

higher "yearly, monthly, daily, hourly," and threatening to engulf not only the library but civilization itself. He repeats an earlier warning: "We seem to be fast coming to the day when, unless it is afforded the most expert sort of bibliographical service possible, civilization may die of suffocation, choked in its own plethora of print." This is a serious condition requiring surgical operation. But Mr. Rider is willing to content himself with a palliative. He suggests a microcard which will reduce the physical size of the mass of print. But the real threat of the "plethora of print" lies in its quantity, not in the size of its paper container, and Mr. Rider's microcard does not reduce this quantity. This condition is properly the problem of the scholar rather than the librarian, and the scholar should be urged to suggest a remedy. It is possible that the condition is due to an atavistic habit of the days when there was a scarcity of recorded facts and when every record discovered filled a vital gap in our knowledge. In these days of overabundance of print the problem is not in filling gaps but in preventing obstructive mountains. The problem of the librarian and of the scholar is not in the acquisition of all printed "records," but in the selection of *representative* records—i.e., records exhibiting the contents and characteristics

of numerous existing variants—so that the library will be spared the task of preserving mountains of print of dubious, though possible, value, and the future scholars will be spared numberless hours of futile search in illusive "treasures."

The profession owes a profound debt to Mr. Rider for throwing a glaring light on the starkness of the research library problems and for dramatizing the great potentialities, and also the great need, of microprint and centralized cataloging in meeting the problems of space and cost. These reviewers incline to envision the future research library as containing materials in various forms—books, films, microprints, and other media which may yet be developed—each form used for the materials for which it is most suitable and kept in the special conditions required by it; specialized authoritative bibliographies prepared by scholars to guide other scholars in the literature of their fields and librarians in their task of purposeful acquisition; and a catalog which will guide the inquirer to the library's resources, in whatever form they may be available. The catalog will be cooperatively produced for the good of all libraries, and its ultimate shape is still in the lap of the future.—*Herman H. Henkle and Seymour Lubetzky.*

Official Publications of Latin America

U.S. Library of Congress. *A Guide to the Official Publications of the Other American Republics.* James B. Childs, general editor. Washington, 1945. (Its Latin American Series, no. 9, 10, 11.) Contents: I. Argentina; II. Bolivia; VII. Cuba.

The compilation of guides to the official publications of the other American republics is a project undertaken by the Library of Congress to meet an urgent need for securing adequate information about an area of publication which, while difficult of access, is, nevertheless, of vital importance to those concerned with the study of administrative, economic, social, and cultural conditions in Latin America.

The three sections published in 1945, namely, Argentina (Section I), Bolivia (Section II), and Cuba (Section VII), were prepared under the general editorship of James

B. Childs and have been issued as a part of the program of the Department of State's Interdepartmental Committee on Scientific and Cultural Cooperation. The project is the outgrowth of preliminary and special studies made by Mr. Childs, the earliest of which appeared in 1932.¹ The value of this early work was recognized at once by those inter-

¹ Childs, James B. *Bibliography of Official Publications and the Administrative Systems in Latin American Countries.* Washington, D.C., 1938. (Reprinted from *Proceedings of the First Convention of the Inter-American Bibliographical and Library Association.*)

—. *Colombian Government Publications.* Washington, 1941. (Reprinted from the *Proceedings of the Third Convention of the Inter-American Bibliographical and Library Association.*)

—. "Cuban Government Publications—a Comprehensive Statement." (In *Proceedings of the Second Convention of the Inter-American Bibliographical and Library Association.* Washington, D.C., 1939, p. 123-52.)

—. *The Memorias of the Republics of Central America and of the Antilles.* Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1932.

ested in the field of official Latin American material. Many who have used the studies must have desired further breakdowns in the descriptions of governmental organizations, with a listing of as many of their publications as possible. These conditions have been met in the three guides recently issued insofar as the circumstances governing the compilation and available material permitted. From their introductory statements one senses the magnitude of the field in which the compilers have been working, and it seems natural for them to emphasize the fact that the publications in hand are intended merely as introductions to rich informational sources, upon which much work remains to be done.

The scheme of arrangement of the three sections which are the subject of this review, as well as the treatment of the material included, gives indications of criteria, which, it seems reasonable to assume, will govern the editorial policies of the entire project.

First: conditions of compilation. The collections described are based upon those of the Library of Congress, probably the most extensive in existence. In order to clear up doubtful points and to secure data which would otherwise have been inaccessible, a Library of Congress representative undertook direct investigation in the capitals of Argentina and Bolivia. The cooperation of officials of the countries concerned has given the guides, in all parts of their development, a further cachet of authority.

Second: arrangement. The general arrangement of the contents of the three parts of the series now available is by the three branches of the government—legislative, executive, and judicial—with a section preceding the whole devoted to general publications. The sections dealing with the executive departments give the ministries in alphabetical order with the subordinate agencies of each ministry grouped by their distinguishing names in the hierarchy, *e.g.*, *comision*, *comité*, *consejo*, *direccion*, etc. Within each group the agencies are arranged in alphabetical order with their publications listed below the respective names. A variation in the general administrative scheme appears in the case of Cuba. A group of independent establishments, learned societies, professional colleges, associations of producers, and retirement and social security funds follows the list of ministries—

an indication of the extent of quasi-official participation in activities of a scientific, cultural, and economic nature which in many other Latin American countries come under the jurisdiction of specific ministries.

Third: content. The nature of the contents indicates that the guides have been prepared to fill the need for practical reference works for the agencies and individuals interested in the affairs of the Latin American republics. Primarily, they aim to inform concerning the governmental structure as it exists at the present time, with all statements supported by adequate documentation; to trace significant changes in governmental organization, particularly those reflected in the official publications; and to list the publications of each agency within the limits prescribed in the conditions of compilation. Secondly, there has been a consistent effort to furnish adequate references to be consulted for details and discussion concerning the government and country under consideration. Care has also been taken to include statements regarding official printing and to note existing bibliographies of official publications.

In each guide, the achievement of these several objectives has resulted in a work which partakes of the dual nature of a handbook and a bibliography. The histories of government agencies are written in a form which may be studied with profit by others attempting to compose statements of this kind. The descriptive notes of serial publications are rich in beginning dates and terminal ones, where the latter exist. Although there has been no attempt made to be consistent in giving the contents of monographic series, many are listed. Under the names of agencies and institutions having to do with cultural matters there are given composite and single works by personal authors. Although they are at opposite ends of the books, the sections treating the gazettes, found under General Publications, and those dealing with legal material, under Judicial Branch, should be consulted and studied together.

The indexes included in each guide are open to criticism. Presumably, they contain the names of all agencies included in the text as well as the titles of significant publications. A sampling of personal names seems to reveal no editorial policy for their inclusion or exclusion. It is unfortunate that the excellent

cross references abounding in the text are not incorporated in the index. These criticisms are made on the hypothesis that one may be using these guides without having in hand the documents described—a situation in which one needs all the help from an index that one can get.

So far, what has been said about the contents of the work under review merely appraises its component parts as pieces of fine craftsmanship. What raises them above this level to that of distinguished compilation is the presence on every page of timely and revealing data concerning the publications described. These data are the products of

painstaking research and a keen and unerring sense of what is relevant, bibliographically speaking. Such a sense is the result of a combination of permeation by a subject and assurance in the use of prescribed forms and is the factor which causes some bibliographies to be long remembered as outstanding. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the series so happily inaugurated by the three sections reviewed here is to have introduced meaning and order into a field of publication where, from the point of view of the average user in the United States, a state of confusion possibly approaching chaos has prevailed up to now.—*Violet Abbott Cabeen.*

Library as a Teaching Instrument

The Library as a Teaching Instrument. State University of Iowa. University Library Planning Committee. 1945. 14p.

The University Library Planning Committee of the State University of Iowa has issued a brief but compact outline of its program and the principle upon which it intends to construct its new library building. As a preliminary step to any building program, the University of Iowa has set up a model of procedure from which other colleges and universities planning a new building might well benefit by first analyzing their program and aims of the institution. The physical structure will be based throughout on a modified version of the unit type of construction. This type of building will permit the library to do everything it can think of now and will also, since the interior will be flexible and adaptable, meet the needs of the university for a long time to come. Rather than a great architectural monument, the building will be a sensible workshop in which the instructor and the student can work together in the midst of the book resources of the university, assisted by the latest audio-visual aids to learning and by adequate facilities for group and individual study. The program sets up principles which attempt to place within one building all the academic activities, including much of the instruction, which may wish to utilize media of communication now available for educational purposes. It has high aims which, as they become successful, will bid fair to revolutionize our present library programs and build-

ings on the campus.

The needs of the college freshmen are to be met by the establishment of a "heritage" library within the main building. This library collection will be arranged around eight periods or historical moments from that of Early Man, Greek and Roman, to Contemporary. For each period not only the books will be used but all the dramatic visual aids such as models, maps, pictures, posters, phonograph records, slides, objects, moving pictures, etc. This heritage library is tied up with the "core curriculum" of the arts college and has the objective of helping the students become acquainted with their backgrounds as well as aware of the critical issues of their own times. The adaptation of the library to the new curriculum is typical of the progressive thinking of the whole program, from the needs of the college freshmen up through those of the graduate student, the research scholar, and even beyond to the needs of the citizens of Iowa.

Such a program will demand new techniques and training for librarians. The librarian will become an integral part of the program of instruction. Less emphasis will be placed on library housekeeping functions and more on the professional aspects of the library. Books, however, do not take care of themselves, and it is not too clearly stated just how this housekeeping is going to be eliminated from the working day of librarians.

An experiment on as large a scale as this one will inevitably have its influence on the