

# Official Checklists and Indexes Versus Cataloging of Government Publications: A Symposium

THE FOLLOWING four papers, in addition to an introduction by Jerome K. Wilcox, were presented at the meeting of the American Library Association Committee on Public Documents, Cleveland, Ohio, July 19, 1950. The January 1951 issue of *College and Research Libraries* carried a symposium concerned with various aspects of federal depository libraries and the organization of government publications.

By JEROME K. WILCOX

## Introductory Statement

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LIBRARIES today, especially college, university and research libraries, are faced with two very serious space problems. First, there is the ever-increasing book, periodical and document collection. Secondly, there is the growth of the public card catalog with its supporting shelflist and official catalog. While the latter is the lesser space problem, it constitutes, annually, a substantial item in every library budget. In the past it was common practice of catalogers, with or without encouragement from the reference staff, to place analytics in the card catalog for the subject contents of any new subject bibliography. In the public document field the Library of Congress has for years been preparing analytical cards for such series as the Office of Education Bulletins and the Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletins. All of this analysis has been undertaken without much, if any, thought given to the possibility of coordinating substantial subject bibliography with the card catalog rather than systematically adding the contents to the card catalog.

Further, we have for years been led to believe that every bibliographical effort including the card catalog must be in dictionary catalog order; that is, author, title, and subject all in one alphabet. At the same time the card catalog itself has been built up as a

bibliographical tool, perfect in all bibliographical detail, rather than merely a simple index to the library's book collection. With private and public funds becoming tighter yearly, we are now forced to reconsider many of the practices of the past. What can be sacrificed and still not decrease the efficiency of the library and its card catalog?

Unfortunately, in spite of our dictionary card catalog and its detailed subject analytics, we still are forced to have larger reference staffs, and in the larger university libraries, card catalog advisers are being added as well. Maybe the card catalog should never have been more than a simple index to the library's collection. In any case, however, we can begin real economies in coordinating subject and author bibliography with the card catalog. Further, we should encourage and take the lead in seeing that adequate periodical author and subject bibliography are prepared in book form. Unfortunately, whenever bibliography is published in dictionary catalog form, the cost per copy is generally high. Public Affairs Information service, for example, is \$100 per year, and the H. W. Wilson Company's indexes on the so-called service basis cost individual libraries anywhere from about \$8.00 per copy to over \$500 a copy annually. In the government publications field, we have at least two ventures which can be readily coordinated with the card catalog even though they are not in strictly

dictionary form. The fact that they are not places their annual subscription price in the realm of being financed by any library. They are the *U.S. Government Publications Monthly Catalog* issued by the U.S. Superintendent of Documents at \$3.00 per year, and the *United Nations Documents Index* issued

monthly by the Documents Index Unit of Library Services of the United Nations at \$7.50 per year. The following papers will discuss the adequacy of these indexes and others in four areas: United States Federal, United States State, Foreign and International Organization publishing.

By ISABEL H. JACKSON

## United States Federal Publications

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**S**URVEYS SHOW that official indexes can and are being used as substitutes for detailed cataloging by many depository libraries. That the indexes leave something to be desired in scope and content at the present time is not to be denied. However, it seems that until more people become more vocal in their support of central indexing as standard practice we shall not have an all-purpose catalog and index. If we could reason that financial support of an exhaustive documents catalog would be cheaper than fully cataloging publications independently in more than 500 depository libraries, we will be on our way to greater operational economy coupled with wider use of material.

During the past 15 years at the University of California Library, Berkeley, we have made sufficient use of indexes as substitutes for full cataloging to feel that the principle is sound and that economies are effected without detriment to the usefulness of the collection. Although indexes had always been used to amplify the agency listing which is our only treatment of unbound documents, the first deliberate substitution of indexes for full cataloging was a by-product of a library-wide survey made in the 1930's. At that time the library discontinued making analytics for serial publications adequately covered by printed indexes. The reference services were consulted before such action was taken and agreed that the United States documents titles, mainly in the field of agriculture, were adequately covered in official government indexes or periodical indexes.

A few years later we applied the criterion of adequate indexing as opposed to full cata-

logging to the large backlog of unbound Congressional hearings. After study it was concluded that they could be bound in series by committee and be made readily available through the Senate and House indexes and the *Monthly Catalog*. We had to abandon our original idea of keying the bound collection to the Senate Index of Congressional Committee Hearings by call number because of the delay in its publication. However we find that the author card in the Documents Department catalog and the official indexes provide an adequate approach to the collection. When 30 or 40 volumes are bound for each Congress, each containing an average of six or more hearings, there is no need to argue the economy of this method over the former one of fully cataloging and classifying even one third that number.

Currently we are resorting to an early library practice of making up miscellaneous volumes of documents, much as our predecessors used to bind composite volumes of pamphlets on this or that subject. In our case, however, we are using this device mainly as a method of dealing with a number of defunct agencies whose entire output was small and more economically handled as a unit. The volumes are bound with table of contents, given a general classification number and cataloged briefly. The call number for the volume is added to the document department author cards for the individual documents, and the official indexes are relied on for specific subject approach. Here again the economy in treatment is apparent.

One obvious criticism is that the innocent user of the general library catalog is penalized by the economies just outlined. An equally obvious and rather pessimistic reply is that he is cheated in any case if he depends on the general catalog for the last word on

any subject as the catalog cannot possibly be as up to date, or as comprehensive as are the variety of indexes of which it is our business to make him aware.

Seriously, though, there are two fundamental principles which must operate in the use of such short cuts and substitutions as have been described. In the first place, cards appearing in the general library catalog for government publications given special treatment must refer the user to any specialized indexes and catalogs which describe their contents more fully. For example, our cards for hearings and miscellaneous bound volumes are marked "For contents consult Documents Department Catalog." Similarly, form cards should also appear in the general catalog under broad subject headings referring to existing subject indexes of government publications.

Secondly, all service points must be made as keenly aware of government indexes as complementary to the general catalog as they are of the *Readers' Guide*, *P.A.I.S.* and other periodical indexes. This will require concerted effort because there seems to be a tendency in many places to by-pass such in-

dexes. Librarians not familiar with the varied content of documents don't seem to think of them as possible sources of information except in the most obvious cases.

Historically we have been brought up on the tradition that the library must display all of its resources in a general catalog for the benefit of all users. Practically we are reaching the point where we are no longer able to do this for space and finances will not keep pace with the output of print. Substantial evidence of a trend toward indexes as an approach to resources is provided by the new *Subject Catalog of the Library of Congress*.

Government documents offer an excellent area for fuller exploitation of this index approach to resources. A group such as this could perform no greater service for its members and for libraries in general than to codify its own indexing needs and present a program for more comprehensive coverage of the government documents field. Such plans take time and money. So do cataloging and classification. In the long run we might find that the large scale endeavor would be the cheaper as well as the more effective instrument.

By RUTH HARDIN

## United States State Publications

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FOR MANY YEARS thought has been given to the question of whether government documents should be cataloged in the same manner as other publications. If they are treated differently, to what extent can the printed government indexes and checklists take the place of detailed analytics in the card catalog? This paper deals solely with this problem as it relates to official state publications.

There has been practically no literature on this subject. As a guide to the state checklists currently issued the writer has depended almost entirely upon "The Status of State Document Bibliography," by Gwendolyn Lloyd, in *The Library Quarterly*, July 1948.

Reactions of some librarians in the western, central and eastern states who have dealt extensively with state publications were gained

through correspondence or personal interviews. Contacts were made with the following libraries: California State Library, Columbia University Library, Joint Reference Library, University of Chicago Library, Chicago Public Library, Northwestern University Library, University of Illinois Library and the Illinois State Library. The conclusions of these librarians were very similar to those already arrived at by the writer.

Specific findings of the survey are attached to this paper. A table of checklists of state publications currently issued by 19 states has been prepared with information as to frequency of issue, cumulation, index, bibliographical detail and form of publication. Checklists with varying degrees of merit are currently issued by the following states: Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washing-

# Checklists of State Publications Currently Issued

|  | Frequency        | Cumulation             | Index          | Bibl. detail <sup>1</sup> | Form <sup>2</sup> |
|--|------------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Arkansas (University library)<br>Checklist of Arkansas state publications received by the University of Arkansas Library   | S-a <sup>3</sup> | n <sup>4</sup>         | n              | c <sup>1</sup>            | m                 |
| California (Printing Div., Documents Sect.)<br>California state publications, quarterly listing  | Q                | annual<br>(Nov. issue) | Q and A<br>yes | c <sup>1</sup>            | p                 |
| Florida (University library)<br>Short-title checklist of official Florida publications received by University of Florida Library   | Bi-m             | n                      | n              | c <sup>1</sup>            | m                 |
| Illinois (State library)<br>Illinois state documents received by the State Library (in <i>Illinois Libraries</i> )   | Q                | n                      | n              | inc.                      | p                 |
| Indiana (State library)<br>Indiana documents at the State Library (in <i>Library Occurrent</i> )   | Q                | n                      | n              | c                         | p                 |
| Kansas (Traveling libraries commission)<br>Selected list of documents received in Kansas State Library   | Irr.             | n                      | n              | c                         | p                 |
| Louisiana (Secretary of state)<br>List . . . of the public documents of Louisiana distributed to depository libraries  | ?                | S-a                    | n              | c <sup>1</sup>            | m                 |
| Maine (State library)<br>Checklist of State of Maine publications received by the Maine State Library  | Q                | Irr.<br>(3 or 4 years) | Inc.           | c                         | m                 |
| Michigan (State library)<br>Michigan documents (in <i>Michigan Library News</i> )  | Bi-m             | n                      | n              | inc.                      | p                 |
| New Hampshire (State library)<br>Checklist of New Hampshire state departments publications (Supp. to Biennial report)  | Bien.            | n                      | n              | c                         | m                 |
| New York (State library)<br>Checklist of official publications of the state of New York  | M                | a                      | n              | c                         | m                 |
| Ohio (State library)<br>Ohio state publications: documents issued by state agencies and received by the Ohio State Library   | Q                | n                      | n              | c                         | m                 |
| Oklahoma (State library)<br>Checklist of state documents (in <i>Bulletin</i> )   | Q                | n                      | n              | c                         | p                 |
| Texas (Library and historical commission)<br>Documents distributed . . . Checklist . . . (in <i>Biennial Report</i> )  | Bien.            | n                      | n              | inc.                      | p                 |
| Vermont (Free public library dept.)<br>Probably incomplete listing of state publications included in New books added to Vermont State Library (in <i>Bulletin</i> ). Partial list also in Biennial report of State purchasing agent. | Q                | n                      | n              | c                         | p                 |
| Virginia (State library)<br>Checklist of Virginia state publications (in <i>Bulletin of Virginia State Library</i> )   | a                | n                      | a              | c                         | p                 |
| Washington (State library)<br>Washington State publications received at Washington State Library (in <i>Library News Bulletin</i> )  | Q                | n                      | n              | c                         | p                 |
| West Virginia (Dept. of archives & Hist. Lib.)<br>Short title check list of West Virginia State publications   | a                | n                      | n              | inc.                      | m                 |
| Wisconsin (State historical society)<br>Wisconsin public documents   | S-a              | n                      | n              | c                         | p                 |

<sup>1</sup> Complete or sufficiently complete detail for ordering publications.

<sup>2</sup> Mimeographed or near-print.

<sup>3</sup> Semiannual.

<sup>4</sup> None.

ton, West Virginia and Wisconsin. An analysis of the information acquired shows 11 printed checklists and eight either mimeo-

graphed or in some near-print form; only four of these are cumulated and three are indexed. The frequency of issue varies as

## Statistics Compiled in California State Library

|               | Items in State<br>Checklists | Mimeo-<br>graphed<br>Items<br>listed | Items in<br>L.C.<br>Checklist<br>of State<br>Publica-<br>tions | L.C.<br>Mimeo.<br>Items | Time Lag <sup>1</sup>                         |
|---------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|
| Arkansas      | 76<br>Jan.-June 1949         | 13                                   | 21   | 4                       | Rec'd 2-3 mos. after<br>end of period covered |
| California    | 481<br>Jan.-Mar. 1949        | 306                                  | 109  | 19                      | 2-5 mos.                                      |
| Florida       | 79<br>Jan.-Feb. 1949         | 19                                   | 24   | 3                       | Rec'd 1 mo. after end<br>of period covered    |
| Illinois      | 108<br>Dec. 1949-Feb. 1950   | n.i. <sup>2</sup>                    | 98   | 34                      | 2 mos.  |
| Indiana       | 153<br>Nov. 1949-Jan. 1950   | 43                                   | 62   | 18                      | 2 mos.  |
| Michigan      | 54<br>Jan. 1950              | 3                                    | 30   | 5                       | 2 mos.  |
| New Hampshire | 296<br>(1946-48)             | 35                                   | 152  | 12                      |   |
| New York      | 135                          | n.i.                                 | 30   | 4                       | 1 mo.   |
| Ohio          | 34                           | 6                                    | 38   | 19                      | 1 mo.   |
| Oklahoma      | 73<br>Jan.-Mar. 1948         | 16                                   | 47   | 5                       | Questioned                                    |
| Vermont       | 10<br>Mar. 1948              | —                                    | 21   | 8                       | Questioned                                    |
| Virginia      | 438                          | 28                                   | 234  | 14                      | 1 yr.   |
| West Virginia | 175<br>1948-49               | 4                                    | 49   | 9                       | Questioned                                    |
| Washington    | 136<br>Jan.-Apr. 1949        | 49                                   | 42   | 19                      | 2 mos.  |
| Wisconsin     | 220<br>Oct. 1948-Mar. 1949   | 78                                   | 87   | 35                      | Rec'd 6 mos. after end<br>of period covered   |

<sup>1</sup> Used coverage of list, as stated in title, e.g. Illinois State Documents Received by State Library (date); otherwise dates contained within list as contrasted with date received by us.

<sup>2</sup> Not indicated.

follows: biennial (2); annual (2); semi-annual (2); quarterly (8); bimonthly (2); monthly (1); irregularly (1). Bibliographical detail used in the checklists for ordering publications ranges from complete or sufficiently complete to very incomplete. Eleven are issued as separate checklists and eight are included in other publications.

The writer is indebted to Evelyn Huston for her excellent detailed report on her findings in regard to state checklists in the Cali-

fornia State Library. Statistics compiled by her and attached to this paper compare the number of printed and mimeographed items in the state checklists and in the Library of Congress' *Monthly Checklist of State Publications* for the month of January 1950 as a basis for comparison when possible. While this comparison, according to Miss Huston, was inaccurate as such, it did prove that the Library of Congress list contained fewer items than the state checklists. The time lag

in receipt of items as indicated by the various checklists for the period covered and in the date of receipt by the California State Library was from one month to one year.

Facing the state checklist situation squarely one is aware of the incomplete coverage of states and of the unequal value of the lists issued currently due to scant bibliographical detail. Cumulation of issues and indexes are infrequent. There are, sometimes, gaps in the historical coverage of a state. And last but not least many of the present lists are issued in such impermanent form that there is no definite assurance of their continuance over a long period.

In the libraries consulted state checklists are used primarily to identify a particular title, to establish a corporate entry and to order publications. Requests for state publications are usually by subject and the use of unofficial indexes which include state publications, such as *Agriculture Index*, *P.A.I.S.*, *Education Index*, etc., is more satisfactory than the use of brief state checklists. At present the state checklists merely supplement the card catalog and would in no sense of the word be adequate substitutes for detailed analytics. Selective cataloging of the more important state publications should be done if possible. If no cataloging is done reference costs increase for the time required for search is great. In the Joint Reference Library, Mrs. Lucile Keck reports that the

particular emphasis on subjects often eliminates the use of author entries in their catalog, and if detailed analytics are found in *P.A.I.S.* they are often omitted in their card catalog.

To a great extent for the subject approach the state document worker must, in addition to the use of unofficial indexes, depend upon the annual index of the *Monthly Checklist of State Publications* issued by the Library of Congress. As previously stated the *Monthly Checklist* is very incomplete in coverage of items for all states. The streamlined annual index does not include sufficient detail to identify readily a specific reference. More subject headings are also needed to cover all items completely. The 1948 and 1949 indexes were not received until June of the following year, which necessitates frequent search through the 12 monthly issues.

In conclusion, since only 19 states currently issue brief checklists the following recommendation is suggested for the improvement of the use of state publications: Concentrate upon the suggested expansion and improvement of the Library of Congress' *Monthly Checklist of State Publications*; namely, by more complete coverage in collecting items from all states; by indexing monthly issues; by a more detailed annual index; and by assigning each item a number for more ready reference.

By VIOLET A. CABEEN

## Foreign Government Publications

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THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL sources available for consultation when one undertakes to acquire the publications of foreign governments are far more numerous and varied in form than the official checklists and catalogs which can be found to implement document collections.

For example, there is a considerable number of periodical titles which those who acquire foreign documents find it necessary to examine regularly and systematically for notices of important government publications. There are national trade bibliographies of 12 countries, other than the United States, which

contain important listings of their official documents. There is a comparatively neglected but prolific source of great value, namely the accessions lists and lists of books cataloged issued by libraries attached to government offices and private institutions which are concerned with international affairs in their many ramifications.

The importance of these three groups is about evenly weighted on the acquisition and reference sides and with a well-organized collection they can be made to effect cataloging economies. Although they can never take the place of systematic catalogs and checklists of official publications, they go far in opening up the resources of a collection.

### *Processing Treatment*

The documents whose titles are found in these bibliographical aids fall into the easily recognizable categories of government publications, and lend themselves to the following conventional processing treatments: (1) listing and checking of serial titles including numbered monographic series in a visible index file, with entry under name of country and issuing body. Such titles need only brief descriptive cataloging records in the public catalog; (2) descriptive and subject cataloging for the more important monographs and sets; (3) incorporation of pamphlets in files which offer a subject approach; and (4) collation and brief listing of files of releases and other ephemeral materials serial in nature which are discarded when their usefulness is over.

Whether these publications which are not regarded as ephemeral are to be classified and shelved partly by country and partly by subject, or exclusively by the latter, is a matter which may offer occasion for lively debate.

What one should try to remember is that provided one can read, or get help in reading the languages which are represented in a collection of foreign documents, the work of arranging, recording and using them is relatively simple because of the orderly characteristics of the material.

It is fortunate for the document librarian that so few foreign governments share the enthusiasm of the United States Government for the mimeograph and the photo offset process.

### *Value of Official Checklists*

There are 11 outstanding lists of varying frequencies published by foreign governments in which a systematic attempt is made to list their printed documents.

Those which present the best solution to the problem posed for this paper, *i.e.* ways and means by which to reduce the bulk of analytical and subject cataloging, are the ones produced by the United Kingdom. In fact we have come to rely so much on the *Daily List* of the Stationery Office, which is followed by the *Monthly List* with its subject index, and the *Annual Consolidated List* containing the same feature, that we tend to regard these as the standards by which all other lists shall be judged. There are besides these

just mentioned no less than 50 Sectional Catalogues of Government Publications issued by H.M.S.O. which offer a broad background of subject and government author approach.

The *Lists of Publications* for Northern Ireland issued by H.M.S.O. in Belfast are valued more as checklists than otherwise.

For the colonies and protectorates in the frame of the British Empire the current list of outstanding importance is issued by the Reference Section of the Information Department of the Colonial Office. There are also the shorter *Lists of Publications Received by the Crown Agents for the Colonies* which include some documents of political units other than those covered by the Colonial Office list.

To get a better understanding of the uses which can be made of the Stationery Office lists one should read an article entitled "H.M.S.O. Publications" by W. Cox which appeared in *A.S.L.I.B. Proceedings*, 1:251-56, November 1949.

By far the best list issued by a government of a dominion is that of Canada and its use in conjunction with a checking record will go far in cutting down the volume of serial cataloging which some might think necessary. It is unfortunate, however, that it so late in appearing and that its frame of reference does not permit it to include mimeographed documents.

Before judging other government lists too harshly for their brevity and lack of subject approach, it would be wise to consider the general nature of the publications issued. For instance, some governments do not lean toward the monographic series as a vehicle for publication but are noted for the encyclopedic nature of their gazettes. The indexes of the gazettes when they exist are invaluable. In addition, in some cases, notably that of the Netherlands, many analytics from its gazettes appear in its official catalog of government publications.

### *Resources Offered by Sessional Papers*

If the interest of a library in a given country is such that it wishes to acquire as many of its documents as possible and to do the minimum of cataloging, it is always well to remember its sessional papers if they exist.

Although the actual bulk of the British Sessional Papers and those for Australia and

New Zealand is considerably less than it used to be, yet they contain many valuable documents which can be approached by way of the indexes for each session. The same is true for the *Riksdagens Protokoll* of Sweden which besides the parliamentary debates contains administrative reports as well as financial and budget statements in its *Bihang*.

#### *Lists of Publications*

In the last decade the Library of Congress has made notable contributions to the bibliography of the documents of Latin America in its *Guides to the Official Publications of the Other American Republics*. The statement in the prefatory note of each to the effect that "This checklist is published in the hope that it will provide a working tool for libraries and scholars wishing to utilize the information embedded in official publications, and, by pointing out gaps, will assist in the improvement of our collections" tells only part of the story of the uses to which these may be put, for what each successive guide has done has been to provide the means whereby many possessors of collections of Latin American materials in this country were enabled to organize their present holdings as well as to check on the inadequacies of these and to seek to remedy them.

#### *Special Subject Bibliographies*

Although the existence and use of well-organized official checklists can do much to increase the effectiveness of document collections, they have close competitors in the form of special subject bibliographies of official material. Notable among these are annotated bibliographies of censuses and vital statistics produced by the Census Library Project of the Library of Congress. A documents librarian wishing to get the full use out of a collection of such material can ill afford to be without them. Because this paper is confined to comments on foreign documents, mention is made only of these bibliographies which cover the Americas, excluding the United States but including its territories and possessions, and later ones covering Europe and British Africa.

Since the majority of libraries tend to strive more for completeness in their foreign document holdings in selected subject fields rather than for completeness by country, the way to effecting economies in processing seems to point more and more to the use of subject bibliographies containing document listings in conjunction with the relatively simple processing controls described earlier in this article.

## Bibliographical Aids

#### *Official Bibliographies*

Canada. Dept. of Public Printing and Stationery. Division of Documents. *Dominion of Canada Government Publications. Annual Catalogue*. Ottawa.

Egypt. Ministry of Finance. Government Publications Office. *Catalogue of Publications in Stores, 1938-43*. Cairo.

India. Office of The High Commissioner for India. *List of Publications Received in The Publications Branch*. [London]

India. Publication Branch. *Government Publications: Supplement to the Catalogue of Civil Publications of the Government of India, 1949*. New Delhi.

Ireland. Stationery Office. *List of government publications issued during the month . . .* Dublin.

Netherlands. Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Ruilbureau. *Nederlandsche Overheidsuitgaven*. The Hague.

Sweden. Riksdagsbiblioteket. *Arsbibliografi over Sveriges offentliga publikationer for . . .* Stockholm.

Switzerland. *Bibliographie der Schweizerischen Amtsdrukschriften*. Bern.

U. K. Colonial Office. Information Department. Reference Section. *Monthly List of official publications*. [London]

— Crown Agents for the Colonies. *List of publications received*. [London]

— Stationery Office. *Daily List of Publications*. London.

— Government Publications Monthly List. London.

— Consolidated List. London.

— Stationery Office, Belfast. *List of Publications*. Belfast.

#### *Library Accessions Lists*

Australia. Commonwealth National Library. *Annual Catalog of Australian publications*. Canberra.

Belgium. Bibliotheque royale. *Bibliographie de Belgique. Liste mensuelle des publications belges ou relatives a la Belgique acquises par la Bibliotheque royale*. Brussels.

Belgium. Ministère de la Justice. Bibliotheque. *Liste des acquisitions*. Brussels.

— Ministère de l'Instruction publique. Bibliotheque centrale. *Liste des acquisitions. Livres et periodiques*. Brussels.

British Library of Political and Economic Science. London School of Economics and Political Science. *A Selection of Books Recently Added to the Library*. London.

Ceylon. Ceylon Government Gazette. Quarterly Supplement. *Supplement of Books Printed in Ceylon*. Colombo.



- Columbia University. Law Library. *Recent Acquisitions*. New York.
- France. Ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer. Service des Archives. Bibliothèque centrale. *Bulletin des nouvelles acquisitions de la Bibliothèque centrale*. Paris.
- Direction des affaires économiques et du Plan. Service de Statistiques. *Bulletin bibliographique*. Paris.
- Ministère des Affaires étrangères. Bibliothèque. *Bulletin des nouvelles acquisitions*. Paris.
- Inter American Statistical Institute. *List of Publications . . . Received During the Months of . . .* Washington.
- Luxembourg. Bibliothèque nationale. *Bibliographie Luxembourgaise*. Luxembourg.
- Morocco. Bibliothèque générale et Archives du Protectorat. *Ouvrages édités au Maroc au cours de l'année*. . . Rabat.
- New Zealand. General Assembly. Library. *Copyright publications*. Wellington.
- Public Affairs Information Service. *Bulletin of the Public Affairs Information Service*. . . New York.
- Science Museum Library. *Monthly List of Accessions to the Library*. London.
- Union of South Africa. South African Library. *Quarterly bulletin of the South African Library*. Cape Town.
- U. K. Foreign Office. *Foreign Office Printed Library*. London.
- Ministry of works. *Library Bulletin*. London.
- United Nations. Library. Geneva. *Monthly list of books Catalogued in the Library of the United Nations*. Geneva.
- Lake Success. *New publications in the United Nations Headquarters Library*. Lake Success.
- U. S. Library of Congress. Information bulletin. Washington.
- *Monthly List of Russian Accessions*. Washington.
- Bibliographies on Special Subjects*
- International Association for Research in Income and Wealth. *International Bibliography on Income and Wealth. Annotated Quarterly Report*. [London]
- U. S. Library of Congress. *Guide [s] to the Official Publications of the other American Republics*. Wash-
- ington. (Its *Latin American Series*) Contents: I Argentina; II Bolivia; III Brazil; IV Chile; VI Costa Rica; VII Cuba; VIII Dominican Republic; IX Ecuador; X El Salvador; XI Guatemala; XII Haiti; XVI Paraguay; XVII Peru; XVIII Uruguay; XIX Venezuela.
- Census Library Project. *Bibliography (In United Nations Demographic Yearbook 1948. p.549-96)* Lake Success.
- *General Censuses and Vital Statistics in the Americas*. Prepared under the supervision of Irene B. Taeuber. Washington. 151p.
- *National Censuses and Vital Statistics in Europe 1918-1939, an Annotated Bibliography*, prepared by Henry J. Dubester. Washington. 215p.
- *1940-1948 Supplement*. Washington. 48p.
- *Population Censuses and other Official Demographic Statistics of British Africa; an Annotated Bibliography*, prepared by Henry J. Dubester. Washington. 78p.
- Reference Department. [Bibliographies on Special Regions and Subjects.] Washington.
- Trade Bibliographies by Country*
- Argentinas Gaceta del libro*. Buenos Aires.
- Czechoslovakia: *Bibliografický Catalog. A. Knihy ceske. Praha. B. Knihy slovenske. Brabislava.*
- France: *Biblio; bibliographie, littérature*. Paris. *Bibliographie de la France*. Paris.
- Germany: *Deutsche Nationalbibliographie. Reihe A (weekly); Reihe B (monthly)*. Leipzig.
- Netherlands: *Nieuwe Uitgaven in Nederland*. s'Gravenhage.
- Poland: *Przewodnik bibliograficzny*. Warsaw.
- Portugal: *Serviços bibliográficos da Liveria portuguesa*. Lisbon.
- Spain: *Bibliografía hispania*. Madrid.
- Switzerland: *Schweizerische Landesbibliothek. Das Schweizer Buch. Serie A (Semimonthly); Serie B (Bimonthly)*. Bern.
- Union of South Africa: *S. A. Katalogus van boeke*. (and monthly supplement). Johannesburg.
- United Kingdom: *The British National Bibliography*. London.
- Yugoslavia: *Slovenski knjizni trg*. Ljubljana.

By A. D. ROBERTS

## United Nations and Its Specialized Agencies: Documents and Publications<sup>1</sup>

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THIS ARTICLE deals with the problems facing libraries which are receiving the great

<sup>1</sup> This paper has not been prepared as an official statement of the United Nations Library. It was prepared by the author at the request of chairman of the A.L.A. Committee on Public Documents to stimulate thought on the general theme.

majority of the documents and publications of either the United Nations and/or one or more of its Specialized Agencies. Libraries whose intake is restricted to sales publications should be able to treat these books, periodicals and pamphlets as they do works issued by commercial publishers. We are, then, concerned with libraries receiving extensive sets

of documents and publications, "documents" to mean papers which are not normally obtainable separately and most of which are mimeographed and in numbered series. By "publications" is meant those items which have either been placed on public sale individually or which are distributed free as informational material.

The means of most, if not all, libraries do not permit them to catalog individually all the items issued by the United Nations or one of its prolific agencies. A number of libraries catalog only the publications placed on general sale, or perhaps only a selection of these. Some libraries have made "open entries" for the periodicals and the various series of mimeographed documents bearing symbol numbers. Many libraries are unhappy about what they have done and their catalogs are not indicative of what they have.

The purpose of this article is to examine the possibility of using the *United Nations Documents Index* and other bibliographies of United Nations and Specialized Agency materials as substitutes for entries in the catalog itself. *United Nations Documents Index* records United Nations and Specialized Agency documents and publications received in the library at Lake Success; publication of it began in January 1950. It is a monthly checklist with a subject index; the latter is to be cumulated annually. Most of this present article deals with its adequacy as a record of and key to a library's holdings of United Nations materials.

Before examining the uses of *United Nations Documents Index*, however, the value of the library's checking record of United Nations and/or Specialized Agency materials should be mentioned. Such a record is necessary to control the intake of documents and publications. The great majority of mimeographed documents bear symbols, and it is according to these that the record should be arranged. Since these symbols in many cases represent a brief "author entry" for the items in question, the checking record will often answer "author" questions about a library's holdings.

Speaking now only of the United Nations, if its documents and publications are arranged in the library in the order of their symbols (which for the most part agrees with the order in *United Nations Documents Index*),

no further investigation is necessary in order to find an item marked as received in the checking record. If it is wished to shelve certain items outside the general sequence, the checking record must be marked accordingly. A dummy for a volume or a reference sheet filed with the mimeographed documents would be an added help. There are certain other decisions to be made; one would be whether to file all sales publications together or whether to treat them in the way they are listed in *United Nations Documents Index*.

If a library does attempt descriptive cataloging of a selection of its mimeographed documents and then interfiles these cards with those for the United Nations sales publications, the result is a sequence of author cards which both librarians and readers find most difficult to follow. Only librarians specializing in United Nations material and readers who have spent some time working with it and who know something of the structure of the United Nations will be able to find their way easily among these cards. It is suggested that under the heading "United Nations" cards be placed explaining the holdings of the library in general (e.g. mentioning the date from which it holds mimeographed material) and explaining the uses of the checking record, *United Nations Documents Index* and other bibliographies.

It would be possible, then, for a library wishing to effect cataloging economies to dispense with corporate author entries under "United Nations" for United Nations material if its United Nations collection was well organized, had checking records and was adequately serviced. Sales publications, except those recently published, can, for example, be rapidly identified by consulting *Publications 1945-1948* and *United Nations Publications 1949* issued by the United Nations Department of Public Information. *United Nations Documents Index*, the two bibliographies of sales publications just cited and other appropriate bibliographies would need to be shelved near the public catalog. If necessary they could be annotated to show exact holdings and call numbers. If it was decided that some corporate author cards should be filed (perhaps because subject entries for these items had been decided upon) the detailed statement of the library's holdings and cataloging policies should still be

retained on the first cards under "United Nations."

The next part of this article is an attempt to answer questions which arise about the use of *United Nations Documents Index* as a substitute for full cataloging.

#### *What Does the Library of Congress Do?*

The Library of Congress has cataloged a number of United Nations and Specialized Agency documents and publications and has cards available for them. They represent, however, only a portion of the documents of importance. The Library of Congress makes author entries under "United Nations" for publications prepared by national delegations and published by their governments. These items are not recorded in *United Nations Documents Index* and would, presumably, be dealt with by a library in the same way as other government publications.

Would *United Nations Documents Index* record everything in the Library? In nearly every case it will record far more than the holdings of any library outside Lake Success, partly because it includes documents with a limited distribution. Because its listing of Specialized Agency material is limited to items received at Lake Success, a depository of a Specialized Agency could receive material not in *United Nations Documents Index*. The United Nations has not yet perfected its arrangements for obtaining all Specialized Agency material at Lake Success.

#### *How up to date is United Nations Documents Index?*

An issue of *United Nations Documents Index* recording documents and publications received at Lake Success during one month appears on the fifteenth of the following month. Generally speaking it is quicker in recording items issued by the United Nations than it is in entering those of the Specialized Agencies, because the latter items have to travel first; the majority of the former are produced at Lake Success.

What treatment would be given to such items as monographs by individual authors and serials with distinctive titles? A small minority of documents and publications bear the names of individual authors. Examples are to be found among papers prepared for the International Law Commission of the

United Nations; one of these is, for example, a "Report on the High Seas," by J. P. A. Francois (U.N. document A/CN.4/17, 1950). Unesco has published a number of works bearing their authors' names, among them *Education for Librarianship*, by J. P. Danton and *Food and the Family* by Margaret Mead. These works are particularly likely to be looked for in the catalog under their individual authors' names. Reference librarians may not recognize them as having been issued by the United Nations or one of the Specialized Agencies if imprints are omitted from references. It might well be decided that these items should have individual author entries, especially if the library concerned specialized in the topics dealt with. If individual author entries are to be made for a limited number of items, the selection could be made either at the time of receipt or by a perusal of *United Nations Documents Index*.

Similarly, serials with individual titles like the *Transport and Communications Review* and the *Demographic Yearbook* of the United Nations or *Industry and Labour* of the International Labour Office might be cataloged under their titles. In any case, if special lists of periodicals, perhaps of those currently received, are made for reference use apart from the general catalog, titles of United Nations and Specialized Agency periodicals should be included.

Would not the absence of subject cards mean that readers would miss important materials? This is probably the gravest accusation against the proposed scheme. In assisting readers, reference librarians would have to be constantly on the watch to see that they did not neglect items receiving this special treatment. The present writer feels that some subject treatment is necessary. The following suggestions are put forward with the view of giving some subject coverage in an economical way. We have seen that Library of Congress cards are available for most sales publications and for a number of mimeographed documents. These cards could be filed by subject.

Form references to the library's holdings of United Nations material, and to *United Nations Documents Index* in particular, might be inserted under other appropriate headings. An examination of the subject

entries in the catalog of one library housing United Nations documents and publications showed a number of subject entries for sales publications but not much else. There was nothing for the United Nations under "International law—Codification," though a relevant League of Nations publication was there. This was because the work of the United Nations in this field is reported in supplements to the General Assembly's *Official Records*; many mimeographed documents are also concerned with this subject. Nor were there entries under a number of other subjects for which United Nations documents and publications in that library probably give the most detailed, the most authoritative, or the most up-to-date information available. This library is, in general, taking good care of its United Nations collection. Though a thorough investigation has not been made, it is probable that conditions in this one library are paralleled elsewhere.

If Library of Congress cards for United Nations materials are filed by subject and form cards are also used, sometimes they would come together under the same heading. In the great majority of cases all that would be necessary would be to add a word to the form card, so that instead of reading "Information . . ." they would read "Additional Information. . . ." Most printed United Nations publications and the more substantial mimeographed documents will be found to be supported by other related mimeographed items.

It has already been suggested that United Nations documents and publications arriving in a library be screened for works by individual authors, titles of serials, etc. They might also be screened from the subject point of view and new form cards made when appropriate. For this purpose a separate United Nations form card file would be needed as a working tool. It is also suggested that the cards be dated. The interests of the United Nations do change; after the passage of a number of years it might be necessary to add to the form cards a fuller indication of the years concerned. The procedures outlined would not take much time and they would provide a minimum coverage by subject in the public catalog. They are suggested because it is realized that fuller subject cataloging is often not possible.

It should be noted that in each issue of *United Nations Documents Index* "an asterisk distinguishes those documents and publications which summarize the work of an organ, represent the final results of international conferences or research projects, or are works of reference such as bibliographies, handbooks and yearbooks."

The monthly subject index at the end of *United Nations Documents Index* does, however, provide an analytic index far superior to anything libraries can afford to produce themselves for their own catalogs. It includes index entries for parts of documents and publications as well as for these items as a whole. In this respect it is more detailed than the subject indexes in the general catalogs of the publications of national governments. As has already been noted, the plan is to cumulate annually its subject index.

What treatment would be given to items which the library wished to shelve outside the main United Nations and/or Specialized Agencies Collection? Notes in the checking records and possibly a marked copy of *United Nations Documents Index* would show this. It might be decided that extra copies of the publications concerned were needed for such purposes. If special catalogs were provided for these other locations, e.g. in departmental or seminar libraries, the extra copies could be cataloged for this purpose. If the main catalog of the library is a union catalog of all holdings, the checking record and/or the copy of *United Nations Documents Index* serving as a catalog would be marked accordingly.

What of the material that appeared before "United Nations Documents Index" began? Some 41,000 documents and publications in English had been issued by the United Nations alone before *United Nations Documents Index* began. Some of these are carefully recorded in *Checklists*; these have subject indexes. The preparation and publication of checklists for the documents not so far covered is continuing. For coverage of the Specialized Agencies in pre-*United Nations Documents Index* times, only the catalogs and indexes produced by these agencies themselves are available.

A case can, then, be made for using *United Nations Documents Index* as part of the catalog of a library's contents and for not cataloging at all or adopting a scheme of

highly selective cataloging in the card catalog itself. It should be added that, in addition to *United Nations Documents Index*, some agencies have detailed catalogs of their own documents and publications. If a library is a depository of one of these agencies, it most certainly should shelve the relevant agency bibliography with *United Nations Documents Index*. In at least one case the agency bibliography is fuller than *United Nations Documents Index*.

The International Civil Aviation Organization publishes a monthly *Index of ICAO Documents*. This is in alphabetical order of subjects and it is cumulated annually. Alternatively, or in addition, one can receive monthly, by subscription, cards containing abstracts. Subject headings are printed at the top of the cards. These headings are, however, specialized ones, so that the cards could hardly be interfiled in the catalog of a general library.