

of Library Resources." It was hard to tell if some of the more difficult sections of his book gave trouble because of strange Russian concepts of bibliography or because of this characteristic of the translation. Both translators, however, for all these small points, are to be congratulated for effective pieces of work.

The Russian authors in these books are, perhaps properly, very serious; and there are no humorous or light touches to relieve this seriousness. Horecky and Gorokhoff, in the books they wrote on similar subjects, managed to give much livelier presentations than Melik-Shakhnazarov and the other Russian authors have done.

The MIT libraries are to be commended for giving American librarians an opportunity to learn more about the Soviet library world. For librarians concerned with science bibliography, industrial librarianship, or Soviet publications and librarianship these books should make interesting and profitable reading.—Dale L. Barker, *Georgia Institute of Technology Library*.

## International Classification

*Rider's International Classification for the Arrangement of Books on the Shelves of General Libraries*. By Fremont Rider. Preliminary ed. Middletown, Conn.: The Author, 1961. 1173p. \$15.50.

"This new International Classification is not intended for special libraries of any sort. It has been compiled solely for the shelving of books for general libraries, (i.e. public libraries, college libraries, and school libraries)." This sentence opens a brief "Preliminary Explanation" concerning the International Classification. Rider also states that an aim is to develop a short and simple notation, but he points out that despite the shortness and simplicity, the sixteen thousand subheads included "will be found adequate to take care of any general library having holdings of up to a million volumes." He writes further: "The result has been attained solely by making every endeavor to spread its load evenly, without national, linguistic, or religious biases over its 26 Classes and 676 Sub-classes." There is a deliberate avoidance of all subsidiary tables and

"divide-likes," in order to make application of the system easier for the classifier.

In the purpose and the programing of this classification, Rider has been seeking the ideal classification for his particular groups of libraries. He uses all the letters of the alphabet, and there are considerable resemblances to both the Dewey Decimal and the Library of Congress systems in the order of the main classes. The subclasses have three letters as a maximum, (e.g. "A" is Generalia, "AA" is Book Arts. Authorship, and "AAA" is the Art of Authorship).

Dr. Rider is not inviting librarians to reclassify their collections to this system, he professes in the preface to this work. Indeed, he is suspicious of reclassification in terms of costs. New libraries or old collections that are not classified might want to introduce this classification, he suggests.

The present reviewer is willing to await the comments of foreign librarians as to whether or not this is a suitable classification for the arrangement of materials in their libraries. As one who has been interested in centralized classification to enable librarians to process materials as effectively as possible, within the limitations of economic support, the idea of a universal classification is an appealing one. One does not have to recite in detail the objections that one might have to the new classification, even for new American libraries or for collections which have not been classified. The history of classification has been quite revealing in the array of corpses of schemes devised by individuals. At this point in the development of libraries, it would appear that an American college or university library might do much better in the use of the Dewey or the Library of Congress schedules, both supported by national programs to keep them up to date and to provide guidance in their use.

There is little promise, it seems to this reviewer, that the Rider International Classification will be actually applied in libraries. The Bliss Classification, which has been used by foreign librarians, sought some of the goals that Rider has been concerned with in the development of a universal classification, and has had acceptance on the basis of being less "American" than Dewey or LC. It would appear that Rider has done a useful service in showing what "a classifi-

cation for the arrangement of books on the shelves of general libraries" looks like. But it is likely to be one of the less practical ventures in classification.—*Maurice F. Tauber, Columbia University.*

## Classifiers' Guide

*Guide to Use of Dewey Decimal Classification, Based on the Practice of the Decimal Classification Office at the Library of Congress.* Lake Placid Club, N.Y.: Forest Press, 1962. 133p. \$5.00.

This *Guide* represents selective publication of the "manual of Decimal Classification Office practices," developed over the years by the most influential interpreter of the DC system. To prevent greater size than the schedules, the contents were chosen by rule of the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee that "the *Guide* should be concise and practical rather than theoretical or historical." Space is saved by printing information at one number only and referring from others. The entries are typical rather than exhaustively specific, depending upon analogy and judgment in their application. The confusion which follows such advice is reduced by numerous *ad hoc* decisions on what to do "when in doubt." Thus the collective biography of 920.02 is to be preferred to the universal variety of 920.01, which "must be very inclusive." But errors due to differences of experience and confidence will cause less separation here than in the choice between 311.2 (Statistical techniques) and 519.9 (Sampling methods), where no such final preference is suggested.

To judge this procedure manual within the limits of its stated purpose, we must applaud its timely and useful compilation. The aim to be concise is attained. Index and explanatory headings were omitted, as was virtually everything available in the schedules. The cost for this simplicity lies in the reference that must be made from one work to the other. The similarity of style and format make transition from schedules to *Guide* easier. But having gone this far, another step seems needed.

The *Guide* refers principally to edition sixteen of the classification, and the sound of seventeen which rises in the distance heralds obsolescence. We should encourage

publication of this work, incorporated within the tables and introductory material of DC. This would be comparable to merging the present *Decimal Classification Additions, Notes, and Decisions* into the next edition of Dewey.

By eschewing the theoretical, the *Guide* seldom tells us why a thing is done. Thus, at 808.831, we are told that collections of short stories from many literatures have this number, but collections from a specific literature must go with other fiction. One exception is the statement of two reasons for keeping civil service examinations together in 351.3, although this is "contrary to the general principle of classification by most specific subject." Elsewhere, contradictions are noted but not explained.

Historical or personal reasons for practices are avoided, "interesting tho it might be to deal with these subjects." Some entries, marked "History," explain differences between various editions which have been bases for DC numbers on LC cards. Occasional social commentary appears, as when explaining recent separation of sociological, psychological, or medical aspects of topics long grouped in the 170's under ethics.

Only once are we reminded of the connection between DC numbers and assignment of LC subject headings. The entry under 327 points out: "The Library of Congress subject heading usually includes 'relations (general)'. " Such service, admittedly, is not within the purpose of the Editorial Policy Committee. But it should not be overlooked that the present location, at the Library of Congress, of the office responsible for both editing and applying the DC offers an opportunity for integrating the two subsystems (DC classification with LC subject headings), which in many libraries are but parts of a single cataloging activity. The appearance of this *Guide* also points out the need for similar publication by the subject cataloging division of some current procedures and extended-scope notes for assigning LC subject headings.

Some theoretical aspects of classification do appear in "General Principles and Procedures," the twenty-one major subdivisions of which are best located by a summary table of contents. These rules are reminiscent of W. S. Merrill's *Code for Classifiers* (included by the *Guide* in a bibliography of twenty