detailed inspection should be additional to the general examination given during the daily tidying process.

The branch librarian may consider these methods to be too ambitious for the limited resources of his book budget, which could not hope to cope with the deficiencies revealed. Actually, he is in a favourable position, for he can supplement his stock at all necessary points by bulk loans from the central library. By the infusion of such material he can watch the effect on his issues, adding and withdrawing where necessary. He can also provide himself with solid evidence of his needs in particular sections and, perhaps, encourage the central authority to fill the gaps in his stock. Some such method must be followed; the librarian selecting for a branch cannot afford to make any mistakes in the spending of his small allocation.

Such methods are extremely important to the librarian who is forced to work with a small stock. Another important factor concerns the distance of a branch from its central. If the main library is within reasonable distance there is no need for the branch to carry a large basic stock. Books which normally form part of the basic stock, and which are little used, can well be retained at the central, so allowing the limited shelf space at the branch to be used for more active stock.

This policy must not be carried too far. If it is found that a work is requested from central two or three times a year it can be taken as proven that the work is required in the branch library stock. The amount of shelving space is an important factor, but any provision of basic stock for branches should err on the side of leniency. Thus, it is better to include a generous basic stock, and to withdraw individual books that are not used, than to neglect to stock such books on the assumption that they will not be required. Every library should be as representative as possible, and every basic work should be given a trial over a long period before it is withdrawn from branch display.

Selected on these lines, branch stocks will represent the

central stock instead of representing only the widely-used sections of that stock. A person would be able to use his local branch to obtain introductory works on a subject as well as some of the standard works. Further research into the subject would involve the use of the wider resources of the central library.

This method seems to be more reasonable than the practice, sometimes adopted, of leaving gaps in the representation of the lesser-used subjects. Librarians are apt to assume that the reader will ask for the material he wants, but this assumption is not always justified. Many readers do not ask, either through diffidence or because, surprisingly enough, they are not aware of the inter-loan resources. Their need for subjects not represented in stock is not, therefore, always brought to the attention of the librarian.

Where small collections are provided, frequent change of stock is necessary because a reader soon grows tired of a limited choice. Readers do not, as a general rule, select their reading material from the whole range of subjects, but prefer to browse among certain defined classes. In a 10,000 volume branch the amount of working stock for a particular reader may well be in the region of 1,000, of which the larger part may be fiction. The couple of hundred volumes of non-fiction in which he is interested soon become familiar to him by sight and, long before he reaches the end of his resources, he gains the impression of limitation, because his effective choice is restricted to the contents of a few shelves. Inter-library transfer of stock represents the best method of freshening the shelves and of retaining the interest of readers.

Although the provision of a small standard core has been recommended, it is not necessary to go back to former methods of stocking each library from a standard list, so that the whole stock of each is duplicated at every other branch. The method proposed is that the few essential books in each class should be represented at each branch, and that the remainder of the stock should consist of current works selected according to the tested needs of the local inhabitants. The complete stock in each branch should be large enough to carry such a common core without making each appear to be a replica of the others.

The current section of the stock should be "floating", that is, capable of transfer to other parts of the system without the necessity for lengthy discarding processes. Unit loans from central to branches have been suggested as a means of varying and freshening small stocks. Each unit consists of a hundred or other specified number of books, and is treated as a bulk loan.

If a single sequence of accession numbers is adopted for the whole system there are few difficulties in the way of inter-library transfers or of bulk loans. The only drawback to the single sequence is the length of the number, and this can be avoided by using a separate sequence for each class, each number being prefixed by a letter. Thus all books throughout the system in the General Works class would be contained in the sequence A1-A?, all books in the Philosophy class in the sequence B1-B?, and so on. Fiction numbers would be prefixed by the letter X.

A pool stock could be set up on which branches could draw. Alternatively, all stock could be allocated to central and issued to branches as required. There are points in favour of both methods. The pool system is very convenient, but it has the disadvantage of keeping books out of circulation during such times when they are not on loan to branches. For this reason, the policy might be favoured of adding all works to the central stock, thus allowing them to be used, and limiting the pool stock to duplicates. Each volume used for pool purposes should carry two book cards and should be issued with two sets of catalogue cards. If union cataloguing is already in operation further catalogue cards become unnecessary.

There are many systems which already have a separate sequence for each branch. Under these circumstances rotation of stock could be initiated by adding all future additions, which would normally be branch additions, to pool stock with a separate pool sequence of accession numbers, which might well be A1—A?, B1—B?, and so on, as previously suggested.

As a result of this method there would be, in each branch, a double sequence of accession numbers: 1 onwards being the normal branch sequence, and letter 1 to letter ? being

the pool sequence. As books were removed from the branch to make room for pool loans they should be withdrawn from the branch stock and added to pool stock, thus taking a pool accession number. This development would be assisted by the normal withdrawals caused by wear, so that eventually all original branch sequences would disappear and would be superseded by the pool sequence. This is a comparatively slow method, but has the great advantage of avoiding the re-numbering of the whole existing stock at one time. Work entailed when original branch stock is sent to pool for re-numbering is spread over a period and need cause no dislocation of routine.

Unless a common sequence of accession numbers is adopted for the system as a whole much unnecessary work will be involved in transferring books for which there is no shelf room at the smaller branches. In such cases, further books can be added only when other books are removed to make room for them. In the small branch books must be removed for this reason well before they are worn out, and the only method of disposal is by transfer to the central library. Adjustments must then be made in stock registers, catalogues and in any other records maintained. The smaller the collection, the more rapid the turnover required, or the stock will soon become stale. If a separate sequence of numbers is in use for the branch a large amount of unnecessary work is continually being created by the consequent stock transfer.

There should be few duplicates in pool non-fiction stock and every work should be clean and up to date. Such factors take on an increased importance here because one of the chief functions of the pool loan is to freshen stock and to brighten the shelves. Dingy or over-duplicated stock cannot do this.

The period of rotation depends upon the size of the branch and the number of volumes loaned on each occasion. Fewer volumes are required to freshen a stock of 5,000 than are necessary for a stock of 10,000. A small loan needs to be renewed more frequently than a large loan, for the stimulus is, naturally, less. A good plan might be to transfer 25 per cent. of the floating stock every six months. Each book would, therefore, remain at a branch for two years.

The whole stock can be moved, including catalogues. This has been advocated, but there are difficulties concerned with reservations and reading courses if these are prepared. These are not insuperable obstacles, and too much should not be made of them. A more serious objection is that, in order to make the transfer of the whole stock worth while, the branches concerned in the transfer must have approximately equal shelf space and their readers must possess similar reading needs.

On balance, the method of frequent change of part of the stock will probably give greater variety over a longer period than the mass change-over at longer intervals. Opinions differ as to the part of the stock to be transferred at each move; some advocate the transfer of whole classes, while others prefer the replacement of a portion of each class. The latter method is recommended since it will give variety to a greater number of readers than the former method.

During the process of change it is necessary to ensure that the stock eventually provided is capable of meeting local demands. Transfer of stock is a useful process for retaining the interest of readers. It is a good method, but it should not be allowed to develop into a routine that will prejudice readers' interests. Thus it would be ridiculous to remove books that were in active circulation merely because such books had served for two years and were scheduled for transfer. Only the lesser used material should be changed. If the stock was originally selected according to local requirements it follows that subject material, provided to meet those requirements, should be renewed periodically but never entirely withdrawn while the demand continues to exist. The branch stock will, therefore, continue to be representative of use. The central stock may be representative according to the theoretical relationship and importance of subjects, and may attempt to provide a very wide selection. Its numerous readers may demand such representation, and its reserve stock may make this possible, but such an attempt at provision should not be applied at the branch. Use, once determined, should be catered for and, in spite of stock transfer, subjects affected should always be represented.

The necessity for retaining the books in active use is the chief argument against the mass withdrawal of whole classes. If the transfer consists of a number of volumes, spread over the whole collection, only those of lesser value need be included. Books ready for transfer will reveal themselves during the routine shelf examination. Removal of a whole class could take little heed of such factors.

It is an important part of policy that every branch should be able to meet all normal requests, if not immediately, then within a short time. Sufficient material should be available to allow choice to the reader, although the range of choice will not be wide. This should not be difficult in branches of reasonable size if the stock has been wisely chosen according to the interests of the individuals to be served, and provided also that precautions are taken to test the needs of new readers.

Individual provision, as far as it is possible, is assured by the supply of books to cover known needs and by test provision to ascertain unexpressed needs. Even when use is not forthcoming in response to such tests the books provided will not be wasted. If borrowed from the pool for the purpose they can be returned, if purchased they can be sent to pool and used for other branches or for the central. Such periodical testing is very necessary. Book requirements in an area served by a branch are almost as diverse as those in the central library area; the difference lies in the number of requests rather than in their variety.

So far as general stock is concerned, the greatest need is usually with regard to reference material. With the exception of a few large branches, reference stock is limited to a small selection of quick reference books. This must necessarily be the case, for an adequate collection is costly to equip and maintain and is beyond the means of any small branch. Even the larger branches should not attempt to build up a complete and self-contained reference service; this provision should be left to the central library.

As a general rule the branch librarian would be well advised to transfer all inquiries to the central reference library at an early stage. The search for information can prove to be very costly in staff time, especially when the stock is not completely

adequate and when assistants are insufficiently trained in reference work. The specialized and comprehensive collection of the central, and the trained staff there available, should be called upon as soon as possible.

The correctness of the policy concerning the non-provision of reference collections in branches can hardly be called into question. Reference material is expensive and a large proportion of it requires frequent renewal. Books of factual information must be discarded as soon as later editions are available, while directories are usually re-issued annually. This represents a heavy drain on resources. Moreover, an efficient reference service needs a trained staff for its exploitation, otherwise it has a limited value. Few branches will ever have sufficient staff of this calibre.

The most efficient reference service in any area can be rendered by the provision of an adequate collection at the central library, staffed by trained reference assistants. Linked with this department there should be the quick-reference collections at the branches, and the whole should be closely co-ordinated by the telephone service. Branch assistants must be aware of the limitations of their own stock and must be urged to pass on inquiries that go beyond their own resources.

Assistants should be trained to keep touch with inquiries handed on in this way. A record should be made of the initial inquiry, and persistent watch maintained to ensure that a reply is received and is communicated to the inquirer.

The following simple procedure will ensure satisfaction to readers in cases that require a detailed search and the use of other resources:

When a reference inquiry is received details should be entered in a ledger provided for the purpose. The ruling need not be elaborate:

Each inquiry entered in the book receives a number. The number is recorded on a pasteboard slip, which is handed to the inquirer who is asked to present it at an appropriate time. This time will vary according to the nature of the query. Presentation of the slip allows easy reference to the inquiry and avoids the awkward search for details that sometimes occurs when no check of this kind is available.

Number	Name	Address	Tel. No.	Enquiry	Date Recd.	Action and Source	Result	Date cleared
1								
2								
3								
4								
etc.								

Fig. 10
Reference Enquiries Book

The ledger should be checked daily by the assistant-in-charge in order to ensure that inquiries are not allowed to remain for too long in abeyance. It is possible that occasions will arise when information is unobtainable. In such cases the inquirer should be informed; no request should ever be allowed to lapse without a definite decision having been reached.

Similarly, when an inquiry demands correspondence with other bodies, such as the specialist sources, a week or more may elapse before a solution is reached. This delay may be unavoidable and reflect no discredit upon the library system. But, in order to avoid unjust censure from the inquirer, he should be kept informed of progress and of the reason for the delay. In this way, the inconvenience of waiting can be reduced. Furthermore, credit to the system may, possibly, accrue, not only for the information supplied, but also for the method and persistence of the search. Favourable publicity of this kind should not be despised or hurriedly discarded.

Pasteboard slips are sometimes lost by the inquirer, but no great harm results, for the name provides a ready check. The number may also be used as a reference between branches and central, and should be quoted on all correspondence, thus ensuring accuracy during protracted inquiries.

The book may be used to good effect for the training of staff. The source of the material used for satisfying the query should be entered in the column headed RESULTS. Junior assistants could obtain useful practice by attempting to judge for themselves the possible sources of information before looking at the sources in the appropriate column.

Apart from the normal reference service, the public library can often provide a specialized service to local industry by the collection of technical information contained in Government reports, British and foreign standards, technical periodicals, patent specifications, directories, and trade publications such as house magazines and catalogues. To develop this service to any great extent would appear to involve expenditure on a scale that would be impracticable for small systems. For this reason, work in this field has been carefully avoided by many librarians who have made the assumption that even a limited service is impossible.

There are, however, two factors that bring the supply of this information within the scope of the smaller systems. The first is that the larger industrial concerns have their own specialist libraries to provide for their needs, and so do not require to call upon the aid of the public library. The second is that industries tend to group themselves, so that a library system often finds that the majority of the commercial undertakings in its area are devoted to the same branch of industry.

Both factors reduce the extent of demand and limit the field considerably, thus making it possible for the smaller system to cope with the task remaining. Concentration of this kind would allow many libraries to provide technical services for the larger part of their local industries.

Where grouping of industry is not present, the smaller systems have less opportunity for developing any extensive service in this direction. In such cases, librarians will be forced to provide the maximum of facilities commensurate with their financial resources.

Any provision of this nature must be the responsibility of an assistant who would be prepared to study and familiarize himself with the material. Documentary material needs careful handling if full benefit is to be extracted from it. Close co-operation with the relevant specialist libraries is an obvious precaution, and only a librarian with the requisite training can be expected to develop this aspect and to exploit all resources. It is not too much to say that the success or failure of such a venture depends mainly on the staff responsible for its working. Knowledge of the sources of material, and of the needs of the industrial users, are the prime necessities.

The process of building the collection is not difficult. Persistence and determination in searching for material are basically important. Book stock in the relevant sections should be brought up to date by reference to bibliographies. Valuable material can be obtained from His Majesty's Stationery Office, the Department of Industrial and Scientific Research, the Patent Office and the British Standard Institute.

The complete series of patents abridgments dealing with the subject concerned should be acquired, and the Patents Journal should be taken. All periodicals relating to the trades

included within the scope of the collection should be regularly purchased and filed. Wherever possible, acquisition of periodicals should be on a subscription basis, since some trade periodicals issue directories and annual publications that are available only to subscribers.

The close relationship that has developed between Government and industry has resulted in the production of much technical literature of all kinds. Government publications form an increasingly important contribution to the fund of knowledge that can be assembled in specialized fields. British and foreign government departments responsible for the subjects being collected should be approached. Extremely co-operative relations can usually be established. The Library of Congress has in operation a far-reaching scheme for the interchange of material, and circulates useful lists of items offered free or for a small charge.

One of the most useful services than can be offered is the provision of as many as possible of the special bibliographies that deal with the subject. Bibliographies of wider subjects that include the subject of study should not be overlooked. A sharp watch must be maintained for these publications for they are sometimes issued for limited circulation and are not widely noticed.

All directories and annuals which contain material on the subject should be taken, and it is extremely important that they should be kept up to date. They frequently contain a wealth of essential material in addition to the normal directory information, and sometimes list bibliographies in their field that have appeared in the current year.

Working party reports on the industry, where they have appeared, are an obviously valuable acquisition, and Development Councils associated with the industry are usually prepared to place their resources at the specializing library's disposal. They sometimes publish bulletins dealing with advances that have been made, and the importance of these cannot be overestimated.

All Statutory Instruments and Regulations affecting the manufacture or sale of the materials of the industry should be taken. Here, again, the latest publication should be available as soon as issued.

Further material can be obtained from the trade itself. A circular letter should be dispatched to every business house in the service area, and to other firms known to be in the trade or which advertise in the trade journals. The letter should explain the object of the scheme and request the donation of catalogues, brochures, pamphlets and other printed and illustrated material. Arrangements should also be made for future publications to be supplied as they become available.

The next step would be to contact the research agencies set up to serve the industry. Much valuable information and assistance can be obtained in this way. By such methods and at comparatively little cost, the librarian can gradually build a useful instrument ideally suited for his purpose.

It is not difficult to exploit such collections. Some subjects, such as pottery, lend themselves readily to exhibition. With the co-operation of manufacturers, a really first-class display could be arranged in the library, preferably located near to the specialized material. Such displays could be permanent or semi-permanent surveys of the whole field. Alternatively, different sections of the speciality could be made the subjects of exhibitions and changed every few weeks or so.

A feature of this kind would have an especial appeal to schools, both general and technical, and could be made to support lectures given on the library premises. A good method would be to arrange for the class to be addressed by the teacher responsible for instruction in the subject. This should be followed by a talk given by the assistant responsible for the collection. This plan would offer a fine opportunity for an explanation of the significance and potential value of the books and other material in the collection. The method of linking all studies and subjects with the use of books should, especially, be stressed.

None of these measures, however, can achieve a fraction of their potential value unless the collection is closely classified and well organized. Analytical cataloguing is essential here.

In order to make the resources available to as many interested parties as possible (a vital consideration in these days of subject specialization), the catalogue should, if possible, be printed and widely circulated. In the very nature of things

it cannot long be up to date, but if a card catalogue is maintained on the premises, it is a simple matter to record the acquisition of new material. A new edition or a supplement can then be made available without too much difficulty.

The chief obstacle is the cost of printing. Smaller systems could not, normally, afford to print even the main catalogue, and supplements would be out of the question.

In such cases a duplicated catalogue could be attempted. If something more ambitious is required, type-litho could be considered. This would produce a neatly-finished publication at approximately two-thirds the cost of letterpress printing. This proportion varies according to the number of copies required. A run of 2,000 copies would be sufficient for most purposes, and here the type-litho costs would be about one-half those of letterpress. The maximum run for type-litho is 5,000 copies.

The possibility of producing a printed catalogue with the aid of advertisers should not be overlooked. Advertising revenue may be set against cost of printing, and these funds may be sufficient to cover the whole or major part of the printing charges. There are a number of publicity agents who are prepared to produce catalogues on this basis.

Practical difficulties of this method hinge directly upon the number of firms that can be persuaded to take up advertising space. Catalogues of widespread and popular subjects, such as furniture, present no problems, but more specialized subjects, such as pottery, might appeal to a smaller circle of advertisers.

The collection of specimens is sometimes feasible. This, of course, depends entirely upon the subject. At Shoreditch, a representative collection of timber and veneer specimens has been acquired to supplement the collection of books and pamphlets on furniture and allied trades. These specimens have proved of great interest to students, craftsmen, manufacturers and schoolchildren.

In addition to such facilities, it is important to be able to inform inquirers where further specimens may be seen. For these reasons, it is important to acquire the published guides, both British and foreign, to those museums, mansions and

institutions that feature permanent or periodical exhibitions. In this way the graphic resources of the collection can be supplemented by a collection of guides that will show, for the benefit of interested people, where, when, and under what conditions examples of the article or subject being studied can be consulted.

When the collection has begun to acquire a reputation for completeness and good all-round coverage, requests will soon begin to come in. Requests will be made for the loan of material, and this is one of the greatest difficulties that will confront the administrator. Material, painstakingly collected, cannot be lightly loaned, and any article that cannot be replaced should be available for use only on the library premises. This decision must, unfortunately, be taken, and it is reinforced by the fact that a collection of this nature forms a unit which is closely knit. Each item depends upon the others to a large extent, so that it is not practicable to abstract items and allow them to be issued on loan.

To offset this difficulty it is possible to make use of the photostat facilities and to arrange for copies of material in demand to be made. In this way it is possible to obtain the greatest possible service from material which it might not be expedient to loan. The time is probably not very far distant when a specializing library will be able to acquire, at relatively small cost, many important works on microcards, and so be enabled to provide information which it would otherwise be unlikely to obtain.

A system deliberately developed in this manner could soon become a force of obvious importance in any area. Every member of the staff should be encouraged to strive for this development. Departmental heads should be trusted to accept authority and to use it to strengthen the service offered. Each branch librarian should be made aware that he has a particular area as his own responsibility. In order to stimulate and satisfy demand he should be encouraged to draw upon all the resources of the system. The result of such initiative would soon be revealed by the nature of public response.

CHAPTER XI

THE NEW BRANCH

ANY discussion of a new branch should commence at the point where the idea of the branch is first formulated. However, the problems involved in choosing a site and the development of plans are so wide as to form a separate study. Any decision reached must be largely affected by local circumstances, and only a complete review of the whole field of library planning can enable the librarian to select the best methods for his own particular requirements. It is, therefore, proposed to commence this chapter at a point some few months before the date of opening, when plans have been approved and the actual building operations are in progress. At that stage, general development again becomes operative, and it is here that the assistant-in-charge and his staff should be appointed.

Methods proposed can be adapted for use by those concerned with the reorganization of a branch. In order to provide a logical sequence of operations it will be necessary to mention briefly, in this and the following chapter, some of the items that have been more fully dealt with previously.

The immediate problems may be grouped under three heads: (*a*) stock, (*b*) furniture and fittings, and (*c*) staff. Use of the library will form a later problem. Furniture and fittings must be ordered well in advance owing to present-day circumstances, yet this will not always be the case. The time lag can, therefore, be ignored in order that their provision may be discussed.

It will be assumed that the new branch is a single-roomed building, giving lending facilities for adults and children and a section for quick-reference. Overall stock is 15,000 volumes, with shelving space for 10,000.

Stock

Initial stock must be experimental to a certain extent. It should consist of a basic core of 1,000 volumes and a floating stock of 14,000 volumes, made up of 5,000 fiction and 9,000 factual works. The basic core should be selected, as far as possible, with regard to the nature of the population to be served. This core is provided for use, although the material is unlikely to circulate as freely as that in the floating stock.

Floating stock should be provided according to the needs of the local population. At the time of provision, that is, before the opening of the branch, these needs will not be known, except by inference. There are, of course, a large number of subjects that are always in steady demand in any district, and these can be provided with safety. But full provision should not be made until exact information is available. Therefore, of the complete stock of 15,000 volumes, only 13,000 volumes should be purchased at this stage. This would provide for the basic core of 1,000, the fiction supply of 5,000, and an estimated factual requirement of 7,000, leaving 2,000 volumes to be purchased according to the definite needs of the local population as soon as these are known. Methods of estimating demand, mentioned in a previous chapter, will supply this information, so that the books can be purchased within reasonable time of the opening of the branch.

As the books arrive they should be processed and stored. When deliveries have been completed, the stock should be arranged in classified order and shelved so that a survey can be made of the whole. Examination of stock cards is a poor substitute for examination of the books themselves, and shelf inspection of the whole stock is essential so that all necessary subjects shall be adequately represented by suitable editions.

Few libraries will have free shelf space to house thousands of volumes, so that the inspection will have to be made class by class, or even division by division. This can be managed easily enough if the books are arranged in approximate order after processing. A number of cardboard cartons should be provided and labelled with the class number or division number. After the last stage of processing the books should be put away in their appropriate cartons and, as each carton

is filled, it should be stored. It is then a simple matter to retrieve and shelve one class at a time for the purpose of inspection.

The inspection will reveal a number of gaps in representation. Some of these may need to be dealt with by purchase but others, which may represent problematical topics, should be filled, if necessary, by loans from the central stock. Their use will decide whether purchase of material is a necessity. On the other hand, if such material is not used, it can be returned.

A satisfactory working stock can be built up by these methods. The representation will not be exactly according to requirements, for these will not be fully known until after the opening of the branch. The actual use made of the stock will determine its variation and will decide the addition and withdrawal of subject material. The normal methods of book selection will come into play, when the service is in action, and material will be selected according to the extent of demand and its assessed value for local purposes. Demand itself, expressed and unexpressed, will be gauged according to the factors previously laid down. Thus a branch stock will not be thoroughly suited to its clientèle until after approximately a year's working has caused the necessary adjustments to be made.

Furniture and Fittings

The chief problem in small branch furnishing is to obtain the maximum shelf space without crowding the floor area and without shelving books either too high or too low. Island stacks have lost favour; the tendency nowadays is for a free circulating area with easy access to a selection of active stock. Wall shelving is favoured but, where insufficient accommodation is provided by these methods, stacks may be provided at right-angles to the wall, thus forming an alcove arrangement. If island stacks are used they should not be more than 5 ft. in height.

It is generally agreed that the bottom shelf of the stack should be at a height of 15 to 18 in. from the ground, and the top shelf at 5 ft. 6 in., giving an overall height of little more than 6 ft. The bottom space need not be wasted. It can be

used for the shelving of pamphlets in boxes and for the filing of back numbers of periodicals. Alternatively, this space can be fitted with doors to form cupboards. These will accommodate books in immediate reserve, such as the seasonal books which are in demand at certain periods only. Books on cricket, football and gardening are examples.

Storage facilities are usually lacking, so that all available space must be utilized. Catalogue stands can be enclosed at the base to provide convenient cupboards, and there is no reason why tables in the lending library should not be of the circular type, with a lower shelf which could be used for filing periodicals. Such "coffee tables" are informal and help to provide a friendly atmosphere. They are small and give a measure of privacy not to be obtained by the use of the larger table.

To accompany such tables there should be provided a number of fireside chairs. Heavy chairs of the kitchen variety may be durable but they are not comfortable, and their appearance effectively destroys any semblance of the club atmosphere. Curtains for the windows should be provided, and should be fitted with easy adjustments so that they can be drawn, without difficulty, at dusk.

Reading lamps should appear on every table. They will contribute little in terms of candle-power, but will add considerably to the comfort of the establishment. Their lighting effect should not be considered when assessing the amount of artificial lighting required, for sufficient general lighting should be provided to cover all reading needs.

Facilities should exist for three or four displays to be featured at one time. Each of these should be of a different type and should be designed for a purpose previously decided upon. Thus the display of the "hobby" type would require a table and a book trough. A small notice should be affixed to the back of the trough and the visual material arranged in front.

"Current Affairs" and similar features would require a wall display. Provision for wall display furniture can be made when the book shelving is fitted. The book trolley is most suitable for "Recommended Books" and for the variable

display. This trolley should be of the type that makes allowance for a small poster at the top.

Guiding should be adequate but not obtrusive. Tier guides on bright plastic plates with 2-in. letters can be seen readily enough, particularly since they will be fitted at a height of little more than 6 ft. Such guides should not be purchased in standard sets but should be ordered individually according to subject representation. Familiar headings are to be preferred rather than a slavish copying of Dewey's terms.

A copy of the regulations and by-laws must be included. If possible, these should appear at the entrance rather than in the lending library. Framed copies of such notices still appear, massively proportioned. These are unsightly and unnecessary, for reduced photostat copies can be obtained for a few shillings.

Separate accommodation for children is most desirable. This department may be isolated from the main department by means of the lower book stacks normally provided for children. Classification and catalogue should be simplified while still following the principles of adult practice. Facilities should be provided for the story period; the centre of the library, where other children are moving around, is not the best place. A separate corner of the room, with no immediate distractions, is much to be preferred.

Where the juvenile and adult sections are contained in the same room, book cases are sometimes provided throughout of uniform height. This is undesirable, but in such cases, the top shelf of the children's stacks should be boarded in and used as a base for illustrations or a frieze. By this method extra colour can be added while retaining the appearance of the room as a whole.

Staff

The number of staff required for a branch will be decided by the librarian, but the allocation of duties and the preparation of time-sheets should come within the province of the assistant-in-charge, provided that his administration is in accordance with that generally obtaining in other parts of the system. Figures are available to show the number of staff required, working on the basis of population and issues. But

these are applicable to the system as a whole, and are not very helpful for the purpose of estimating branch requirements, particularly when the branch is small.

There should always be at least two people on duty in the lending library. Some difficulty might be experienced here in the smaller branches, particularly during meal periods. However, such periods are usually accompanied by an increase in the number of readers, and the second assistant should always be present. This might involve relief assistance from the central but it should, nevertheless, be provided, or the opportunity for reader service may be lost. The second assistant may not be required for counter duty all the time, but his presence will be necessary for floor walking.

A branch open for ten hours each day, and for six days each week, will require 120 man-hours weekly, if we agree that at least two assistants should always be on duty at one time. One hundred and twenty staff hours could be covered by a minimum of three assistants, each working thirty-eight hours, leaving six hours to be supplied by central relief. Such provision would be insufficient for the successful branch, for it would make no allowance for extra-library activities, efficient assistance for readers, work with children, or anything else but direct lending library counter work.

Abnormal issues would affect the position and would further increase the need for staff. The assistant in charge at any time, whether the branch librarian or his principal assistant, should be free from counter duties so that he is able to give his full attention to the needs of readers. Time sheets should take account of such necessities.

Another important fact, when compiling such schedules, is to ensure that an assistant's free time always occurs on a fixed day in each week. Library workers are sufficiently penalized by late evening work, and difficulties should not be increased by thoughtless planning. Similarly, split duties should be abolished. A library that closes at 7 p.m. has no need for split times or midday commencement of duties. Later closing may necessitate an occasional late start but, even here, the split duty should be avoided.

Staff should be appointed well before the actual opening

of the branch. There is always plenty of work to be done in connection with book preparation and the adjustment of fittings, and these tasks are best carried out by the people who are going to work in the branch. Moreover, the branch librarian has the opportunity to get his staff working together as a team, undistracted by the necessity for attention to readers. The basis of good staff relations can be laid at this period, and any delay in appointing staff is likely to prove false economy.

Use of the Branch

The branch librarian himself should make preparations for compiling a staff manual. When such a manual is already in existence in other parts of the system it can easily be adapted for use. A duplicated or printed guide for readers should follow, and this should be as comprehensive as possible while retaining simplicity and clarity. The chief items for inclusion are:

(1) Map of the area, showing position of all libraries in the system;
(2) Addresses, telephone numbers and times of opening;
(3) Special features, such as reference facilities, specialist collections, etc.;
(4) How to find a book—use of the classification and catalogue;
(5) Facilities—inter-library loans, requests, reservations, suggestions, advisory service;
(6) Summary of chief regulations, such as loan periods, renewals and similar essential items;
(7) Extension facilities—lectures, gramophone record collections, etc.;
(8) Details of co-operating societies—addresses of secretaries.

When the staff manual and readers' guide are in course of preparation, an opportunity is provided for an assessment of the value of processes and regulations. The questions should be asked with regard to each: Will this contribute to the efficiency of the service? If so, can this contribution be increased in value by improved methods? Any alteration of

regulations should be considered at this stage, well before the opening of the library. Throughout, it is necessary to ensure consistency of practice in every department of the system, especially with regard to regulations that affect members of the public. Regulations that must be imposed at one branch should be made to apply at all branches.

Preparations can also be made for circularizing the local shop-keepers and business people. Envelopes can be addressed before the opening, but publicity material should not be dispatched until several weeks after this event. The reason for the delay is that the building of a branch is, in itself, sufficient publicity to cause a spate of registrations. Every new branch is greeted by an initial influx of readers, and the staff are sure to be kept busy coping with this demand for some time. Delay is also advisable so that observation can be made concerning the way in which the stock is standing up to the demands made on it. Initial provision is partly experimental, and it must receive adjustment as soon as reliable facts are available. These cannot be obtained until the stock has been tested by use.

In addition to the publicity caused by building operations, there will also accrue a fair measure of notice from the opening ceremony. Such a formality is always desirable and, if possible, a celebrity of local renown should be invited to preside. The presence of such a person will ensure Press notices and photographs; there could be no better publicity than this, and it costs nothing.

The actual process of circularizing should be conducted in two stages: (*a*) that concerned with business concerns and tradespeople, and (*b*) that concerned with the private residents. The former group should be contacted within a few weeks of the opening, and the latter after stocks have been tested as already suggested. The reason for this is that the requirements of local industries are known to a large extent and can be previously catered for. No harm, therefore, develops from an immediate demand on the stock in that section as would be the case with too great an influx of general readers. The staff will, no doubt, be impatient to achieve maximum use in the shortest possible time, but it is wise to restrain this natural

tendency in order to avoid the overstraining of resources in the early stages. Methodical development, spread over a period of months, should lead to permanent and more solid results.

A public library depends upon public opinion, both directly and indirectly, for its development. Opinion is formed by the services offered to the extent that these are known to people. Publicity is, therefore, essential for all systems that have services of value to offer. These facts underlie the maxim that the first step in publicity lies in the library itself, and should be concerned with the task of creating an efficient service. Publicity that advertises a poor service is devastating in its effects, for it recoils with boomerang force. An adequate stock and a trained staff, sufficient in numbers to cope with all demands, must be provided before publicity can be successful. Of all forms of publicity, the best is the personal recommendation. Every member of the staff should aim at giving an individual service of a standard of excellence to obtain such testimonial. In this way, the service provides its own publicity, to a certain extent, but this alone is not sufficient; no librarian should be satisfied until his service is used by the largest possible proportion of his population. The aim should be to ensure that no person is denied the use of the service because of lack of knowledge of the facilities themselves and of the benefits that the library has to offer.

It is possible to achieve this coverage, for the area served by any system is limited. Therefore, over a set period, news of the service may be brought to every individual. Since residents change, a routine should be devised so that circularization of the whole area is performed regularly over a period of two years.

Local knowledge possessed by assistants is of great value when publicity methods are being considered. For best results, publicity should be directed specifically at a group, and should appeal to their special interests. Knowledge of these interests, and of the groups is, therefore, a valuable asset.

Schemes initiated by branch libraries as local efforts should be encouraged, although they will probably be restricted by financial considerations. This need not be a cause for complaint

for centralization of advertising has many advantages. Many opportunities still exist for the branch librarian, and these can be taken without any great expenditure. Talks given to groups and societies, articles in the Press, school visits and the many aspects of reader guidance and research, are examples of such possibilities.

With all efforts of this kind discretion is required in the claims made on behalf of the service; nothing should be promised that cannot be supplied. To admit a weakness may be an unpleasant task, yet it is far more serious if a weakness is exposed by a reader who has been led to expect an adequate and complete service. Any statement made should be demonstrably correct.

From the first day of opening of a newly established branch a record should be maintained, in the electoral register, of the location of readers. This is a procedure that will involve no extra staff time for its accomplishment. All registration forms must be checked with the electoral roll, and it takes no extra time to place a tick against the register entry.

The advantage of this procedure becomes apparent, at a later stage, for the electoral roll will then supply a complete record of membership in a street-by-street order. The work of pin-pointing registrations on a map, as later recommended, is thereby facilitated.

At this stage the librarian will have had some time to note the behaviour of his stock under working conditions. After making good the defects that have become apparent, as far as possible, he should commence the second stage of his circularization. The estimated area of the branch, adjusted in accordance with natural obstacles, should be traced on his map. Streets included in the area should be marked in the electoral register, which has already been marked with registrations as they have occurred. Letters should then be sent to those people still unregistered.

The branch can then be considered as established. Discussion on subsequent procedure forms the theme of the following chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE BRANCH IN ACTION

THIS chapter will be devoted to the development of a branch from the time of opening. In effect, the material here is a continuation of that in the previous section, except that the problem of circularization, discussed there for the sake of convenience, would, in practice, arise at a period after the opening.

As far as possible the branch librarian should be given a free hand in the running of his branch. Apart from the essential supervision and control that every chief librarian must undertake, the assistant-in-charge should be made to realize that the branch is his and that he is responsible for providing a library service for his area. In order to do this he should be expected to utilize the resources of the central and other branches as well as his own; he should be encouraged to bring to the attention of his readers the possibilities of inter-library co-operation in all its phases.

Although book purchase should be in the hands of a senior officer the selection should not be entirely centralized. The initial selection and withdrawal of books can be better performed by the local assistant, subject to the final decision of the chief librarian. This method provides excellent training for staffs and leads to stocks better suited to local requirements.

A branch librarian of merit would seize the opportunity here presented with avidity. The placing of such responsibility would indicate that the librarian had confidence in his staff, and such confidence is rarely betrayed. An assistant who has something creative to work for is usually an energetic and keen worker. Efficient library systems can only function when they are staffed by such people.

Assuming that the branch librarian has been given such

powers, his first step should be to commence his work with an informal talk with his staff in an attempt to convey to them the ideals which he himself possesses concerning the profession and the assistant's duty to the public. He will try to make them see readers as individuals, as people to be assisted rather than as customers to be tolerated. He will try to convince them that librarianship is a social service, that the librarian is the vital link between book and reader, and that their business is important in a democratic way of life. He will not be afraid of using the cliché—"self-development in an atmosphere of freedom", because the phrase is still vital for those who regard books as necessary tools for the development of the whole man.

At the outset, the branch librarian should follow the example of his chief and delegate some of his powers, although not his responsibilities. He should not attempt to increase his own importance by making himself indispensable; he must retain control of affairs, but his staff should be made aware of all developments so that they have a share in the running of the branch. He should remember that the training of the staff is his responsibility. He has a duty to ensure that they understand thoroughly all the processes and routines, and that these routines are allotted and regularly varied in order to provide a complete range of experience for each assistant.

In addition to the normal routines, the staff must know the by-laws and regulations and must be aware of their powers and duties as there laid down. They must know what to do in matters of emergency, such as fire or accident, and must be prepared to supply full details of the occurrence for the benefit of any later inquiry. They should not bring the regulations into contempt by smoking or loud talking in libraries where this is prohibited. They should understand all the provisions of the National Charter, and govern their conduct accordingly. All of these matters are the concern of the branch librarian in his training of staff.

A settled routine of duties should be established at the time of opening, and this should be adhered to unless better methods can be devised. This is not an unlikely event, for most routines can be improved when tested under working conditions.

Staff suggestions in these matters, as in all others, should be welcomed and considered with care.

One of the first of such routines should be to set up a system of stock examination. Each assistant should be given the oversight of a section of the stock and should be held responsible for its care and repair, the selection of additions and the withdrawal of material. Each day, when tidying his section, the assistant should make a quick, general examination of the whole, with a more detailed examination of, perhaps, one or two shelves. In this way, the whole of the stock will be kept fresh and in good condition.

At the same time, the branch librarian should work through the stock himself, taking a small section each day. He should note the popularity of certain books and the unpopularity of others. The reasons for this should be established and the factors noted for use when selecting new stock or returning material to the central pool.

The next concern should be with borrowing facilities. It is probable that the number of tickets allowed to each borrower will be fixed, but discretionary powers should be sought to enable any person to borrow additional books when necessary. In order to ensure that readers can make full use of resources they should be encouraged to understand the arrangement of the catalogue and the classification. All assistants must co-operate in this task, either by the methods previously suggested or by other means. Full use cannot be made of a library service by any reader who is bewildered by the scheme of arrangement.

To ensure the fullest aid, all assistants should become readers' advisers as far as this is possible. An advisory service may be set up—this will depend upon the policy of the system—but, even though there is no provision for such a facility, the branch librarian and his subordinates should do all in their power to assist readers. Their policy should not be confined to that of answering questions; instead they should be alert to anticipate requirements and to provide a full service. A suggestions book or slips should be provided for readers and an inquiries book for the staff. These should be examined daily and all necessary action taken.

To supplement the book stock the filing of pamphlets should be undertaken. These should be filed near to their related books, probably on the lower shelves of book stacks. Similarly, selected periodicals should be displayed on tables, and the back numbers of these could also be filed on the lower shelves.

All of these matters should engage the attention of the assistant-in-charge from the date of opening of his branch. At the same time he must organize his system of initial book selection. This should be based on the principles discussed in a previous chapter, and his task will be made easier by the assistance of his staff selecting in their own particular sections. The discovery of demand is a process which is continuous; to complete this process the methods of issue analysis and the comparison of issues with circulating stock should be put in hand. Similarly, the staff should be encouraged to report on any need expressed by the readers or which is revealed as a result of their own observation.

At this stage sufficient experience of working conditions should have been gathered to justify an index of readers' subject requests and interests. Full use should be made of the information supplied, and continuity should be maintained by following up all requests. When a reader asks for a book on a particular subject his request should be satisfied, but that, alone, is not sufficient. He should be shown the position of the subject representation on the shelves and in the catalogue so that his future selection is made easier. Another file should be set up of societies, groups and clubs. Leaders of such groups should be approached and co-operation established for the supply of lists or for the organization of talks. These may be given by members of the library staff to the group, or by individual members of the group to users of the library at the branch.

Such activities will undoubtedly reveal weaknesses in the stock which will have to be rectified. Similarly, there will be other sections where weakness will be suspected. In order to provide for the known defects, and to check on those suspected, arrangements must be made for a test loan from the central library. This will involve the return of certain books to central, and the selection of these will be governed by the

observations made from day to day during the examination of stock. Care must be taken to ensure that subjects of proven interest are not deprived of representation during stock transfer. Any book that has been in demand, but which has fallen into disuse, should be transferred, but it should be replaced by another dealing with the same subject. Observation will soon demonstrate whether subject representation is still required at that point.

Given a revised stock, with facilities for constant observation and replenishment, some thought may be given to its exploitation. One of the best methods is by means of the display used in conjunction with a book list. The display policy should be thoroughly organized. It is not sufficient to put on an odd display, here and there, and hope that some benefit will be derived. The whole stock should be taken and systematically displayed over a period. Each display should be retained for two or three weeks and the use of the books observed during the period of the display and for some time afterwards. By this method it is possible to discover which are the popular subjects and which subjects can be popularized if sufficiently exploited.

Duplication of lists, both for specific subjects and in connection with displays, should be practised and there is no reason why such lists should not be enlivened with lino-cuts printed with a coloured ink. A weekly annotated list of additions should also be considered. A general list issued by the central library would be useful, but such lists are usually selective, and the annotations, if included, are too concise. The large number of accessions dealt with leaves no alternative, yet this condition does not apply to the branch. A monthly duplicated list is within the capabilities of most local assistants, and such a publication can produce far-reaching results in drawing together staff and readers and in spreading knowledge of stock additions.

Such lists, together with organized displays, will soon prove their value, but assistants should not be allowed to forget that the library itself constitutes the chief display. Individual troughs of books can have little appeal if the shelves themselves are marred by books out of sequence, or in need of

binding, dusting, replacement or discarding. Littered counters and tables, and notices hanging awry, do not speak of efficiency; no amount of publicity can overcome such obstacles.

The branch librarian can avoid such handicaps if he makes a habit of walking around the library, with a critical eye, at least once each day. Slipshod methods which are overlooked through long familiarity may frequently be noted in this way. As examples of such details, note the pen available for public use. Is it really usable? Do the staff themselves use it? Are inkwells allowed to run dry or become coated with sediment? Are tables allowed to remain ink-stained? Does the swing-door close completely or does it remain slightly ajar, allowing a draught to penetrate? Are the springs of self-closing doors efficient and correctly tensed, or is it necessary to exert undue force to open a door? Are notices removed immediately they become out of date, or are they allowed to remain until space is required for other posters?

All of such faults can be found at different times and at different places. Only a watchful eye can prevent their occurrence, and this is very necessary, for their incidence can give a bad impression that is out of all proportion to the degree of the negligence involved.

The general routine of the service will, by this time, have provided information regarding the readers and their needs, and plans will have been made for their satisfaction. The staff will have taken the initial rush of registrations in their stride and will have made good the defects and weaknesses revealed. When such needs have been satisfied, the branch librarian is in a position to look around for new readers. For this purpose a guide to the library will be required. Some mention of this has been made and, if such a printed guide is available, it should be used. Otherwise, a duplicated guide, though less effective, is suitable.

What are the best methods of attracting readers? Before this question can be answered the librarian must know who his readers are and where they live. Accordingly, he should pin-point on a map the density of membership. He will find that greatest use comes from those people who live nearest to the library, and that use tapers off after a distance of approx-

imately a mile. But, before taking any action, he must have a clear idea of obstacles to library use. These hazards prevent people from using the service, and all efforts will be wasted if potential readers are opposed by such obstacles.

The following are typical hazards:*

(1) Busy roads and crossings.

These will materially affect registrations. They are found to constitute a very effective barrier, particularly in the case of children and old people.

(2) Poor transport facilities.

Where transport does not exist on a particular route the density of registrations thins out perceptibly after approximately a half-mile. In other words, only a keen reader will take more than a ten-minute walk for his books. On the other hand, door to door transport tends to increase the library range to rather more than the mile radius given as the average.

(3) Lonely and unlighted roads and open spaces.

The reason here is apparent and is found to operate more especially during the winter season. Roads that include dark or lonely railway arches at any part of their length can be included here.

(4) The existence of a central library or larger branch.

A larger, more representative, stock will always attract readers. It is a fallacy, widely held, that circles can be drawn on a map to show areas of service. The area of a branch, which is theoretically circular, becomes distorted because of the attraction of the central. The other factors, here mentioned, will also play their part in changing the area of service, so that the final area cannot be stated, except approximately, without the aid of a survey.

The following factors are now available:

(*a*) Location of registrations, and

(*b*) Obstacles.

The next step is to go through the list of streets in the area, taking a radius of one mile from the branch. Note those areas where registration is weakest and check against the obstacles. If the poorness of registration can be explained by

* These facts have been frequently stressed by Dr. E. Savage.

an obstacle there is little to be done immediately. If the known obstacles fail to solve the problem there may be an unknown obstacle responsible, and this aspect must be checked. But, if no obvious cause can be discovered, the need for special attention to that street or area is apparent. This method must be followed until the whole area has been covered, street by street.

Efforts at publicity should be focused, in the first place, upon those sections of the district where registration is poor for no known reason. Results are likely to be most satisfactory here. Areas handicapped by obstacles should then be tackled, and the attempt must be concerned with overcoming these barriers. Precise methods depend upon the obstacle to be overcome and will, therefore, vary. If, for example, it was found that a busy crossing was preventing children from using the service it is possible that representation to the police would result in special supervision at that point. Attention to these details can increase the effective area of a branch and should, therefore, be of concern to every assistant.

The purpose of the survey must be maintained throughout in order to avoid the tendency to branch off along subsidiary lines of action. The chief points of inquiry should be:

(*a*) to examine the present provision in order to estimate its adequacy,

(*b*) to indicate in which direction and to what extent further provision should be made, and

(*c*) to assist in deciding the type of provision required.

The materials of the survey are facts. Opinions have their uses, since informed opinion may lead to verified fact, yet opinion as such should not be used as the basis for development.

An impartial attitude is required, and all facts should be separately examined and critically assessed. Such an unbiased attitude is particularly important when facts are to be interpreted, for it is extremely easy to adopt a point of view and to make the facts conform. This can be affected without deliberate intent by allowing the significance of some facts to be increased by unwitting bias and by permitting other facts to be decreased in importance. Because of this human factor

it is advisable for the interpretation of facts to be judged by an impartial agent.

The measures taken will ensure good coverage of residents within the area of the library service. The next step should be to concentrate on business concerns in order to contact those people who work in the area but live away from it.

The best method is to compile a list of the firms arranged in groups according to trades. A card should be made for each firm, and on this should be recorded information concerning the number of employees, names of contacts, details of previous attempts at co-operation, and so on. These cards should be filed in classified order of trades so that they are automatically linked with related books.

The staff manager of each concern should then be approached and a personal interview arranged. The secretary of the local Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club will sometimes prove helpful in this connection. The interview, when obtained, should be kept as short as possible, and should be concerned with facilities which the library can offer to the management. The information service is an obvious topic of interest, as also would be a list of books or pamphlets on the particular trade concerned. A selection of the books themselves, taken along for personal inspection, might well have a decisive effect in obtaining the support of a businessman in a scheme of mutual co-operation.

Such a list might well interest the manager more than the craftsman, for every employer is concerned to ensure that his workmen reach a high standard of efficiency. It may be true, as is sometimes said, that a list of books on his trade is not a great inducement to a craftsman, who prefers to spend his leisure in pursuits not connected with his daily work. This may well be the case, as a general rule, but the policy of providing the specialist list should still stand; the initial list is not directed particularly at the craftsman, although his use of it would be encouraged. The list is compiled to gain the favour of the employer and to prepare the way for subsequent co-operation in the form of general and special book lists and the display of bulletins and posters.

If sanction is obtained for the display of publicity material,

a small wooden tray should be provided to hold the bulletins and application forms. This should be provided with a sloping back-board to accommodate a 15 in. × 10 in. notice. This small item of equipment can be made for a few shillings and well repays its purchase. It serves to attract attention and, at the same time, prevents the untidy scattering of library literature which might well cause prejudice in the mind of a shop manager. Further extension will depend upon the degree of co-operation established, but efforts should be made to provide small exhibitions and displays during the workers' lunch periods.

Incidentally, these trays should be used for display in other places, such as clinics, labour exchanges, dentists' and doctors' waiting rooms, shops and showrooms. They should, of course, be constantly supplied with current material, and any publications that have become out of date should be removed. This is an important point because the display of an outdated bulletin, for example, gives an impression of extreme inefficiency.

A good poster for display in factories can be made by pasting the front covers of illustrated periodicals on to a blank sheet. Periodicals appertaining to the trade and those of general interest should be combined so as to extend the range of appeal. Such posters can have a good effect, for there are a large number of people who read periodicals but do not read books. These people could be attracted to the library to obtain the periodicals. If they are displayed in the lending library, as suggested, and the back numbers filed on the lower book shelves, every opportunity is given for the spread of interest to books.

Further publicity should be sought by the display of posters on all Council space. There are usually facilities to be obtained for the asking, and space can often be found on Council hoardings, notice boards and vehicles. A local Press advertisement would prove a good investment at this stage, for the purchase of space could lead to further free advertisement in the news columns. A 4-in. double column advertisement, announcing the reorganization of a branch, would cost approximately £8 for a single insertion in a local newspaper.

But, in addition to such paid publicity, a write-up of the revised service could confidently be expected if the matter is broached in a tactful manner and suitable copy is supplied.

Any attempt to contact the local Press for the first time should, preferably, be made in the summer months. Local social events are likely to be less numerous at this period, so that the editor will be more favourably inclined to the prospect of the insertion of library news. Obvious openings are narrative lists on topical subjects, holiday reading, and the preparation of summer dishes for the housewife. Essential current news, such as the availability of tickets at holiday resorts and facilities for increased holiday loans, would probably earn space and would serve as an introduction that, with persistence, might lead to the opportunity for continued publicity throughout the year.

If the interest of the editor can be secured, the library will have obtained a valuable opportunity for contact with a host of the unregistered population. The local Press has a weighty influence, for it is usually read with greater care for detail than the national news-sheets. It is read by most of the adult residents, and can convey to them the full details of the needs and facilities of the library service.

All activities will provide material for free publicity in the local Press. The story of an organized campaign and its results would, itself, be a news story of local interest. Activities of group members would similarly appeal. The contribution of book notes would probably be considered the prerogative of the central library staff but, if this is not so, the branch librarian may have an opportunity to exploit the feature.

Children using the service can assist by taking home publicity material and, in some cases, by the display of small posters in ground-floor windows. Other methods may be suggested by local conditions. Thus, in some places, it is possible to obtain slide advertisements in cinemas and, where this is the case, the method should be adopted. The tendency to-day is for the slide to be replaced by the film strip. Such strips are provided by the theatrical advertising agency at a fixed price per foot. This medium has an advantage over the slide because a definite period of advertising time is guaranteed.

Leaders of sections, such as clergymen and secretaries of societies and unions, as well as heads of schools and evening institutes should be visited in order to obtain their goodwill and assistance. Much valuable work can be done in this direction, but it must be effected by a personal visit; letters and circulars are a very poor substitute. A series of talks should be planned for schools and for youth groups, such as boy scouts and girl guides. Talks should be centred around the predominating interests of the groups and should be directed always towards linking those interests with the use of books.

While these experiments are proceeding the stock provision should be closely observed so that its suitability can be assessed for the demands being made on it. Full use should be made of the information provided. Nor is it sufficient to wait for demand to be expressed; attempts should be made to discover needs by means of investigation into reading habits. For this purpose the method of issue analysis and stock examination should be used. The index of readers' interests should also be in process of compilation and, later, as the publicity drive produces results, the area of service should again be examined in order to determine where further efforts are required.

Later publicity should be concentrated on the areas of continued poor response but, before any action is taken, an attempt should be made to discover the reason for the lack of response to the initial drive. Thus, it may be that the stock is deficient in certain respects and, if this is the cause of poor membership in a particular area, the difficulty should obviously be removed before further publicity is attempted.

Children should not be forgotten. The tendency to-day is for control of children's work to be concentrated in the hands of one person, and no complaint can be made of this. Yet the branch librarian can help, especially by the provision of parents' collections and by the training of children in the use of facilities. He should concentrate, also, on retaining the adolescents, and he will be assisted in this aim by the efficient exploitation of stock and by the use of group lecturers. He should make every effort to discover the interests of his young readers and to relate these interests to the lectures and the books. If he succeeds in this he will do more than increase the

efficiency of his branch; he will be contributing something of value to the whole library service.

Difficulties will arise, especially in a one-room branch, for in such a building it is impossible to make adequate provision for children. The chief difficulty lies, not with regard to space, although this is usually a problem, but with the necessity for reducing the amount of noise. An adult lending library disturbed by the chatter and bustle of children is intolerable; on the other hand, children must be allowed a large measure of freedom. Complete quietness in a juvenile section is unnatural and, probably, impossible. For this reason, glass screening, taken right up to the ceiling, is to be preferred. This will probably mar the appearance of the room and will throw out the balance of proportion, yet the sacrifice to practical use must be made.

Separate provision is very desirable when juvenile activities are contemplated. The children's library is not the place for entertainment, as such. It may be necessary to provide some form of attraction, but it must have a purpose behind it. The right books must be provided, the desire to read must be encouraged, and the methods of getting the best value from a library must be demonstrated.

Story periods are justified only when they are designed to introduce children to reading material of value. The telling of stories has undoubted entertainment value, but librarians should not be concerned with that aspect except in so far as it furthers their purpose. The ultimate aim should always be a relevant factor; little of permanent value can ever be achieved unless the action is directed according to a pre-arranged plan.

Judged by these standards, much story-telling is a complete waste of time. This is doubly unfortunate, for the medium can be a most valuable instrument for spreading a knowledge of literature. When properly handled, and presented after due preparation, excellent results can be obtained.

Children should be encouraged to develop those activities that lead to increased knowledge of books. For example, a cuttings collection could be compiled. The used weekly periodicals and daily newspapers could be made available for this purpose. Items from such sources could be cut out,

mounted, catalogued, classified and cross-referenced by the children. Many mistakes will occur, but there can be no better method of teaching the technique of book arrangement. After a time, projects could be initiated to supplement the file by means of material copied from reference books. Other library games to ensure use of the file in answering queries should follow as a regular feature. Such efforts in the juvenile section, together with corresponding efforts in the adult department, should have a cumulative effect and result in increased membership.

An influx of members will produce new problems, for it is one thing to enrol a borrower and quite another to keep him. Continual exertion must be maintained to assist readers by means of personal attention, good book service and displays. This period is probably more difficult than any earlier stage, for the branch is on trial before new and critical readers. A consistently high standard of service must be maintained, and attention given to such details as the speedy satisfaction of book requests.

Another much appreciated feature is the file of book, film and play reviews. It does not often happen that a review appears at the appropriate time for reading the book concerned or for seeing the play or film. The review is often in advance of the event, so that the file is readily used as being a means of linking review and event at the convenience of the reader.

Unused tickets should not be allowed to accumulate, they can readily enough be posted to their owners. Similarly, at a later stage, application forms not renewed should be extracted from the borrowers' register. A special letter and a form for renewal should be sent to the people concerned.

Librarians would do well to study the arrangement of the stock at Luton's Stopsley Branch. Normal Dewey order has been discarded and factual works are grouped around six main sections—Travel, Biography, Practical Books, History, Literature and Art, Philosophy and Religion.

Set in the shelving, amid each section, there is a large notice-board, which serves as a display base for jackets, posters and lists relating to the section. Dewey notation is retained within each section, each of which is provided with a separate alphabetical index of subjects.

In an interesting article on the branch, Mr. F. M. Gardner, Borough Librarian of Luton, states: "This arrangement, apart from breaking the monotony of long runs of shelving, is intended to focus interest on the non-fiction sections and give additional colour.

"In the children's library, a similar arrangement has been followed, with separate sections for older and younger children.

"No attempt has been made to provide a representative stock, and the whole of the stock is non-permanent, forming part of a general circulating stock for all departments outside the central library. Emphasis has been placed on practical books, travel and biography."*

The pattern here is extremely fluid. That is a good feature which could be followed in all small branches. Small units must be entirely practical, and must be sufficiently flexible in stock and organization as to react swiftly to the requirements of public demand. Failure in this respect tends to be serious, for a branch that has been tried and found wanting cannot easily regain the confidence of its public.

Methods described have been treated from the point of view of the needs of a new branch or of a reorganized branch. All are applicable to the system as a whole. It is, however, preferable to adopt a single library, such as the central or a branch, as the unit for the administration of forms of extension that can conveniently be handled in this way. Where each branch has its own literary circle, and where each branch librarian is responsible for his own book lists and local publicity, there arises a spirit of competition and friendly rivalry which brings out the best in each individual. This reacts to the benefit of the system.

The chief librarian should, naturally, approve all projects before they are put into effect. Such matters would appear on the agenda at the weekly meetings of departmental heads, thereby enabling a variety of opinions to be assessed.

The librarian should himself be responsible for the larger schemes that involve the whole system. But the shedding of minor responsibilities will enable him to give more time and attention to his own problems, besides encouraging his staff and developing their initiative and abilities.

* Library Association Record, 1948. pp. 243-244.

CHAPTER XIII

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

THE opening of a branch should strengthen a system by providing new contacts with the community and greater opportunities for service. Branches also bring increased responsibilities and problems for the librarian, especially with regard to the provision of stock to satisfy local requirements. The efficient distribution of staff becomes essential, and in order to facilitate smooth development the position of the branch in the hierarchy of the system should be firmly established at the outset.

Ideally, a branch should be regarded neither as an independent organization nor as a poor relation of the central library. It is an active limb of the system, representative of the system, and designed to perform a service on the spot that could not be carried out so effectively by the central acting alone. If the significance of these facts were thoroughly appreciated, and given their full value by both branch and central personnel, there would exist more harmony in relations generally and greater all-round efficiency. Co-operation is required as well as competition; there must be co-ordination between each branch and its central and between the branches themselves.

The branch librarian has an important part to play in such a scheme, and the value of a keen and trustworthy assistant-in-charge can hardly be over-emphasized. By his efficiency, by his willingness to assist and to balance his preferences and prejudices against the needs of the system as a whole, he can make it possible for his branch to be raised to its rightful status in the hierarchy of the service.

Always he should remember that inefficiency or slackness on his part will result in direction being taken over by the central authority, with a consequent lessening of the power

of the branch and deterioration of its usefulness to the local community. No librarian of spirit and initiative wants to be governed at every turn by regulations that prescribe his actions under all eventualities. Yet freedom from restriction carries its obligations; such freedom must be won by proof of reliability and retained by consistently competent behaviour. A chief librarian is responsible for the administration of the whole system, and he is entitled to demand that liberty of action shall result in greater efficiency, leading to better service. A wise chief holds the reins loosely and allows a wide margin of freedom. Yet, when once the control has been tightened, it is often difficult to allow its relaxation. Confidence betrayed leaves a residue of suspicion and mistrust that is not easily eradicated.

As systems grow in size, and the amount of extensional activities increase, the librarian normally finds that more and more of his time tends to be taken up by administrative duties, leaving less and less time for his basic function of book exploitation. Eventually, there comes a time when an increase of administrative duties involves the sacrifice of a measure of bibliographical activities.

This is to be regretted, although it cannot always be avoided. When, however, choice is possible, and administrative duties can be shared with a subordinate, this course is to be preferred. It is sometimes said that the librarian should be an efficient administrator first and foremost. It is difficult to agree with this view for the administration and routine of a system has no meaning and no value apart from books. If the librarian is an administrator, he must have capable book-men under him; it may then be queried whether he is much else than a manager. Every librarian should resist the encroachment of too many administrative tasks. Such details should surely be left to the clerks.

So many problems remain unsolved that no time can be wasted on non-essential matters. The urge for a better service in the immediate locality is an obvious priority, yet the librarian should always remember that all efforts directed towards this end are stages in the battle for better provision throughout the country. There are areas in this country with library

services that are well below the standard required for efficiency. Little can be done about this because each local authority is completely independent of external pressure, even should this exist. But although external pressure is negligible and lacking in power, there yet exists an internal force of great potency in each district if only it can be harnessed and directed.

This force consists of the will of the people. Local authorities can ignore cultural, educational and moral appeals, but they cannot ignore the united demands of their rate-payers. That is a fact which all librarians should ponder. If the electors demand an effective library service there is no doubt that it will be provided.

Will such a demand be made? It could be, but only if the electors feel the lack of the service and feel it strongly enough to translate their wishes into action. This can happen if men and women in a poorly-served area have a basis of comparison, and this is provided wherever tickets between systems are inter-available.

If one of the systems is demonstrably better than the other, that fact will inevitably be noted by those who use both services. The reaction may not be immediate but, in course of time, the effect must surely be observed. So it is that an efficient system can act as an example to demonstrate the benefits capable of achievement.

Every librarian, and every assistant, has an opportunity to take part in this struggle; each should regard himself as a fighter in the twentieth-century crusade against ignorance, inferior library provision and the glorification of exclusively materialistic values. The expenditure of public money on an inefficient service is an extravagance that can never be justified. On the other hand, an efficient library represents an economical tool of direct social service that will spread its benefits throughout the community.

In order to demonstrate the value of the service it is necessary to extend its use to the widest extent and, for this purpose, extensional activities have their value. The more ambitious methods, such as general lectures and documentary film shows, that involve the accommodation of a large number of people, will be confined to the central library. There are,

however, a number of other features that are well suited for development at branches. Specialized lectures to small groups, literary circles, exhibitions and musical recitals are examples.

At the outset the principle should be established that these activities are subordinate to the primary function, which is the supply and exploitation of books. It is possible to go further, and to assert that they are employed solely in order to increase the use made of the book stock and to attract the unregistered into the library.

Librarianship is concerned with the written and printed record. That has always been its purpose, and any attempt to extend the function to include other features, such as gramophone record collections, television and films, should be supported by more than the wish on the part of the devotees of these activities. An extension of functions cannot be justified when the basic function is still incompletely developed, nor when it involves the sacrifice of book provision or of service to the public.

The basic task of librarianship has yet to be completed. The task consists in providing an effective book service for the community. A social service which can claim to serve no more than 25 per cent. of the population is hardly in a position to branch out into fresh fields. The problem of book provision has not been solved. It is, however, in danger of being shelved in favour of other developments which are concerned with cultural activities.

Activities may be cultural, worthy, and in need of propagation, but it does not follow that librarians should adopt and propagate them. We are not universal providers, nor are we equipped to perform such a role. Public libraries have no sharp definition of purpose, such as exists for specialized libraries, so that care is required in order to avoid the spreading of resources too widely. Dilution must surely follow unless special measures are proposed.

If it is suggested that the scope of the service should be extended so as to include other activities, it is essential that the development should be accompanied by separate financial provision. In addition, sufficient trained staff should be appointed who would be able to organize and carry out such

ventures without detriment to the primary bibliographical function of the service. A realistic attitude must take account of the fact that the librarian is the servant of his authority. An instruction to develop the cultural services cannot be ignored, yet it should not be accepted until the need for extra resources has been strongly urged.

The librarian can concentrate on doing one thing well, or he can dissipate his energies and do several things badly. In the latter event he creates no credit for the profession and adds nothing to assist in the development of culture. Libraries represent one part only of cultural equipment. The librarian should concentrate on the task of ensuring that his contribution in this field is sufficient and adequate to stand up to the most searching scrutiny. This cannot be achieved if resources are overstrained in an ambitious attempt to cover ground which is outside of his legitimate sphere. There are limits to the purposes of a library; there are limits to the capability of a librarian; no good can arise from an attempt to overstep these boundaries.

All activities of the system enter into the process of building a library's reputation and of defining its place in the scale of social agencies. Since this is so, it follows that every project undertaken should be capably performed and should be recognizably related to library practice.

It is noticeable that activities vary from system to system according to size, resources and the opinions of those responsible for the formulation of policy. In many cases, functions and purposes seem to be vague and undefined; nor is this surprising since few, if any, systems can encompass all activities included within the complete scope of present-day practice. Since resources are limited, we find that certain activities are adopted by some systems and neglected by others. This must be very confusing to members of the public who find, for example, that System A will loan gramophone records to individuals, System B to societies only, while System C has no collection at all but provides free film shows.

A distinct bias can be traced towards certain activities, yet common agreement between systems is very necessary in order to avoid the frittering away of resources and the expenditure of time and energy on features that yield little profitable return.

Such irregular development is not beneficial to the service, yet the responsibility lies as much with authorities as with librarians. No library budget is adequate for its purpose, far too many authorities mistake parsimony for economy and fail to realize that economy connotes wise spending rather than blind frugality.

Even the basic principles of book provision can command no general measure of agreement, and the controversy of light versus standard fiction and of fiction versus factual works still rages. Second thoughts on library problems appear to be affecting policy in America and, in this connection, significant material is provided by the publication of *The Library's Public* by Bernard Berelson, Dean of the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago.

The Library's Public was published under the auspices of the American Social Science Research Council and made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. It represents a section of the findings of an Inquiry, set up at the request of the American Library Association, to investigate the basic issues and problems facing the American Public Library. It is described as "an organized summary of all that is now scientifically known about the use of the 7,400 public libraries in the United States".

From an examination of the results of research investigations between 1930 and 1947, Dr. Berelson finds that one-fourth of the adult population reads one or more books per month, that one in ten adults, and one in three children and young people, use the public library as often as once a month. Of the books read in the United States the public library supplies about one-fourth. As a source of information the public library has little reality for most people, while the better educated use the library to the greatest extent.

These facts lead to the conclusion that the public library should use its resources to serve the "serious" and "culturally alert" members of the community; the present tendency to be all things to all men should be avoided. In other words, the lines of communication have been over-extended and provision has been spread too widely and too thinly, so that in no place has it been adequate.

What does this mean to the British librarian? Is there any lesson to be learned from this survey and the facts thereby presented?

Of the significance of the survey we can have no doubt since its prime object was to answer the question: Who are the people who use public libraries, and why do they use them? This question, although posed for the American librarian, and discussed with reference to the American people and the American scene, must still concern the British librarian, for his problems of supply and demand will likewise be vitally affected by his clientèle. Any facts, therefore, which can be gained, or any conclusions which can be drawn, should be studied and used for the benefit of his service.

The conclusions of the report may or may not be the correct interpretations for the American scene. We do not know whether similar implications would be valid in this country. The remedy proposed is to cast off all but "serious" readers and so conserve resources. Before such a drastic step is taken the question should be asked: Would it not be better to consolidate by shedding some of the extra activities that encroach on the grounds of the educationist?

In this connection it is rather interesting to note the tendency here for librarians to divide themselves into two schools; those interested in the rapid development of extensional activities of all kinds, and those who insist that the business of the librarian is with books. The former spread their nets widely and drag into their sphere much that rightly belongs to the educationist; the latter have no objection to these activities as such, but regard them as being outside of the library's function. The danger of such extension of activities lies in the dispersal of forces and the consequent weakening of basic provision. The warning has been voiced here many times; will the experience of America have its effect?

It is this distribution of resources among the actual and potential readers that forms one of the basic problems for all responsible for library policy. The difficulty of just and equitable provision cannot be overcome by ignoring a section of the public nor by pandering to the taste of the intellectual few.

The librarian must play his part in solving his local problem

by setting out to discover the people who are using *his* library and, especially, he must contact those who do not. Some of his readers will show no return in terms of intellectual credit, but some concentration on the needs of the barely literate is still necessary, not for the sake of issues, but because the satisfaction of their reading demand is a social necessity and a moral responsibility. The provision of the books required, in their rightful proportion, is as legitimate a part of the library's function as is the satisfaction of any other claim which may, with full approval, be made upon the service.

It is becoming increasingly common to hear it stated that reading in itself has no value. This is so nearly true as to make it difficult to deny. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that reading is a habit that has vast potentialities for good, if properly directed. Therefore it is a habit which should be encouraged, irrespective of its present value to the individual. Present value may, indeed, be negligible for any one person but possible, future, value may be enormous. The habit of reading may not be particularly important as an end in itself, but it forms a very good means for the acquisition of knowledge, and encouragement in its development should be liberally given. The librarian should attempt to ensure that the means are adopted so that the ends may be attained.

It follows that there must be a purpose behind all provision. If reading is to be assessed on its value as a mental stimulant much must depend upon the benefits derived from the exercise. Value can be obtained from both fictional and factual material, and books of any kind are to be welcomed that assist in the development of man and that make a contribution towards the welfare of society. The issue of novels is often considered to be of less importance than the issue of factual works, yet this can surely not be substantiated. It is impossible to generalize on the merits or demerits of a broad group such as fiction; each item must be considered as an individual contribution and its value assessed according to its content.

Any scheme for developing adult education through books and reading comes up against the problem of reading habits and, consequently, of those factors which determine and influence reading tastes. Before the attempt is made to elevate

standards of reading it is necessary to discover whether taste is capable of improvement and, if so, by what methods. What are the factors that cause one person to prefer good quality literature and another to refuse anything but the easiest forms? The following are suggested as relevant factors:

Intelligence; education; environment; amount of leisure; temperament; other interests; access to material; background experience; desire for self-improvement, either cultural, social or economic.

Intelligence

Intelligence in an individual will, usually, affect the quality of his reading, for the person of average intelligence is unlikely to be satisfied with the crudities of sub-standard literature for any length of time. In any community the standard of intelligence among individuals will vary widely, so that provision must be made at all levels.

Education

The remarks concerning intelligence are applicable with regard to education, although to a more limited extent. Enjoyment of a full education does not necessarily lead to the formation of good taste, but it encourages its formation and makes it possible. The library can assist those whose education has not been completed; an adequate service can reveal the way towards self-education.

Environment

The effect of environment on development needs no emphasis. Sociologists have stressed again and again that early influences have powerful formative qualities. Any attempt to nullify the effect of past environment must rest with the individual, although the library service can do much to assist by the use of its resources. Present environmental influences can be partly combated by the provision of necessary aids, such as study rooms, book and periodical services.

Leisure

The amount of available leisure operates mainly in a single direction. Ample leisure does not necessarily compel the

urge for sustained or better reading, but scanty leisure can be a powerful factor to prohibit the use of any material that demands mental effort. A tired brain cannot concentrate, and so is not able to cope with literature that demands a contribution from the reader. Little can be achieved in such cases except to provide material of suitable quality to arouse interest and quicken curiosity.

Temperament

The causes of individual temperament cannot be specifically stated, for they spring entirely from all the aspects of character and being. So far as the librarian is concerned, his duty is to make wide provision so that all types shall be catered for; this, after all, is merely another way of stating that provision should be based on the needs of the individual.

Interests

Other interests form a fluctuating attraction throughout the life of each individual. During the adolescent period, in particular, other activities are extremely potent in attracting away library users. The remedy, which can never be completely effective, must lie primarily in the provision of adequate training in the juvenile library and in the schools. So far as the adult is concerned, the only method to adopt, to combat the pull of other diversions, is to make the library as attractive as possible; to provide a clean, up-to-date and varied stock, and to illustrate, by display and other methods, that self-interest demands the use of books.

Material

Access to material is not a strong limiting factor in this country. Library coverage is almost complete, although very thin in some places and of doubtful quality in others. But, on the whole, a reasonable service is provided which should increase in efficiency as public opinion is awakened to the value of libraries. A point to note is that complete access to material does not necessarily follow from access to books. Stocks must be analysed and revealed, readers must be assisted before the full benefits of books can be enjoyed.

The individual intent upon improvement has every opportunity in the public library where reader guidance is featured. In other cases, it is to be feared that the initial impetus towards development is allowed to become stifled in the complexity of material, so that early enthusiasm is damped and eagerness discouraged. No impediment should be allowed to stand in the way of the questing borrower. Where reading courses are provided, all books required for the completion of the course should be made available at the appropriate *times*. An enforced delay during a set course can easily result in its abandonment.

Experience

Background experience has a powerful influence upon the type of material read, for reading is the sharing of an experience between author and reader. All worth-while literature makes its demand upon the reader, yet the value to be derived is correspondingly great, and is considerably enhanced if the circumstances described fall within the orbit of the readers' own experience. Lack of such experience is a limiting factor. Only general provision can help here, for one of the methods of building experience is vicariously, through the use of books. This fact should be stressed and assistance given wherever necessary.

Self-improvement

The desire for improvement will be both governed and restricted by most of the preceding factors. Yet, if the urge is sufficiently powerful, most obstacles can be overcome. The library has an important part to play in this sphere, for many of the difficulties encountered by the seeker after development can be reduced in effect with the assistance of a book stock that is made readily available. The experiences of others, and the thoughts of the world's best brains, are available for the man searching for knowledge, yet this material must for ever remain hidden unless revealed by the active librarian.

These factors may not represent the total of the influences that go to form reading habits, yet they are all important and

operative. Some attention to their effect is, surely, part of the librarian's duty.

A difficulty in all cases is to ensure that the reader chooses at his own level and not at a lower grade. Left to his own devices, an individual often tends to choose the easy way and to read well below his capabilities. He should not be coerced, naturally, but every attempt should be made to awaken his self-interest; the way should be made easy for him to read at the best possible standard. Effective stock, displays, graduated reading courses, book lists and adequate personal assistance are the methods that can be employed.

Nor need the librarian be chary of delving into the question of reading habits. The importance of assistance to readers has been rightly stressed, yet little effective work can be performed unless the factors that govern reading tastes are understood. There are many obstacles to be overcome in this work; no two readers are quite alike, the problem of each must be separately assessed. But that, after all, is one of the attractions of librarianship.

Far too little attention has been given to the question of reading habits. To be thoroughly effective it would be necessary to conduct wide surveys of both readers and non-readers. It is easy and deceptively simple to wish away the need for reading surveys. Such investigations, by their nature, can never be completely conclusive; nor do they pretend that their results can serve other than as a general guide for future development. Because of such limitations they lend themselves readily to the supercilious witticisms that often take the place of thought.

The human factor will always intervene to prevent the survey from being specific in its conclusions. So many people, confronted with a questionnaire, or interviewed by an investigator, tend to allow fantasy to colour their replies and to state what they think is expected of them. Moreover, the care and detail required often appear to be a waste of time in view of the meagre results obtained. Yet, although imperfect, the method can be used to advantage, provided that its limitations are known and taken into account.

Such efforts to increase the extent and value of the service

given to existing readers should be accompanied by continuous attempts to widen the circle of library users. Every librarian should be concerned to increase the number of his readers, and one of the best means to achieve this is by contact with groups. To this end, every library in the system should make full use of the index of organizations, groups, clubs and churches within its area. The assistant-in-charge should approach the leader of each group and offer the resources of the library to assist with plans and activities. Library stocks are frequently left unused by default; groups that could and would co-operate omit to do so because the library service does not come under consideration.

People who belong to groups can sometimes be persuaded to put on exhibitions and help in other ways to spread the use of the library. A particularly useful method is in the personal recommendation among other members of their organizations. But the service must be worthy of recommendation and must be able to live up to a personal introduction.

Co-operation with groups can be effected by means of book talks given by members of the staff. The assistant concerned should take with him a selection of books likely to appeal to the audience. These books should be passed round, preferably before the talk, since any point made concerning the value of books, and the facilities of the library, will carry more weight if the audience have seen and handled the books in question.

After the talk, the books should be available for issue to any person whose name appears on the register of electors. Registration forms on the spot will settle most difficulties, while those people requiring guarantors will, usually, find that group leaders and other local members are willing to act in this capacity for people known to them. Books issued by such methods should be returned to the library in due course by the readers concerned. Further loans should then be made in the usual way.

This method can be remarkably effective. People may read pamphlets telling of the virtues of the library and the advantages of membership, yet they will not take the necessary steps to enrol unless prompted to do so by some special factor. The handling of a desired book supplies this factor of awakened

self-interest, and is usually sufficient to overcome the inertia of apathy.

Issue on the spot is important in every case. It is very irritating to pick up a book that interests, and then to discover that issue is possible only from the library, which may be some distance away. Assuming that sufficient interest is aroused and sustained to make the visit an actuality, there remains still the risk that the book may not be immediately available when required. Dozens of potential readers can be lost in this way.

When speaking to a special group, whether it be a juvenile group or a circle of business men, it is as well to remember that words used must be appropriate to the setting, for any words spoken without due regard for the audience can be misleading in the extreme. Particularly does this apply to library terminology. "Non-fiction" is an inconclusive term, "factual" is better; "open-access" conveys little, while "closed-access" is a contradiction in terms. Assistants sometimes speak of "fiction" and "non-fiction" tickets. They should be warned that "fiction" tickets do not exist, and that "general" ticket is the correct term. Such emphasis is not pedantic, for readers have been known to assume that "fiction" tickets may not be used for factual works. Clarity and simplicity are essential on all occasions when facilities or technical and semi-technical processes and services are being described to members of the public.

Book talks to groups have a habit of developing into more formal lectures, and difficulty is sometimes experienced because of the limitation of the library's resources. With care, however, too great an emphasis on specialized topics can be avoided, and the sessions made to conform to a sufficiently general pattern to attract an interested audience. In the preparation and presentation of these features much assistance can be obtained from bodies such as the National Book League, the Arts Council and the Central Office of Information.

When co-operation with local groups has been well established, attention should be directed to the possibilities of poetry and play readings. Interest in such features is intense rather than wide and they are, therefore, especially suited for the

club atmosphere of branch libraries. Not least among the virtues of such activities is the fact that attention is drawn to the lesser used, yet valuable works.

A similar venture is seen in the operation of the Critics' Club. Each member, in turn, reviews a book and other members are invited to express their opinions. The routine can be varied by the selection of a particular author for study. One member gives a general appreciation, and this is supplemented by a discussion on particular aspects, contributed by others belonging to the circle. With both the Reading Circle and the Critics' Club the value of quality in reading is stressed and discrimination encouraged.

The discussion group is another activity that can serve as a valuable means of bringing together people and introducing them to books. Such groups require efficient organization if interest is to be aroused and maintained, but they are, nevertheless, valuable aids in the development of a library service.

A service that is well within the scope of all systems is that which provides for the delivery and collection of books for those people who are bedridden or physically incapacitated. Such people are not always able to persuade others to collect books for them, and often do not care to give trouble by asking too often for favours. A regular weekly delivery would be a benefit warmly appreciated.

All librarians should pay special attention to the hostels and hospitals in the area. In such centres people form separate communities and, in the majority of cases, are widely separated from their families and friends. The nurses in the hospitals, and the business men and women in the hostels, form groups to which the public library could make a powerful appeal. Quite often such people are thrown much on their own resources and might welcome the opportunity afforded by the library service. An approach to the Matrons and Supervisors of such establishments would probably result in permission being obtained for the display of bulletins and other material. The bulletin display tray would prove its value here.

A development which might cause the librarian some uneasiness is concerned with the spread of television and its increasing demand on the spare time of the reading public.

The growing popularity of television might result in a decrease of purely recreative reading, especially of the lighter type of material. It is, however, doubtful whether this visual form of entertainment will ever seriously threaten the use of books for educational or cultural purposes. Action portrayed on a screen cannot be held up while the viewer meditates or takes notes, neither can the picture be turned back, as a page, for reference to former description.

Television can instruct but cannot record. So far as the reader in search of entertainment is concerned, the medium itself has little significance; that medium, be it book, radio or television, that offers the greatest diversion will be chosen. For cultural and educational purposes the printed and visual mediums are not competitors, each can supplement the other.

So many possible means of development might cause confusion, yet this need not be so if the librarian holds fast to the fundamental purpose of libraries and measures all decisions against that standard. Then he will not be swayed to take extremist views on such problems as the provision of light reading material, but will realize that such provision, in just proportion, is necessary for the fulfilment of his social duty.

He will further realize that his duty does not end with the purchase of books. Books of value must be analysed and displayed; books of lesser value must act as the vehicle for the use of those of greater value. In other words, stock must be exploited and readers assisted, not in order to achieve more reading for its own sake, but to encourage the development of more critical and rational standards of thought. For a library is a social force; it must retain that function, and every action, every activity, must be designed to carry out that obligation.

Cultural and educational aspects are the basis of the service, but facilities must be extended to all and not confined to any particular section. By broad and catholic provision many will be attracted who can make little use of the greater part of the stock. The librarian is concerned with these people as much as with those who are pursuing courses of study. His duty must lead him to assist all readers to seek their own fulfilment. He must, therefore, guide and assist; he must provide the pill and the sugar—but not all pill and not all sugar!

From this it follows that the librarian must so administer his service as to utilize his forces to the greatest advantage. A skilful use of the facilities of his branch libraries can assist in this respect. Branches should be used as active outposts of the system and not, as is often the case, as deposit stations or as hiding places for the less successful assistants. The branch library has a very real part to play in the development of a successful system. In order to ensure that the greatest benefit accrues to the service, the work of each branch must be co-ordinated and blended so as to fit smoothly into the pattern of the whole. Branch libraries must, therefore, receive their due measure of importance in order to play their allotted roles.

What, then, is the future of the branch? The progress of centralization, the ban on building during the war years and after, the movement of population, and national and local economy measures would all appear to have contributed towards a decrease in the influence, prospects and status of the branch.

Classification and cataloguing processes are performed at the central library, as also is book selection in many cases. The building ban and the destruction of branches have left a deficiency that cannot be made good for years to come. The movement of population and industry has played havoc with the siting of existing branches, so that the present lay-out of many systems is entirely unrelated to their immediate needs or future possibilities.

However, this gloomy description gives a distorted view, and does not represent a true picture of the future of branch libraries. The facts recited are correct, but they do not constitute an insuperable obstacle.

Local branches to-day are in process of change in all systems where the administration is forward-looking and efficient. The centralization of processes has set the branches free, and this freedom can be utilized for the practice of librarianship in its essential forms. No longer are branches regarded as isolated and separate establishments within a system; instead they are moving towards a position in which they have the function of vital representatives of the system, designed in purpose and in stock to serve the special needs of a particular locality.

Personal assistance to readers is developing, and it is accepted that this work can be very satisfactorily accomplished at the branch. For this reason, too, the tendency is to augment branch staffs by trained assistants.

All of these factors point to a definite conclusion. It is clear that as this progress continues the branch will assume an even increased status in the system. But this increased status will be accompanied by its own particular responsibilities. The branch must be worthy of the respect paid to it; the service offered must be such as to make it a valuable amenity in the eyes of the public; staff must be able to build a tradition and maintain it.

For these reasons branch librarians must be efficient and keen, interested in their work, and regard it, not only as a vocation, but also as an avocation. Only by disinterested and willing service to the public, and a continuous and critical self-analysis, can these qualities be attained.

The librarian's share in this development is evident. He has control of the whole system. He can direct and encourage the members of his staff and train them so that they become capable of performing their duty to the community. He can assist them to achieve a balanced scale of values, so that they become capable of assessing the importance of books and reading as a contribution towards communal welfare. His own training and enthusiasm will constantly be tested in the task of co-ordinating the various endeavours and blending them into a common tool for the improvement of his service.

Such progression will demand strenuous exertions, yet the toil will not be without its compensations. The reward of such labour will be revealed in the creation of an instrument fitted in every way to fulfil its allotted purpose in the service of mankind.

APPENDIX

BULLETINS AND BOOK LISTS

THE librarian determined to increase the influence exerted by his system will inevitably turn to publicity methods. The function of the tool is to assist in conveying information to predetermined quarters, and methods adopted will be governed by circumstances and objectives.

The small system will not be able to indulge in expensive campaigns, nor is this desirable for the chief material of publicity lies in the service itself. If a service of excellence is provided the problem resolves itself into that of spreading the information where it is likely to be welcomed.

For this purpose the librarian should visualize his community as being composed of a series of groups, as follows:

(*a*) General readers.
(*b*) Societies and clubs.
(*c*) Social groups, such as housewives, gardeners, people with hobbies.
(*d*) Students.
(*e*) Adolescents.
(*f*) Schoolchildren.

These groups overlap, and a reader may belong to several of these categories. Each class presents a separate problem so that it is necessary to concentrate on each in turn.

Mention has already been made to various forms of extensional activities, and these can be organized according to the programme devised. But perhaps the most direct weapon consists of the library bulletins and book lists which can be specifically directed to any selected target. Thus, group (*a*) can be provided with selections of recommended books, both fiction and factual; groups (*b*) and (*c*) with appropriate subject lists; group (*d*) with lists based on the subjects of

study; groups (*e*) and (*f*) with suitable lists of authors and with subject lists on hobbies, sports and careers.

Occasional lists are to be preferred rather than regular bulletins. A monthly or quarterly bulletin must be issued on a certain date, and it may not always be convenient or desirable to publish at that time. The same amount of money devoted to lists can produce results equally as effective without committing the library to the tyranny of the calendar. Periodical lists can be brief or lengthy as the need dictates.

The design and execution of covers for bulletins and lists is an expensive item if blocks are to be purchased. Accordingly, layouts have been included to demonstrate how the problem has been tackled by various systems with the help of designs not requiring the use of specially prepared blocks.

Such designs can be most effective and are capable of much variation. Covers here reproduced are included, not because they are necessarily the best efforts of their kind, but because they represent typical examples of inexpensive designs used by library systems to-day.

Many systems are limited by financial considerations where printing is concerned and, consequently, are forced to rely on duplicated lists and bulletins. The appearance of such work can be greatly improved if a printed cover is provided. Sufficient covers can be ordered and printed at one time to serve for a year's supply of bulletins, and this bulk buying will reduce the individual cost of each item.

Such a cover, designed to avoid the use of a specially prepared block, will give a finished appearance to the duplicated interior text, so that the production, as a whole, need be little inferior, and much less expensive, than a bulletin printed throughout in letterpress.

The production of lists should be followed by a detailed plan of distribution. Batches should be sent to the secretaries of groups who might be interested but, in addition, as many service points as possible should be secured. The librarian can usually obtain permission for the deposit of material in the electricity showrooms, clinics and welfare centres. It should also be possible to arrange for display in the waiting rooms of doctors and dentists and in some factories and offices. In

addition, each branch librarian should make a point of establishing good relations with those readers who are shopkeepers, and so obtain permission for the deposit of bulletins and lists on shop counters.

Local circumstances will affect the number of show-points available, but the greater the number the greater the effect. There cannot be too many if the service is to be made widely known.

BOOK NEWS

SHOREDITCH
Public Libraries

JULY 1950

YOUR LIBRARY

People living in to-day's world must learn facts fast. For without facts there can be no action —without action democracy cannot flourish.

Books in the library can help you to be informed as is shown by the selection of news items and their related background reading.

BACKGROUND OF THE NEWS

Item — PERSIA ON ROAD TO RUIN. Mr. Morrison.

Background
- Buck, P. Asia and democracy
- Payne, R. Journey to Persia
- Roberts, W. Story of oil
- Suratgar, O. I sing in the wilderness

Item — AN ELECTION IN OCTOBER. *Sunday Times* Article.

Background
- Birch, N. The Conservative Party
- Cruikshank, R. The Liberal Party
- Jay, D. The Socialist case
- Joad, C. E. M. Principles of parliamentary democracy

Item — WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO STIFFEN OUR DEFENCES. Mr. Shinwell.

Background
- Gunter, John. Behind Europe's curtain
- Hart, B. Liddel- Defence of the West
- Lippman, W. The cold war
- Padelford, N. Contemporary international relations

THE LIBRARY IS YOURS—USE IT—TELL OTHERS ABOUT IT

(Current Affairs Poster, Figure 8)

If you Like Books

by

Pearl Buck
Monica Dickens
Gilbert Frankau
Naomi Jacob
Cecil Roberts
Nevil Shute

H. E. Bates
Geoffrey Household
Sinclair Lewis
P. H. Newby
Upton Sinclair
C. P. Snow

try

(Display Poster, Figure 7)

ENGLAND'S GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

a select book list

★

March 1938

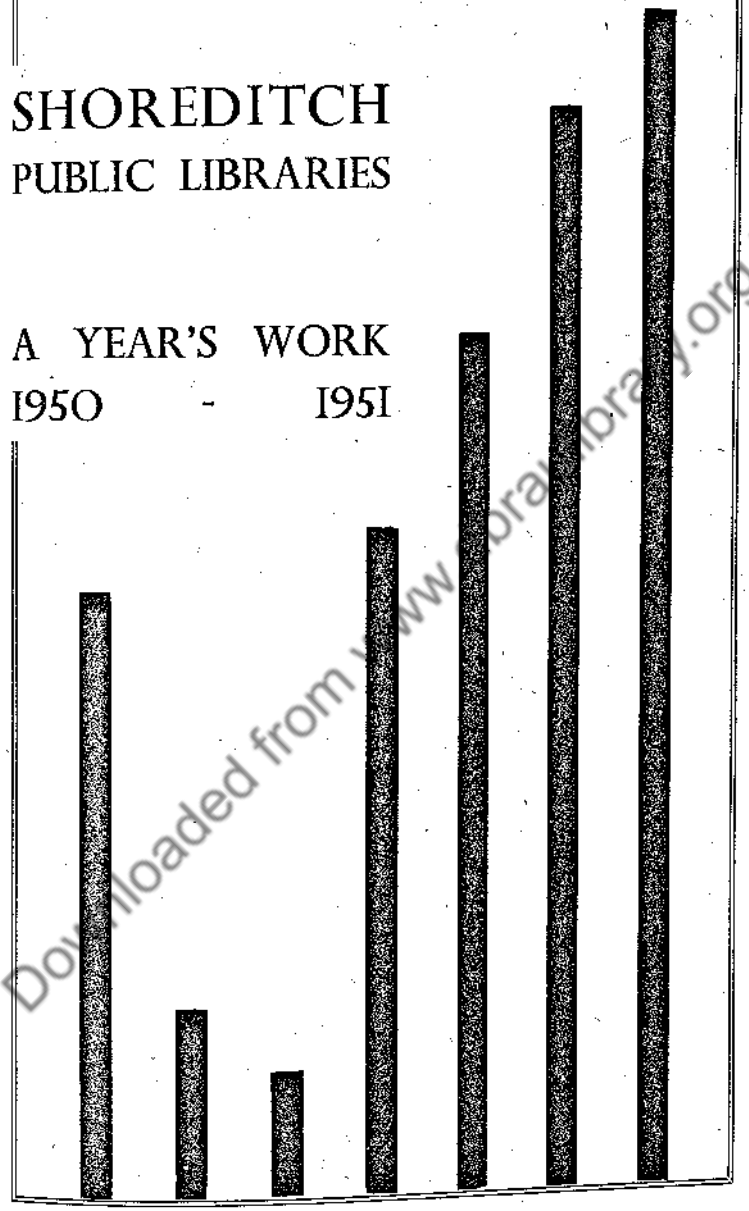
OPPORTUNITIES

1948—9

LEYTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

SHOREDITCH
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A YEAR'S WORK
1950 - 1951



Leisure
into
Pleasure

No. 4

PHOTOGRAPHY

SHOREDITCH PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COULSDON AND PURLEY
Urban District Council

REPORT
ON A YEAR'S WORK OF THE
LIBRARIES

APRIL, 1948 — MARCH, 1949

SHOREDITCH
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

1948 - 1949

ANNUAL REPORT

SHOREDITCH
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A YEAR'S WORK
1949 - 1950

SHOREDITCH
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

No. 3

LEISURE
into
PLEASURE

HANDICRAFTS

BOOK NEWS

JULY 1950

SHOREDITCH
Public Libraries

LEISURE into PLEASURE

SHOREDITCH
PUBLIC
LIBRARIES

No. 2

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

LEISURE into PLEASURE

No. 1

MODEL —MAKING

SHOREDITCH PUBLIC LIBRARIES

TO INTRODUCE

ONE PENNY

THE CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

BOOK NEWS

JANUARY
1951

SHOREDITCH PUBLIC LIBRARIES

ISLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

●

BULLETIN

MAY 1949

●

FOR GOOD BOOKS AND INFORMATION

BOOKS

FOR THE

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INDEX

INDEX