

Review Articles

Library Education

Issues in Library Education. A Report of the Conference on Library Education, Princeton University, December 11th and 12th, 1948. Edited by Harold Lancour. Council of National Library Associations, 1949, 74p. \$2.00.

The Task and Training of Librarians. . . . By Ernest J. Reece. New York, King's Crown Press, 1949, 86p. \$1.75.

It is not inappropriate that these two publications be considered at the same time, for in some respects they have a good deal in common. The first has to do exclusively with six major questions pertaining more or less closely to education for librarianship, while the second is largely devoted to a consideration of the same field from the point of view of personnel qualifications. Both report the consensus of informal and unofficial groups of experts. Both deal, specifically, with questions of recruiting, preparation for special librarians and undergraduate library education. This, however, is about as far as the similarity between the two works goes.

The Princeton Conference brought together 36 persons (15 from library schools, eight university librarians, five public librarians, three special librarians and five others) to discuss: (1) organized interest in library education; (2) recruitment; (3) accreditation; (4) specialistic training; (5) classification and certification; and (6) placement. It was the belief of those sponsoring the conference, initiated in the first instance by the Council of National Library Associations, that previous discussion and conferences had largely ignored these subjects. A disclaimer to this belief might readily be entered. For instance, Wheeler considered recruiting and organized stimulation of education for librarianship in some detail; the B.E.L. held a conference in November 1947 on recruiting (as noted on p. 23 of the present report); and the Berkeley Conference on Education for Librarianship considered specialization and certification. But this is a minor criticism.

To provide each of the conferees with a common background and starting point for the discussions, summaries of current opinion and fact regarding each of the subjects were

prepared and distributed prior to the conference. The discussions were recorded verbatim and *Issues in Library Education* constitutes an edited version of these summaries and the discussions. These latter provide an interesting, frequently thought-provoking and often verbatim report of the opinion and belief of an important group of librarians on some of the major problems facing education for the profession. Not a great deal will be found here which has not already been said or implied in one way or another in our professional literature—but, as most of us have come to realize, the chief value of conferences usually lies not so much in the new facts brought to light as in the opportunity for a meeting of minds and an interchange of opinion. And certainly the recommendations unanimously adopted are ones with which few informed persons are likely to disagree and are ones of which the profession should take heed. They are:

"(1) It is recommended that there be established a joint committee on education for librarianship, for mutual exchange of information between library schools and various professional groups. (This was a useful recommendation which has since been put into effect through the creation of the Joint Committee on Education for Librarianship.)

(2) It is recommended that the AALS Newsletter become a liaison organ for dissemination of information on education for librarianship to all groups and institutions concerned. It is suggested further that the Newsletter be expanded in scope, be issued at regular intervals, and its facilities be made available to the proposed joint committee. (Another apparently worthwhile suggestion, provided funds for expansion of the Newsletter can be secured and provided it can be much more widely disseminated than at present.)

(3) The Conference recognizes that recruitment is a profession-wide responsibility. It endorses the efforts of the Joint Committee on Library Work as a Career to obtain funds for a long-range program of recruiting for librarianship.

(4) It is recommended that the Board of

Education for Librarianship serve as the official accrediting body for library educational institutions of all types and at all levels, and that it take into consideration the interests of specialized library groups by adding suitable consultants to its membership.

(5) It is recommended that the Board of Education for Librarianship assume positive leadership, particularly during the present period, when extensive library school curricular revisions are taking place and new schools are being established, to advise and guide in programs of training, and to insure sound educational development. (Recommendations 4 and 5, while not in any respect new ideas, are certainly of great importance in view of the present variety of and experimentation in library school curricula.)

(6) It is recommended that if and when a joint committee on education for librarianship is appointed, a thorough survey be made by the committee to determine the most desirable educational preparation for special librarians, to serve as a guide to library schools in developing programs of training.

(7) It is recommended that the Board of Education for Librarianship undertake a study of the several types of undergraduate library education, in order to discover the objectives of the various programs, to find where they belong in the general scheme of library education, and how they fit into state certification plans.

(8) Recognizing the major importance of the work of the Board of Education for Librarianship in the general field of professional library training, the American Library Association and the Council of National Library Associations are urged to seek adequate financial support for the Board's activities. (This virtual reiteration of one of Wheeler's recommendations may, we can hope, produce the results which have so far been lacking.)

(9) In consideration of the fact that a profession has an obligation to see placement provided for its members, it is recommended that the American Library Association aid in the establishment of an agency for the placement of librarians, the expense to be borne by the interested parties."

In so far as one who was not able to be present at the conference can judge, Mr. Lancoeur has done an excellent piece of work in what must have been a difficult job of summarizing, reconciling, and putting into read-

able and logical form a large amount of material.

Over the years we have been indebted to the Melvil Dewey Professor (now emeritus) of Library Service, Columbia University, for a number of thoughtful forward-looking writings in the field of education for librarianship. This latest study by Mr. Reece is no disappointment in these respects. It is, to quote the title page, "A report of a field investigation carried out in February to May 1947, to assist with curricular problems then pending before the Dean and Faculty at the School of Library Service, Columbia University." The inquiry sought to secure expert opinion on two fundamental and related questions: (1) what libraries do not do that they probably should and could do; and (2) the respects in which professional library personnel appear to be inadequate, or, positively, the skills, knowledge, attributes and attitudes needed by librarians, if the fullest potentialities of libraries are to be realized.

The technique employed was that of the interview. Some 200 persons, chiefly employers and supervisors of libraries, were consulted. The 83 principal interviewees, listed in an appendix, may be classified roughly as follows: public librarians, 27; university librarians, 14; special librarians, 11; school librarians, 7; college librarians, library school and state library personnel, 5 each; education, 3; children's librarian, 1; and miscellaneous, 5. (Many of these brought colleagues into the discussions, which accounts for the difference between the 83 and 200 figures.)

The answers which Mr. Reece's respondents have provided to the first of the two questions noted above, namely, what are the specific unexploited lines and areas of library effort possible and desirable now and for the next quarter of a century, can be given in summary without, it is hoped, doing injustice either to the investigator or to those who expressed opinions to him. So far as the libraries of educational institutions are concerned, a major lack and potentiality is held to be the proper establishment of the teaching of the use of books and libraries. Closely associated with this curricular-related activity are library opportunities for noncurricular tutoring through, and guidance in connection with, books and reading of all kinds. The primary thought here is that the librarian shall become much more of a teacher than he

has been and that teaching, rather than making collections available and providing material, would become the librarian's central function.

The scholarly and research library is capable of going much further than it has so far gone in discovering, assembling and interpreting needed materials, in organizing data, and in teaming "these activities with the study being done on a subject by scholars and specialists" (p. 10).

Public libraries are held typically to "have been little more than cooperative enterprises for pooling and spreading the book supply in a community" (p. 13); they must go much further than they have so far gone in stimulating use, in undertaking new forms of service, in serving the *whole* population, in supplying the materials for enlightened public opinion on social and political issues. Multiplication of branches and stations, house-to-house service, into-the-home delivery, discussion classes, traveling librarian-teachers, counseling about books, intensive exploitation of nonbook media, and more system and less improvisation in library operation are called for.

Having suggested in broad terms what libraries might or should do that they now do inadequately or not at all, the next question is, what must be the qualifications of library personnel? Are skills, knowledge and attributes not now generally possessed by librarians required?

Needed, and to a large extent now lacking among librarians generally, are power to evaluate books, "training that could enable graduates to bring about effectual changes in cataloging and its associated processes" (p. 20); ability to discover the actual wants of inquirers, to locate material precisely, to detect, diagnose and remedy reading difficulties, to organize and direct groups and to lead discussions, to speak and write effectively; ability in administration, in public relations, in dealing with higher authority, in developing fruitful contacts with elements in the community, in coordinating the work of the library with that of educational, civic and industrial groups; powers of analysis and judgment; a capacity for research, and ability to view one's "work in the large and with reference to its meaning and future" (p. 24).

Required and also largely lacking are a sense of purpose and direction; knowledge

of the history, function, achievements, place and significance of libraries; knowledge of books, both of content and as physical entities; knowledge about the backgrounds, interests, habits and motives of readers; and knowledge of administration as a science, and of the contributory subjects of government, taxation and personnel management, as well as of sociology, psychology, education and foreign language. All this adds up in the opinion of those whose advice was sought to an "earnest and widespread conviction that greater knowledge, of kinds that have so far been slightly represented either in library schools or in the total preparation, is required by the personnel of libraries" (p. 33).

In addition to all this it is felt that librarians definitely need and are generally more or less lacking in the warm human touch, good mental endowment, a passion for knowledge, judgment, self-assurance, alertness, imagination, initiative, professional sense and obligation, emotional stability, physical fitness, patience, perseverance, energy, enthusiasm, industry, courtesy and good appearance.

Probably most people would agree that most, if not all, of these many qualifications are desirable possessions for most, if not all, librarians. It seems reasonable however, to raise some questions. How many people in *any* profession does any one of us know who possesses in high degree all of them? Can any profession expect to recruit any considerable number of persons who are such complete paragons? If not, what are the most added needed qualifications for what kinds of library work? And, finally—as Mr. Reece himself notes—can we really expect to attract large numbers of outstanding recruits so long as salaries are relatively low, provision for leaves and retirement are poor, and much of the work done even by professionals in many libraries is dull and routine in nature?

The balance of the study is concerned principally with discussion that might be summed up in the question, "What can be done about it?" The proposals and suggestions in these pages, although in the main entirely defensible, were something of a disappointment to the reviewer, chiefly because they were so largely in terms of broad generalities. It is maintained that "as concerns skills, knowledge, and even personal attributes,

the intellectual content of the basic preparation requires to be increased" (p. 44). Librarianship must and can become a true profession and it will do so if preparation for it is designed to fit the contributions which lie ahead for libraries. The programs of the library schools must pay attention to intellectual skills, they must provide substantial and extensive knowledge and they must cultivate the attributes and attitudes needed by librarians as members of a social calling. These new programs will win for the schools a clear right to a position of instruction at the graduate level. However, as no one program can prepare personnel for all types of work, "the professional library schools would be . . . turning at last to the single task of preparing the ablest librarians possible" (p. 49). How is it to be brought about, especially if the duration of the library school program continues to be approximately one academic year, as is assumed?

Consideration is given to the desirability of establishing the "traditional" library school program somewhere at the undergraduate level but—as is not surprising—no new arguments either pro or con are advanced. More important, how this program *specifically* differs, at its present best, from what is needed is not made clear.

It is suggested that improved library school programs will be likely to attract more able recruits and that our major difficulty, an undue proportion of middling, average persons, will be solved thereby. This seems debatable, again, unless conditions of employment and work in libraries approximate those of the other professions with which librarianship logically competes for personnel.

No new means are proposed for the selection of students but it is urged that those devices now in more or less regular use—examination of academic records, lists of approved colleges, interviews, intelligence and other sorts of tests, and counseling and planning before college graduation—be extended and improved.

A final short chapter suggests that there may be a number of career lines more or less closely paralleling that of librarianship—for example, reference and information work of nonlibrary "intelligence centers" such as the Foreign Policy Association, the Public Administration Clearing house, economic and opinion surveying agencies, the International

Child Labor Committee—which the library schools should take into account in scrutinizing their programs. The thought here is that a single program of preparation might be designed for the two groups of positions at once, that the usefulness of library schools would be extended, that persons not interested exclusively in libraries might be attracted to these schools and that the graduate would have a wider range of employment opportunity than at present.

Comments on this idea which come quickly to mind are that, while reference and information centers of various kinds undoubtedly have something in common with libraries, the tremendous variety of the former would probably make it exceedingly difficult to design a program which would be useful and satisfactory to many and at the same time to librarianship. We seem to be having sufficient difficulty as it is in planning for our own profession alone. Further, our library school graduates today, granted an appropriate subject background, frequently *do* find employment in nonlibrary enterprises such as publishing, adult education, newspapers and the like, and more no doubt could if they wished to. Finally, for at least so long as the present shortage of librarians continues, we do not need to seek additional employment opportunities for library school graduates.

A general criticism which may be fairly made of this study is that it almost never gives us a quantitative expression of the opinions advanced. The words "many," "some," "a few," "several" and their like appear frequently, but such words give us very little idea concerning the preponderance of opinion expressed. Obviously, all of the qualifications, suggestions and so on reported are not held to be equally valuable or indispensable. Which ones are so held by half or three quarters or all of the respondents? Which are believed to be of primary and which of secondary importance by a clear majority of those interviewed? A study based on the interview technique may properly be expected to provide answers to these kinds of questions, but such answers are largely lacking here.

A doubt now and then occurred to the reviewer as to how closely familiar some of the respondents were with the *current* programs and graduates of the best library schools. Without for one moment denying

the validity, for instance, of the statements on personnel qualifications needed and their all too frequent lack, it is suggested that the total implication may be a little darker than the facts of 1949 warrant. A number of examples might be cited but one will suffice for illustration. Professional sense, obligation, attitude and general interest are held to be too generally lacking (pp. 38-39)—and no doubt they *are* in too many librarians. But, when members of recent library school classes hold 100 per cent membership in the A.L.A. and a state library association; when numbers of them, at their own expense, attend conferences and visit libraries; when, even as newcomers to the profession, many are participating actively in local, state and national committees and other professional activities,

the indictment requires considerable qualification. This reviewer does not wish to appear to be in the position of defending the status quo or of saying that librarianship and education for it should not be vastly improved. It is his observation, however, that improvement and change with respect to recruits for and those admitted to library schools have recently been taking place. Full awareness of the change appears not to be reflected in *The Task and Training of Librarians*.

Nonetheless, as indicated at the beginning of this review, the volume cannot fail to stimulate the imagination and thought processes of anyone interested in the possibilities and future of libraries and librarianship.—*J. Periam Danton, School of Librarianship, University of California.*

Incunabula

Fifteenth Century Printed Books at the University of Illinois. Compiled by C. U. Faye. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1949. (Illinois Contributions to Librarianship no. 4). 160p. \$3.00.

The indefatigable bibliographer and student of early printing, C. U. Faye, was well chosen for the work of compiling the Illinois list of fifteenth century books which now comes to take its place among the Huntington, Newberry, Morgan and other check lists of incunabula. Mr. Faye has a rare combination of linguistic facility, an extensive experience in early printed books, and a passion for the minutiae of paleotypography which have resulted in not only a well-documented list but also a thought-provoking introduction to the field.

The Illinois list numbers some 431 items including three designated as sixteenth century printing. The arrangement is that of Robert Proctor. Each country is taken in the order in which printing was established within its borders, with the cities of each country in chronological order on the same principle. Within each city, the presses of each city appear in the order of their establishment, and the publications of each press are listed according to the date of publication, insofar as this is known.

Immediately following the introduction is a list of references including the most important works useful in the field of incunabula.

The specific qualities of some of these works are recorded in the first pages of the introduction. This list of incunabula is followed by a parallel listing of Hain, Copinger, Reichling, and the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* with the Illinois numbers. The indices include an index of printers, presses, publishers and places all in one, and an author and title index, with a concordance to the *Second Census* of Stillwell.

It is only just that Illinois, as one of the most rapidly growing university libraries of the country, should publicize its now considerable holdings of incunabula, and the production of this list adds considerable luster to the series of Illinois Contributions to Librarianship. This volume contains much more than the usual list of early printed books. In addition to the meticulous detail of identification surrounding each entry, Mr. Faye has incorporated in his introduction a theme which deserves the attention of all amateurs of early printing.

In a "Note on the Cataloging of Incunabula," the compiler first outlines the development of the now accepted authorities in this field, and notes in particular the scope of the identification work in each bibliography. The identifying elements normally include paper, typography, illustrations, foliation, binding. Some bibliographies are more reliable for one element than others; some provide greater detail, utilizing many identifying elements in