

Whitehall, T. *Personal Current Awareness Service: A Handbook of Techniques for Manual SDI*. British Library Research & Development Reports, No. 5502. London: British Library, 1979. 119p. £7. ISBN 0-905984-43-9. ISSN 0308-2385. (Available from: Publications, British Library, Research and Development Dept., Sheraton House, Great Chapel St., London W1V 4BH.)

T. Whitehall has presented a well-organized and detailed guide to the personal current awareness service that depends on the scanning of the accessions of a library in a particular subject area. The methods employed in this study are literature search and interviews conducted in academic, special, and public libraries.

The report begins with an introduction in which the value of current awareness service in general and selective dissemination of information (SDI) and its application in particular are considered. Components of an SDI service are also discussed. After examining the place of SDI among other current awareness techniques, promotion of an SDI service, and the setting up of an SDI service, the author analyzes a wide variety of approaches to manual SDI. The approaches to manual SDI were discovered, with librarians, subject specialists, and project workers functioning as scanners. The author does not ignore other current awareness techniques, including computerized SDI, which is discussed rather briefly. Profiling, scanning, and notification techniques are described in detail. Production system for SDI, quality control of SDI, and management of an SDI service are also considered.

At the end of the report are a bibliography and two appendixes, the first on the idea of a core literature and the second on the details of the investigation. The bibliography presented is not very extensive; however, by dividing the bibliography into five parts based on the subject matter the author has enhanced its utility. Researchers interested in manual SDI would find the second appendix of particular interest. The questionnaires presented in this appendix are pertinent as well as extensive.

The only fault with the report is that it ignores the question of cost. The author

wants to give greater attention to the "value" of a system than to its cost. Details on cost, however, would have enhanced the practical value of this guide.

Notwithstanding this obvious shortcoming, the report makes a significant contribution to the field of current awareness. While the report would be useful to the currently existing SDI systems, those contemplating to start manual SDI would find it especially useful.—*Priya Rai, Central Connecticut State College, New Britain.*

Grogan, Denis. *Practical Reference Work*.

Outlines of Modern Librarianship. London: Clive Bingley; New York: K. G. Saur, 1979. 144p. \$10. LC 79-41109. ISBN 0-85157-275-8.

This slim volume is precisely what the title indicates, a concise introduction to the practical aspects of "doing" reference. The author goes to great lengths in his preface to state the limitations of the work, and he does not pretend to offer the comprehensive discourse in theory or bibliography that is done better elsewhere. Specifically aimed at the student of reference, the book contains a tightly arranged and readable survey that includes references to many acknowledged authorities and the results of specific studies on a wide range of subjects. The original sources are adequately represented in chapter bibliographies as well as a brief general bibliography.

The author is liberal with examples. He illustrates the routine questions and circumstances a potential public service librarian is bound to confront. He obviously views librarianship as a humane profession and says so often. He dwells on personal attributes and responses to the varied needs of questioners. He attempts to provoke concern for the individual, and he reminds us of the things that should be obvious to service-oriented professionals—things such as attitude, approachability, and if not a smile, at least not a frown—things which are often forgotten among loftier concerns.

The author documents his materials well. He provides historical perspective in the development of service and integrates computer capabilities into the reference environment easily and naturally.

One basic argument is alluded to fre-

quently: the degree of assistance to be called "reference." Do we do it for them, or do we teach them to do it for themselves? While advocating "maximum" service the author recognizes the teaching aspect of day-to-day reference. He prefers that in practice we do whatever is required to answer the question, and then some. His common sense view is to do what the situation calls for. This reviewer likes this book, partly because he agrees with its pragmatic philosophy, but also for such statements as, "Man has forgotten more than he has remembered and lost more than he has recorded. A large amount of research involves trying to find it again."

The bibliography might be more complete, but major writers are represented and, of course, similar lists abound. A good, workable index is included.

Reference students and librarians needing a refresher will find this a useful and thought-provoking book.—*James F. Parks, Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi.*

The Future of the National Library of Canada. Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1979. 88, 93p. Free. ISBN 0-662-50628-6. Text in English and French, each with special t.p. and separate paging. French text on inverted pages. (Available from: National Library of Canada.)

Among the august company of national libraries, the National Library of Canada is a mere youth, having celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary less than two years ago. During its short life it has grown from a staff of 14 with a total budget of \$76,600 to a staff of 490 with a budget approaching \$15 million.

This report on the role of the National Library is the culmination of three years of intensive study and review of past achievements and an effort to define the needs and directions of the future. The report begins with a summary of the results of this study—eleven recommendations for organization and development. The remaining pages are an effort to support these recommendations.

In theory it is difficult to argue with these goals and objectives. The library does need better funding; the retrospective collection

should be strengthened to meet research requirements; the acts of Parliament governing the library and related services need clarification; more space is needed; and, finally, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the nation's printed documentation should be under the jurisdiction of its national library.

Unfortunately, the National Library of Canada has not yet earned the full confidence of Canadian librarians nor of the general public. Too often the grand designs have become lost in a maze of studies or been pushed further and further into the future with few signs of fruition.

The recommendations destined to stir up the greatest controversies are those concerning the National Map Collection (now part of the National Archives) and the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI). For more than seventy-five years before the creation of the National Library, functions which might normally have been considered part of its mandate were performed by the National Archives. The development of the National Map Collection is a case in point. It functions well, its staff is active in the creation of international bibliographic and cataloging standards, and it fears disruptions and delays if the collection becomes part of the National Library.

The collection and dissemination of scientific information in Canada has for many years been carried out by CISTI under the jurisdiction of the National Research Council, a Crown Corporation. It has developed a comprehensive scientific collection, a sophisticated computerized information service, and it provides prompt service and documentation to all parts of the nation's scientific community. It is a service far beyond that which the National Library has managed to provide in the humanities and social sciences, yet the report recommends that CISTI become part of the National Library and report directly to the national librarian.

In discussing Canada's research resources and the need for networking, the report downplays the efforts already made when it states: "The benefits of cooperation on a provincial or regional basis have been explored in a preliminary way by the Ontario