

UNESCO-Library of Congress Bibliographical Survey:

First Interim Report of the Library of Congress Bibliographical Planning Group, June 1949¹

Mrs. Murra is a member of the bibliographical staff, Library of Congress.

Editor's Note: The following statement, introducing Mrs. Murra's report, was prepared by E. J. Carter, head, Libraries Division, UNESCO:

"The following is the first interim report of the Library of Congress Bibliographical Planning Group, prepared as part of the UNESCO-Library of Congress Bibliographical Survey. This group was formed in April 1949 under the leadership of Luther H. Evans, Librarian of Congress, in order to prepare a working paper in 1949 for discussion at meetings and conferences to be held in 1950.

"This report is a document of the first few months work. It is intended to stimulate discussion and participation by library and documentation workers in the activities of the UNESCO-Library of Congress Bibliographical Survey.

"The Library of Congress Bibliographical Planning Group has been asked to pay special attention to regional needs for improved bibliographical services, and to the improvement of bibliographical services in those subject areas in which adequate services are lacking at present.

"This statement and the accompanying report are designed to insure that attention is given to such regional and national bibli-

ographic undertakings as librarians may want to draw to the attention of the survey. Your comments should be addressed directly to Dr. Evans, UNESCO-Library of Congress Bibliographical Survey, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

"The following suggestions are made by the Libraries Division of UNESCO to help national library and documentation associations willing to participate in the bibliographical survey:

"(a) Circulate as many copies of the first interim report as necessary to members of your groups, or specialist subcommittees. Additional copies may be secured either from the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., or UNESCO, Paris.

"(b) Arrange for representative groups of librarian and documentalists bibliographers to discuss the present report and those that will come later. Such group discussions will be an important means of formulating national and specialist opinion for incorporation in documents to be prepared for international meetings in 1950, including the third international congress on libraries and bibliography organized by the International Federation of Library Associations with the help of the Fédération Internationale de Documentation.

"(c) At national and regional library meetings during the next few months, it might be possible to take the opportunity of planning participation in the national or regional meetings and conferences which will be held in

¹ Appendix I to the *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, July 5-11, 1949.

1950 on the subject of world bibliographical problems.

"(d) If further detailed inquiries need to be carried on by national or regional library groups along lines indicated in this first interim report, consultations between such groups and UNESCO or the Library of Congress can be arranged.

"Assistance in completing parts of the bibliographical survey will be asked by the Library of Congress from various national library groups."

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The Point of View

The Library of Congress Bibliographical Planning Group is concerned with the devices and services which enable any investigator to discover, locate and obtain whatever segment of man's record of his thinking, activities, experiences and knowledge he may want, for whatever purpose—be it a single thought, an elusive fact, a new idea, or the most comprehensive chronicle of an extinct civilization. The existence of these devices and services provides what is often referred to in the United States as "bibliographical control" over the materials which an investigator may need, and the particular devices and services themselves are commonly referred to as "bibliographical controls." These phrases will be used in that sense in this report. The universal problem of making these controls responsive to the requirements of each and any investigator appears to be no nearer a solution than it was 30 years ago. This statement can be made with full knowledge of the development of new bibliographical controls and the improvement and better coordination of old ones. It emphasizes the discrepancy existing between the increase in the quantity of man's record and his ability to make it universally available. For a variety of reasons—budgetary, administrative, and, perhaps, philosophical—no consistent program of planning for adequate bibliographical control has been un-

dertaken on a national basis—let alone world-wide. As Miron Burgin pointed out with respect to Latin American bibliography: "Rugged individualism reigns supreme."² In 1894 Aksel Josephson observed that "here as well as abroad, bibliographies of special subjects are issued in abundance. What is needed, however, is a well-elaborated general plan. . . ."³

Efforts to improve bibliographical mechanisms or create better ones have, for the most part, been sporadic and often resemble the work of industrious and persevering beavers who can throw remarkable dams across the streams, if narrow and placid, but whose handiwork will be swept away at flood tide. There are excellent bibliographies, indexes, abstracting services and annual reviews, but when these are used to stem the broad and rapid river of the world's recorded knowledge, they are weak. A direct attack requires research, planning and strategy. To date there have been more of what William Randall calls service and administrative studies than research studies and planning.⁴ Strategy requires studies at all levels and planning based on those studies.

Coming through the experience of the war years with fresh evidence that bibliography is the logistics of scholarship, a primary concern of the Library of Congress has been to attack the problem of world-wide bibliographical control directly through planned research and development which would enlist the aid of the major information producing and dispensing bodies of the world. Internationally the library helped to develop and actively supported UNESCO's program for coordination of

² *Inter-American Bibliographical Review*, 2:81, Summer 1942.

³ "International Subject Bibliographies." *Library Journal*, 19:226, July 1894.

⁴ "The Technical Processes and Library Service." In Chicago. University. Graduate Library School. Library Institute. *The Acquisition and Cataloging of Books*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1940, p. 19-20.

bibliographical services aimed at more effective universal control. At home, the library petitioned the Congress of the United States for funds to establish a pilot project in bibliographical planning for purposes of analyzing problems of bibliography; evaluating catalog techniques in relation to other bibliographical procedures; studying indexing and abstracting in relation to cataloging, and bibliography; and cooperating with librarians, scientific groups, and scholars in many fields in developing a cooperative plan of action.⁵ The funds were not allocated. Thus the previous practice of members of the staff devoting whatever time they could wrench from crowded schedules of required duties for the larger problems of bibliographical planning had to be continued.

The pooling of Library of Congress resources for planning with UNESCO's in 1947 has speeded up the work and enlisted the enthusiasm and support of bibliographical planners in all parts of the world. Nevertheless, progress has been discouragingly slow. In 1948, with the exception of a published preliminary case study of bibliographical resources for fundamental education, the work was largely exploratory. The UNESCO-Library of Congress Bibliographical Survey is continuing, however. The program for 1949 calls for preparation by the library of a working paper for discussion at meetings and conferences to be held in 1950. By agreement the paper shall include "as far as circumstances allow:

"(i) A factual statement on the present state of bibliographical services: (a) according to types of services; (b) according to subject fields.

"(ii) Objective analysis of the facts re-

⁵ "Justification of the Estimates of Appropriations Requested by the Library of Congress for Fiscal Year 1947." Appendix I. *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress for . . . 1946*. Washington, U. S. Govt. Printing Office, 1947, p. 348.

corded in (i), pointing out the significant problems.

"(iii) A review of current opinion as expressed by leading authorities or which reflect national or regional experience in so far as it will throw light on the possibility of gaining support for particular development plans.

"(iv) Action directives based on interpretation of the state of current opinion and the analysis of the factual situation.

"(v) The formulation of specific proposals for action."

It has become increasingly evident that before a satisfactory working paper can be produced some fundamental thinking must be done on the function, purposes, and requirements of bibliographical controls. This does not mean that a century of scholarly thinking and investigation about bibliographical problems must be set aside and that untiring search must be made for a new principle, mechanism, or organization which will be the panacea of our bibliographical ills. It does mean, as Fremont Rider emphasized in 1940,⁶ that every aspect of bibliographical work must be re-examined and re-assessed, that the most careful investigation of bibliographical needs must be made, and that the needs and the available controls must be rationalized. This may require new mechanisms and new approaches. It most certainly requires provisions for expert long-range planning. Jason Farradane rightly said:

"In surveying the whole field of publication, abstracting, indexing and the availability of scientific literature, the most obvious first conclusion is that the interrelation of the different facets of documentation is such that any rational approach must also be comprehensive; piecemeal ameliorations which are not derived from a general plan can only create worse confusion.

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"To those who fear the word 'planning'

⁶ "Alternatives for the Present Dictionary Card Catalog." *Op. cit.*, p. 144-45.

let it be said that true planning is not a dictatorship of the few, but the co-ordination of the initiative of the many. The domain of science is founded upon the free and complete dissemination of true knowledge. *If scientists cannot cooperate to set even their own house in order, then the world is indeed lost.*⁷

The Library of Congress Bibliographical Planning Group considers the task of preparing a working paper for meetings and conferences on bibliographical problems a challenge further to clarify thinking about world-wide bibliographical controls. They find the complexity of the issues involved increasing proportionally with the intensity of the scrutiny they are given. Some of these issues are accurately characterized from a British point of view by Miss Ditmas.

"The position had been reached where almost every scientist and technician agreed that something should be done but nobody could decide on the exact course of action or, if they agreed on the course of action, they could not put forward concrete proposals for implementing it. In the meanwhile, the welter of documents increased alarmingly and the flood was further swelled by the release of much hitherto confidential information accumulated during the war period both in the U.S.A. and in Great Britain. It began to be realized that the problem was not only that of recording the information so that the research worker might know what had been written, but also that of creating some device by which the required data might be located and selected from the records. Luckily in this particular respect the advance in mechanical apparatus makes it possible to operate large-scale schemes in spite of the prevailing shortage of manpower. Nevertheless the central problem remains; no machine can, by itself, make the initial record and classification and, unless methods of cooperation can be improved, a large amount of important

material will go unrecorded and be lost to sight. It does not help us that the problem has become acute at a time when, in Great Britain, the financial crisis makes the likelihood of government help for anything but the most utilitarian scheme more doubtful than ever. Still, perhaps there is hope."⁸

J. Alingh Prins, while president of F.I.D., pointed out in 1938 that "the main problems of documentation present themselves in all countries."⁹ He considered the first step toward a solution to be a national one. This is also the opinion of the Bibliographical Planning Group. Until a system for national bibliographical control which will provide both a listing of holdings and of works produced in a given country on a current basis together with a yet-to-be-determined minimum of subject indexing by every nation, large or small, at whatever stage of development, is devised, accepted and instituted, the major research libraries of the world will have to continue to provide as much bibliographical service as they possibly can to the entire world. They must also plan and stimulate the improvement of the bibliographical controls which they have to approximate as closely as possible placing the world's record within easy reach of all who come to them for help.

The work of the group thus begins with a twofold purpose: (1) to define and spell out a model system for national bibliographic control which any country can readily adapt to its peculiar needs; (2) to prepare plans for the coordination of bibliographical services in highly developed countries to insure as complete a control over recorded knowledge on a world-wide scale as is possible until such time as all

⁸ Ditmas, E. M. R. "Co-ordination of Information; a Survey of Schemes Put Forward in the Last Fifty Years." *Journal of Documentation*, 3:220, March 1948.

⁹ Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaus *Report of Proceedings of the Fifteenth Conference, 1938*. London. p. 27.

⁷ "The Scientific Approach to Documentation." In *Royal Society of London. Scientific Information Conference, 1948*. . . . *Report and papers Submitted*, p. 422-423.

nations can effectively contribute to complete world coverage.

Staff and Procedure

The Librarian of Congress, Dr. Evans, on February 14 called the first of a series of weekly meetings to discuss problems inherent in fulfilment of these purposes. The group which is identified as the UNESCO-L.C. Bibliographical Planning Group originally consisted of Dr. Evans, Verner W. Clapp, chief assistant librarian of Congress, Dr. Frederick Wagman, director of processing, Library of Congress, Ralph Shaw, librarian of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Library, and Mrs. Kathrine Murra of the Library of Congress bibliographical staff who serves as executive secretary for the group. Dan M. Lacy, assistant director for acquisitions of the Library of Congress' Processing Department, has since been invited to attend.

The 11 meetings held to date have been concerned with the following: (1) Defining concepts, problems, and terms; (2) Establishing priorities among the large number of problems to be dealt with in investigating bibliographical services so that those which are both central to the subject and most needed will receive first consideration; (3) Identifying the uses to which bibliographies are put with a view to isolating their weaknesses and shortcomings for further study; (4) Considering the levels of use, need, and service which would accommodate all types of investigators using all types of approaches to their subjects, regardless of the cultural and economic status of the society in which they may be working.

At the same time that this work progresses in the group meetings, the executive secretary is devoting as much time as possible to preparing factual statements on the present state of bibliographical services. Her work

was augmented beginning the first of June by an additional research bibliographer. Experts for particular areas of the over-all subjects will be selected to make special reports when the time is propitious from the standpoint of identification and definition of problems requiring such assistance.

Current National Bibliography

The desirability of each country having a current national bibliography is generally accepted and has been an approved resolution of each session of UNESCO's general conference and of the report on the UNESCO program made by the Preparatory Commission. The substance and nature of such a bibliography has not been described. Van Hoesen's statement in 1928 is accurate today. "National bibliography is as difficult to define and as loosely used as most other terms in enumerative bibliography."¹⁰ Neither what is desirable nor what may be feasible in given circumstances has been presented for guidance or as a basis for further research. Certain characteristics are generally assumed for such a bibliography but are not necessarily either the only characteristics or the ideal ones. For example, is the aim of the UNESCO resolution to have an author or a title or a subject listing of all books or a combination *produced* in a given country, or all books *held* in a given country? Shall the list include archival materials, films, maps, sound recordings and other materials? What is to be done about analytics, particularly for periodicals? Is the current national bibliography to be a complete listing or a selective listing? May it not be advisable to strive for selective listing only for some countries, and for complete listing in others?

Group thinking at the moment has

¹⁰ Van Hoesen, Henry B., and Frank K. Walter. *Bibliography, Practical, Enumerative and Historical*. New York, Scribners, 1928, p. 209.

reached the following tentative conclusions regarding current national bibliography:

1. The ultimate aim of bibliographical control first on a national basis and then by combination for the world as a whole is to provide complete listing of recorded knowledge both currently and retrospectively by author and *by subject*¹¹ on at least two levels, though not necessarily in two parts: (a) the level of scholarship; and (b) the level of popularization. These categories are arbitrary distinctions and at their outer limits blend into each other. They are, nevertheless, valid distinctions. In the first, the subject listing would not only contain original and scholarly treatises but would use the technical terminology of the subject. The second would use the layman's terminology and be a listing of what might be called "watered down" treatment of subjects. For each of these levels there could be any number of gradations or subdivisions depending on the uses to which the list would be put and the volume of titles to be included.

Some consideration has been given to creation of an international agency to produce subject bibliography. Agreement has not been reached on the feasibility, from a technical standpoint, of having such a body. World subject bibliography produced in national fragments, no matter how detailed an international code is used, appears to be a highly unsatisfactory method. Confining subject analysis to an international agency which would receive one copy of each book, pamphlet and periodical from each country would require an organization of unattainable size, efficiency and costliness.

The most appealing consideration at the moment is an arrangement by which each

country would issue a current complete national bibliography by author plus whatever subject analysis in whatever form best suited *its* respective needs. Countries would be encouraged by UNESCO to follow an international code. In addition a copy of each book, pamphlet and periodical title, together with a descriptive entry and notation of subject analysis made by the issuing country, would be forwarded to a central agency for subject analysis for adaptation and use in whatever *international* subject bibliographies had been decided upon. A permanent international board for standardization of rules for subject analysis would probably be needed in such an agency.

2. Before the ultimate aim can be realized, there must be a complete listing by author of the production of recorded knowledge for each country on a current basis.¹²

3. Before number 2 can be achieved, all effort should be directed to procuring a complete listing of books, pamphlets and periodical titles produced in each country on a current basis.

PRODUCER:

This not not necessarily mean that each country should list its own production currently. There are areas of the world which could combine operations so that books and periodicals produced in each of a group of countries might be sent for more efficient listing to a regional center. For example, it has been found that the collections of the Library of Congress for the production of certain countries are more nearly complete than any current national bibliographies issued in those countries. In such circumstances it would serve the producing country and the rest of the world if a coopera-

¹¹ Ditmas. *Op. cit.*, p. 220. "It began to be realized that the problem was not only that of recording the information so that the research worker might know what had been written, but also that of creating some device by which the required data might be located and selected from the records."

¹² ". . . a scientific reporting system of any kind presupposes the existence of an adequate means of finding the items to be reported." Smith, Bruce L. *Possible Types of Reporting Systems*, Chicago, University of Chicago, Social Sciences Division, 1949, (Exploratory memorandum No. 5), p. 5.

tive arrangement for listing could be worked out.

SELECTIVE VS. COMPLETE LISTING:

The group is well aware that some countries may not be able to produce current complete national bibliography either because their resources in technical staff, money, and organization are limited, or because they have such a tremendous volume of books and periodicals that it is almost impossible to channel all titles for listing. In the former case, that of the less developed countries, it would be better to have a representative listing of their books and periodicals on a current basis than no listing. The practical guidance currently given by UNESCO (LBA/II, April 1949) for production of select national bibliographies is an important first step. A listing of all books and periodicals which may reach the compiler regardless of quality would usually be misleading and of less value than a carefully selected listing. If neither a complete nor a selective listing by the producing country is possible, UNESCO may be able to provide liaison for international cooperation to produce regional listings.

A different attitude prevails regarding selective listing for highly developed countries. The group feels every effort should be made to have complete listing, and that studies should be conducted and plans made to overcome whatever difficulties now prevent production of currently complete national bibliographies for such highly developed countries.

FORM:

The form of the current national listing of books and periodical titles will vary according to the volume of literature produced by the individual country. In countries issuing as much as the United States and Great Britain, for example, it may be

desirable to issue the current national bibliography in a number of integrated fragments. The nature of these fragments has commanded much of the group's attention. Shall the fragments be set up by use to which the material listed will be put? By issuing body? By subject? For example, shall we have a trade list, a documents list, a list of books on natural science and one on social science? Each such possibility has desirable and undesirable aspects which have as yet not been sufficiently investigated and analyzed to permit a final recommendation.

ARRANGEMENT:

Category three above refers to a listing by author. Even though the ultimate aim of bibliographical control is to establish subject control of recorded knowledge, the group is of the opinion that author listing is an essential prerequisite for either complete or selective subject bibliography. The group is not certain that the current complete national listing should ever be arranged by subject. Three serious drawbacks to subject arrangement have been considered. The first pertains to the problem of cumulation; the second to the utilization of each national bibliography as a segment of current complete world bibliography; and the third is that some materials, such as fiction and annual reports, do not require subject listing unless they are analyzed. Analysis is not now considered by the group to be an essential function of the current complete national bibliography of books and periodical titles.

With respect to cumulations, it is felt that knowledge of an attitude toward the subjects change so much in the course of even a decade that subject headings and classification schedules become obsolete relatively quickly. Fremont Rider pointed this out with respect to classification nearly

forty years ago saying: "Divide and coordinate as carefully as you may, when a classification becomes close, its minutiae are found, in twenty years, perhaps in five years, to be hopelessly awry."¹³ The original subject heading or classification might bury the material for later users. Since establishment and maintenance of a current complete national bibliography will doubtless look toward, and the group believes *should* look toward, cumulation at intervals, the handicap of atrophied subject headings or classification must be anticipated.

Experience in cooperative production of international bibliography has given convincing evidence that no two subject catalogers assign headings or classify in the same way. Therefore, even if an international list of subject headings or scheme of classification were accepted and used, the problem of a world cumulation of national bibliographies at some future time would present problems of unification and standardization which would be extremely costly to handle—if they could be handled satisfactorily, which is doubtful.

ENTRY:

The elements which should comprise the entry for each title included in the current national bibliography have also been considered. There is agreement that an entry should describe (not catalog) the material sufficiently to permit identifying it in the world of literature without redescription. All entries in all fragments of the current national bibliography should be in a form and arrangement which would facilitate subject control at whatever time it might be undertaken.

Agreement has not been reached regarding indication of location for each title. In

¹³ "Alternatives for the Present Dictionary Card Catalog." In Chicago. University. Graduate Library School. Library Institute, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

the first place the precision with which location should be given cannot be determined. Shall publisher suffice? Or shall symbols for libraries having copies constitute required information on location? When a list is current, identification of publisher and place of publication might be sufficient. However, in a very short time some of the titles listed will be out of print which would make symbols for collections in which the title might be found highly useful information.

Many arguments pro and con can be mustered for including the price of each title listed and no agreement has been reached on this point. In general, the question of how the bibliography will be used is the major stumbling block. Until more research has been done on this problem adequate recommendations regarding the type of entry will not be forthcoming.

ANNOTATIONS:

Inclusion of annotations likewise depends on the use for which the list is prepared. In general, it is felt that any list will have to have annotations when the title does not adequately describe the material for purposes of identification.

Use of Bibliographical Tools and Services

One of the most frustrating problems of bibliographical planning is determining how and why specific bibliographical controls such as indexes, bibliographies, abstracting journals, and the like are used. It seems almost too obvious to state that the uses and the users of a tool, or service, should be carefully considered when determining the nature of that tool or service. Yet bibliographical instruments of impressive erudition, representing tremendous outlays of time, effort, and money have withered and died because of inability to respond to the needs of intended users. Whether this in-

dicates lack of data on how tools are used, or failure, for a variety of reasons, to apply available data to the building of the tools or services is not easily ascertainable. There is little doubt, for example, that the demise of the *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature* was largely the result of its failure to provide the service which the scientists and librarians who were its market wanted. Wants of potential consumers were investigated to some extent prior to the establishment of the catalog but evidently not given sufficient weight in moulding the service.¹⁴ A case study of the *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature* to determine its weaknesses and strengths as an instrument of bibliographical control and as evidence of the weaknesses and strengths of the international body which produced it is in progress and will be a part of the working paper.¹⁵

The need of research on the subject of use has long been recognized and frequently advocated.¹⁶ That the conscientious attempts to provide factual data have, for the most part, resulted in reporting opinions rather than objective measurement, is more an indication of the complexity of the problem of securing such data than an indictment of the studies made.

Miron Burgin, formerly editor of the

¹⁴ "William Warner Bishop said: "The plain speaking of the few librarians who were given any chance to be heard between 1895 and 1900 was utterly disregarded." *Science*, 56:214, Aug. 25, 1922.

¹⁵ References selected from a rich literature on the subject follow:

Carus, J. Victor. "On the International Catalogue of Scientific Literature of the Royal Society." (Translated from the *Zoologische Anzeiger*, No. 566). *Science*, 9:825-835, June 16, 1899.

[Exchange of correspondence between the Royal Society of London and the University Council of Harvard University] *Science*, 1:182-186, Feb. 15, 1895.

International Catalogue of Scientific Literature. International Conference, 4th London, 1920. *Report of the Proceedings* . . . London, 1920. 104 p.

"Report from Columbia University." *Science*, 10: 165-174, Aug. 11, 1890.

Ward, Henry B. [Review of First Annual Issue on Zoology] *Science*, 21:147-150, Jan. 27, 1905.

¹⁶ William M. Randall, formerly Professor of Library Science, Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, said in 1940: ". . . we know a great deal about books and their characteristics, we know little about book users and their characteristics." *The Acquisition and Cataloging of Books*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Handbook of Latin American Studies, said:

"No survey of what may be termed the market for bibliographical aids has been made. No sustained effort has been made to define even approximately the ramifications of the various categories of existing or future needs. No program or set of desiderata has been formulated. Yet such a program should be of great service to bibliographers, for it will help to direct our efforts into proper channels. The program should not be rigidly defined, and it should be periodically revised to meet changes in our attitudes and interest."¹⁷

A number of surveys are currently in progress. Three with which the group at the Library of Congress is keeping in touch are those conducted by Professor Bernal¹⁸ for scientific literature as used in large laboratories and institutions in Britain; by Dr. Smith¹⁹ for the social science literature under auspices of the University of Chicago; and by Dr. Gray²⁰ for physics literature for the American Institute of Physics. Preliminary reports from these surveys support the same three reasons for using bibliographical tools and services identified by Holmstrom in 1938:

"(a) The ensuring of continual awareness, by an individual, of current developments in some field of science.

"(b) The maintenance of a personal collection of data at the user's finger tips to serve both as material for his specific researches and as a background for his day to day thoughts on technical matters.

"(c) The organization of a formal 'literature search' to collect and collate all

¹⁷ *Inter-American Bibliographical Review*, 2:84, Summer 1942.

¹⁸ Bernal, J. D. "Preliminary Analysis of Pilot Questionnaire on the Use of Scientific Literature." In Royal Society of London. Scientific Information Conference, 1948. *Report and Papers* . . . London, The Society, 1948. Paper no. 46, p. 589-637.

¹⁹ Smith, Bruce L., *op. cit.*

²⁰ Gray, Dwight E. *Study of Physics Abstracting*. Washington, American Institute of Physics, April 30, 1949. 10p. (*Monthly Progress Report* 8. AIP/45: PR-8).

the relevant knowledge on some given topic."²¹

Librarians, publishers and others are aware of levels of use without having the desired body of facts to prepare a research report on it. It is recognized that a scholar seeks the original research in his special field; is not handicapped by the technical language used in describing it; desires the primary source and will not substitute an abstract if it is possible to get the original. On the other hand, the same scholar seeking information in a field tangential to his, often wants a highly selected bibliography of the more important contributions, summary reviews of the literature, or even popularizations of the literature of the subject. There is an almost infinite number of uses and users, and multitudinous levels of interest, competence to use tools, educational attainment, location with respect to centers of recorded knowledge, etc. Some work has been done in connection with the survey to categorize levels of use. Research is continuing.

Opinion thus far reflected in current surveys indicates the widest variety of forms deemed satisfactory to respond to these uses. Some want unannotated bibliographies; some annotated; some abstracts both informative and indicative depending upon the material abstracted and the way the investigator wants to use it; and some bibliographical reviews. Often the specific investigator wants some of each form so that particular kinds of material will be handled to his satisfaction.

Duplication

Very closely related to an appraisal of the use made of various tools and services is the problem of duplication among them.

²¹ Holmstrom, J. Edwin. "Bibliographical Tools from the Point of View of the User." In International Conference on Documentation. 14th, Oxford and London, 1938. *Transactions*. The Hague, 1:C 30-C 33, 1938.

Because of the cost of providing a bibliography, indexing or abstracting service, or annual review, only a limited number of publications have been listed, analyzed or reviewed in each. Because a service is established, for the most part, with a different clientele in mind from that sought by any other service it frequently happens that some of the same publications are covered as are covered by an existing service, either because the publications are the best on a given subject, the most popular, or the most accessible to the editors and the subscribers, or a combination of one or more of these factors. Bibliographical planners in surveying existing services have frequently pointed out the apparent wastefulness of having the same publication covered by several services while other valuable publications are not included in any.

Commercial publishers of such services are perhaps more sensitive to, and, therefore, keep better informed about the use made of the services they publish than others. In the absence of adequate research it is to them that we must turn for information. It is from one of them that a very clear statement regarding use has come. The reply²² of the H. W. Wilson Company to charges of duplication of indexing resulting in duplication of fees between its various indexes in 1940 indirectly threw considerable light on the use made of those indexes. Since the periodicals included in its indexes are selected by the subscribers, their reasons for wanting the same periodical covered by more than one index revealed the way the indexes are used. It was pointed out that a number of periodicals include articles on more than one subject field. Furthermore, a number of periodicals are used by the general investigator for a wide variety of reasons and also by the

²² "On 'Duplication' of Indexing; a Statement of Facts." *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 15:170-171, October 1940.

specialist in a subject field. Such periodicals therefore must be indexed for both types of users, and this is done by including them in the general index such as *Readers' Guide* and also in the appropriate special index—*Agriculture Index, Education Index* or another. Librarians in larger libraries reported that the indexes were often housed far apart—the special ones in the special libraries and the general ones in the main reading room. The specialist was averse to going to another part of the building for the general material related to his field included in the general index. On the other hand, the general reader had difficulty finding the articles on a special subject in the physically remote and more intricately divided special subject index. The Wilson Company at the time this statement was made objected to the term "duplication" preferring "overlapping" as the more accurate.

The difference between the problems presented by duplication or overlapping of publication and duplication of preparation must

be kept in mind at all times. There is little data to contradict the conclusion reached by a special conference on scientific abstracting convened by ASLIB in 1931 that overlapping in publication "may be unavoidable in practice, and, indeed, may well be an essential factor in the provision of efficient services."²³ The same group thought that the overlapping in preparation, might, in some cases, be eliminated almost entirely by collaboration in the examination of the literature and in the preparation, and even checking and editing, of the abstracts themselves.

1950 Conference

The group has not developed in detail recommendations as to the nature and purposes of meetings and conferences which might be held in 1950 to discuss world bibliographical problems.

²³ Eldridge, A. A. "Scientific and Technical Abstracting: A Report on the ASLIB Enquiry." In *Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux. Report of Proceedings . . . Ninth Conference . . . 1932*. London, 1932, p. 86.

Japan's New National Library

(Continued from page 387)

wholesale duplication of collections already available in the government system. At the same time the branch libraries will continue to be built around their specialized subject interests and will not attempt to acquire general or unrelated collections. Other recommendations, some of which are now being put into effect, were to make cataloging and classification practices in departmental libraries uniform with those of the Diet Library; to study the possibilities of centralized cataloging; to prepare a union catalog of the holdings of departmental libraries; and to make books freely available on interlibrary loans among the libraries in the government organization. If these policies are followed through,

Japan will eventually have a system of government libraries similar to that of our own federal government in Washington.

Conclusion

After working with the Japanese for several months, one could not avoid a feeling of considerable optimism about the future of the National Diet Library. There is a widespread desire and determination among the Japanese themselves to have it succeed, and much interest in it among Military Government officials. Given reasonably favorable conditions during the next generation or two the Diet Library should become one of the important national libraries of the world.