

placed by different terms used for improved or altered types, alternative terms and nicknames spring up on every side literally by the dozen. Anyone attempting to compile an authoritative list of such terms for use by independent groups of indexers or catalogers must accept the necessity of very nearly complete coordination as a minimum requirement.

The individual headings listed in the work under discussion are, beyond question, acceptable to the various individual scientists or agencies who contributed them, but as their contributions are in similar or related fields they duplicate and contradict each other in many instances.

This list may become a basic authority in the fields covered after duplications under varying terms have been eliminated, closely related concepts connected with references, terminology as used in headings clarified by expansion, limitation, definition, or by reference to a standard technical dictionary (attention being paid meanwhile to the commonly

accepted meanings of the terms, especially the broader terms). As it stands, the list seems to be merely an alphabetization of headings and references submitted by various contributors, with very little coordination. This is a great disappointment, as something authoritative is needed in these fields. The *Engineering Index*, *Industrial Arts Index*, Voigt's *Subject Headings in Physics*, and the L.C. *Subject Headings for the Aeronautical Index* (1940), all well done, remain our best sources of special headings, although they do not have the coverage in detail of the newer concepts which the list under review attempts.

Even so limited, the list will be of value to the careful cataloger who understands its limitations and characteristics, and it may even become, eventually, the forerunner of an authoritative cataloging tool for libraries specializing intensively in the fields covered and a reference work of considerable value to catalogers in more general libraries.—*James M. Saunders.*

## The Value of Library Surveys

*Report of a Survey of the University of South Carolina Library for the University of South Carolina, February-May 1946.* By Louis R. Wilson and Maurice F. Tauber. Columbia, University of South Carolina, 1946. 134p. (Mimeographed)

The criticism has been advanced that the literature of library surveys, relatively new as it is, has already fallen into a rut; that each new survey merely repeats the same old patterns; and that if you have read one, you have read all. There is some justification for this attitude since many of the institutions surveyed do have similar organization, similar inadequacies, and therefore similar problems, which in many instances call for similar recommendations regarding correction or improvement. Another criticism which has been directed toward library surveys is that, in the final analysis, all of them resolve themselves into a plea (variously supported) for increased financial support. This criticism, also, is not without substance.

It might, however, be a healthful undertaking for us to view critically these criticisms for a moment: Actually, the strongest

proponents of the survey as a scientific study of a library situation have consistently proclaimed it to be primarily an effective instrument for increasing support. And to quarrel with either the instruments of measurement or the basis of recommended correctives is to refute library economy, not library surveys; for the good survey will employ as much as is pertinent of library economy per se, and in its judicious choice and expert application of proper selections from total library science to a particular library situation a survey may be best evaluated. It is the survey review or criticism rather than the survey itself which has fallen into a rut.

The individuality of a library survey is not readily apparent unless the reader is familiar with or interested in the library which has been surveyed. The reason for this is that the survey, being aimed at nonlibrarians for the most part, is of necessity a *teaching* and an *implementing* instrument as well as a measuring device. Much of its teaching must be quite elementary, resulting in a work which holds little interest for the librarian, unless the whole work should suddenly be brought

alive because of a real interest in the particular library under consideration. In this respect the library survey has a great deal in common with many other measurements, such as the audit, for example, or perhaps, the growth record of one's infant—exciting measurements, which, however, seem to leave our neighbors severely calm.

Since the library survey is such a particularly individualized undertaking, its adequacy must be determined in relation to the institution under study. The University of South Carolina survey could hardly be improved upon in regard to the selection of study objectives, devices for measurement, manner of approaching the problems, and in its patient (but not laborious) teaching. The South Carolina library survey escapes the principal danger, ever-present in such a work, of having the surveyors' recommendations discounted as extreme, when the surveyors merely intended to be substantial. Another escaped danger is that of ignoring, at any time, the fundamental fact that the university library is an institutional service agency. The greatest contribution toward implementation which a survey can make is methodically to show the faculty, the deans and directors, and the administration, once and for all, that the library budget is not competitive. The surveyors in this instance never lose sight of this fundamental fact and each item of increased expense is justified on its service basis. In leaving out any lengthy history of the institution, and even of the library, those responsible for the survey show a satisfying sense of institutional awareness. This same awareness is shown throughout the survey, and no recommendation is so designed or so phrased as to affront the fine traditions of the state's university. Truth, however, has by no means been compromised and a careful rereading of some of the milder sounding passages will show anyone at all familiar with the Univer-

sity of South Carolina libraries that certain recommendations are indeed radical, in the Conant or Jeffersonian sense, at least.

The overtone is one of general helpfulness, to an institution that is trying to help itself, as is, indeed, precisely the case. It may well be, after all, that the best way to judge the effectiveness of a survey is to wait five years and then see what actually happens. In the case of South Carolina the outcome may not prove to be very embarrassing; for some of the recommendations made by the surveyors are already under serious consideration by the university and several are already under way. In this last connection the survey is slightly vulnerable, as not too fine a line is drawn between what should be begun and what should be simply completed. The authors acknowledge a certain indebtedness to the recent Peabody survey, which attempted to sketch all six state tax-supported institutions of higher education in South Carolina, but they fail to take advantage of some of the corrected data of comparison with other Southern state universities. To these two negative comments might be added a third: it is unfortunate that the report was mimeographed with such apparent haste that it was not too carefully proofread.

Despite the fact that a few innovations in survey technique are observable here, it must be admitted that surveys *are* very much alike—unless, as already mentioned, one has a particular interest in the library being surveyed. But to add that "to have read one is to have read all" is about as supportable as to contend that one need not hear Heifetz the fourth time, since, after all, he is merely the same man, playing the same old tunes, on the same old fiddle. In the South Carolina study Dr. Wilson and Dr. Tauber have attained a certain artistic perfection with that increasingly popular—and effective—instrument, the library survey.—*William H. Jesse.*

## The University at the Crossroads

*The University at the Crossroads. Addresses and Essays.* By Henry E. Sigerist. New York City, Henry Schuman, 1946. 162p.

A few far-sighted educators of our country

today are aware of the shortcomings of education with respect to both aims and methods. They are actively attempting to implement the rediscovered purpose of education with the