

# The Divisional Library at Nebraska: Two Aspects

The following two papers on the divisional library at the University of Nebraska provide additional information on this development in library organization. Earlier papers have appeared in *C & R L*, July, 1951, and October, 1953. An article on the divisional plan at Oregon appears in the April, 1953, issue of *C & R L*.

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## The Role of the Divisional Librarian

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AS FAR BACK AS 1911 the student body at the University of Nebraska began agitating for a new library to replace the inadequate building which had long outgrown its usefulness. It was not until 1940, however, that the dream became a reality, when the Board of Regents announced its intention to use the \$850,000 bequest from the estate of Don L. Love for the erection of a memorial library. Early in 1941 plans for the new library began to take shape. Throughout the 1920's and 30's successive directors of the libraries had given considerable thought and planning as to what the library on the campus at the University of Nebraska should be. These men working with a committee of administrative officers and faculty members came to the conclusion that the traditional library organization, which provided a General Reading Room, a Reference Room, a Periodicals Room, and a Reserve Book Room, with the heart of the book collection in a relatively inaccessible closed stack area, would have to be replaced with a plan in keeping with the needs of the students and faculty.

The trend in college teaching had turned away from the use of a single textbook in a course, a method of instruction which made evasion of the library so easy for the student. More emphasis was being placed on the broader use of books and other materials, and the library had to recognize this concept. In order to break down the barriers between readers and books and thereby bring the students into intimate contact with printed matter, the organization decided upon was the "divisional plan" which had been pioneered among university libraries at the University of Colorado and Brown University.

The three subject matter divisions into which all materials were divided are: the humanities, social studies, and science and technology. This paper concerns itself with the role played by the Divisional Librarians in the "divisional plan" of library administration at the University of Nebraska.

### *Functions Common to the Divisional Librarians*

The Divisional Librarians at the University of Nebraska are the heads of the three major subject divisions. As such they are equivalent in rank, authority, and responsibility. Most of their duties are of a common or similar nature. Important variations are dealt with in a later part of this study. At the moment, however, we are concerned with explaining the general areas of operation which are alike in each of the major subject divisions.

In the interest of orderly analysis, the common functions of the Divisional Librarians can be divided into four broad areas:

- a. administration;
- b. contacts with other faculty members;
- c. book selection; and
- d. supervision and liaison.

The paragraphs immediately following briefly explore each of these common functions as they are pursued at the University of Nebraska Libraries.

The Director of University Libraries occupies a position established by the Board of Regents of the University. The organization and direction of the system of libraries are the major concern of the Director. He is guided primarily by the needs of the faculty and student body and by budgetary limitations. As the incumbent Director has set up his organization, there are eight positions on a more or less equal level immediately below that of the Director. These are the three Divisional Librarians, the three Branch Librarians—in Agriculture, Law, and Medicine—the Public Service Librarian and the Technical Service Librarian. Each of these eight persons reports to the Director. The common method of reporting is by means of frequent committee meetings.

For practical purposes of administration, the Divisional Librarians generally represent the Branch Librarians at meetings with the Director. As a matter of fact, for the past three years the positions of Divisional Librarian in science and Technology and Librarian of the College of Agriculture have been united in a single individual. The administrative sessions between the Director and the Divisional Librarians are practically always attended by the Public Service Librarian and the Technical Service Librarian as well.

By means of discussion at these meetings, which occur as often as three times each week, the system of libraries at the University of Nebraska is administered. Problems which at first seem unique to one division usually prove to have ramifications which effect the entire system of libraries. Generally speaking, after each problem or proposition has been discussed thoroughly, agreement is reached among the persons representing the areas concerned. Where agreement is not reached, experimentation is carefully outlined and authorized to determine whether one proposal

has more merit than another. By such a method of democratic administration the cooperation, coordination, and comprehensive understanding so necessary to efficient administration are achieved.

In this type of administrative procedure, the Divisional Librarians play a prominent role. They are involved in all policy making. They present the matters which comprise the budget of the University Libraries, and they are in an excellent position to assist the Director in substantiating his request for funds. Each of the Divisional Librarians is aware of and shares in the responsibility for the complete program of operation of the University's entire system of libraries. Each is, accordingly, in a position to supervise the operation of the entire system in the Director's absence. As a matter of practice, the "Acting Directorship" is rotated among the Divisional, Public, and Technical Service Librarians when the Director finds it necessary to be away for a week or longer.

Since one of the major functions of the Divisional Librarians is dealing with the other members of the University's faculty, it is significant that each of the Divisional Librarians is designated as an Assistant Professor. At Nebraska this rank is factual rather than merely nominal or honorary. Each of the Divisional Librarians, as well as most of the professional staff, is an active member of the American Association of University Professors. Furthermore, with rank of Assistant Professor, each of the Divisional Librarians actively participates in the deliberations of the University Senate. As such, our *contacts with other faculty members* are on a much higher plane than the professor/clerk relationship that that is still all too common in many university Libraries.

The reasons for frequent contacts with other faculty members are legion. Many of our conversations are concerned with book budgets. The Divisional Librarians regularly recommend additions to or deductions from the book funds allocated to the various departments of instruction. Such recommendations are carefully explained to the deans and department chairmen concerned by the Divisional Librarians. Other conversations center around such matters as the need to purchase more or fewer materials in specified areas to meet the demands of students, the clarification of regulations governing reserve book procedures, and the undesirability of purchasing ma-

terials for departmental consumption rather than for the libraries' collections. Concerning the latter point, all requests for purchase of printed materials to be housed in faculty or departmental offices must be approved or disapproved by the Divisional Librarians. As examples, it may be necessary for the Divisional Librarian in Science and Technology to convince the Dean of the College of Engineering and Architecture that he does not need each and every new edition of *American Men of Science* in his office permanently; or conversely, for the Divisional Librarian in the Social Studies to convince the Director of University Libraries that departmental subscriptions to a dozen specified periodicals are essential to the teaching program of the College of Business Administration.

The above brief outline of certain types of contact between the Divisional Librarians and the other members of the faculty illustrate two important features. First, the Divisional Librarians must be professionally and personally acceptable to the other members of the faculty and must be alert to the needs of the departments of instruction as well as of the library system. And second, the Divisional Librarians must act as a buffer between the general run of faculty/library problems and the Director's office. Under the divisional plan of administration at the University of Nebraska Libraries the Director's contacts with the faculty members, other than the innumerable friendly and personal ones, are through Senate and faculty committee meetings.

The third major function common to all three Divisional Librarians is book selection. It is the obligation of the Divisional Librarians to build well-rounded collections in all phases of their subject divisions. Although the burden of selection generally falls upon the faculty members of book committees in each of the several teaching departments, careful supervision of the overall program of selection remains in the hands of the subject division specialists. Otherwise, mounds of material might be purchased to satisfy one professor's hobby or research program and there might be an absolute void in another area where a professor purchases books for his own personal office or home collection but ignores the needs of a library system. Where funds for the purchase of books are allocated to the separate departments of instruction, as they are here at the University of Nebraska, it would be easy

to feel that expenditure of book funds was solely the responsibility of the departments. Such an attitude as: "Well, if the History Department wants to spend all of its money for English History materials, that's up to the Department," would leave the University Libraries in a woeful position when assignments are made or research is attempted in Latin American or Russian History. Ultimately, the various faculty members depart but the University Libraries remain.

The Divisional Librarians have two methods of meeting their obligation of building well-balanced collections. Through our overall competence in the general subject area and our regular recourse to book selection tools, we make direct purchase recommendations to the members of the faculty teaching in the specific areas. Unless the Divisional Librarian's evaluation of the material in question is faulty, the faculty members generally respond favorably and the recommended materials are purchased. To offset any areas in which there is an absence of faculty or a lack of faculty interest in book selection, each Divisional Librarian has a book fund to administer. This fund provides the reference materials needed by the subject librarians in the various divisions, as well as materials to fill in the gaps in the subject collections.

By consultation and agreement among the Divisional Librarians in the matter of book selection, a considerable amount of duplication is avoided. It is frequently difficult to determine the lines of demarcation between various treatments of the same subject. If the Divisional Librarians did not supervise the book selection process there would often be disagreement as to the "right" place to shelve certain titles, such lack of agreement leading generally to duplication of materials.

The fourth major function which is common among the Divisional Librarians is *supervision* and *liaison*. Working directly under the supervision of the Divisional Librarians are other professional librarians. These persons, in addition to being graduates of library schools, generally have degrees with majors and minors in specific subject areas. In the Social Studies Division, for instance, the Education Librarian has a degree in Secondary Education and has had several years of teaching experience; the Social Studies Librarian has a degree in Social Sciences; and the Documents Librarian has degrees in Political Sci-

ence and History. Each of these librarians in turn has one or more assistants with degrees in both library science and subject areas. In the Science and Technology Division, likewise, the Librarians have degrees in Geology, Biochemistry, Biology, and Chemical Engineering. The Divisional Librarians, in addition to supervising the activities of the Librarians in their subject divisions, are also charged with the responsibility of coordinating the efforts of the several Librarians. The Education Librarian may be inclined to make her part of the Social Studies Division a separate, and in her mind supreme, entity rather than a part of the unit. The Librarian in Science and Technology whose speciality is Geology, may want to spend her time doing bibliographical research for a favorite faculty member. Librarians, if left to follow their individual inclinations, are prone to pursue diverse paths. The Divisional Librarians must see that these paths are parallel or lead to a common goal.

The liaison function of the Divisional Librarians is most pronounced in dealing with branch, departmental, and laboratory libraries. Such special collections of material are the result of a variety of things, i.e., accreditation requirements, physical separation of campuses, and teaching techniques. Viewing the total picture at the University of Nebraska as being divided into three major subject areas—humanities, sciences, and social studies—the responsibility of the Divisional Librarians includes a close working relationship with the several outlying book collections. Some of these outlying collections are an integral part of one of the subject divisions. Such is the case with the Chemistry Library and the Geology Library. These libraries are under the direct control and operation of the Divisional Librarian in Science and Technology. On the other hand, his connection with the Library of the College of Medicine, located 60 miles away, is of a liaison rather than a supervisory nature. He advises with the Librarian of the College of Medicine relative to the needs of that Library and represents her at a majority of the University Libraries' administrative committee meetings. Much the same situation prevails between the Divisional Librarian in the Social Studies and the Librarian of the College of Law, even though the Law Library is within 200 yards of the central library building, Love Memorial Library. Such

liaison functions are designed to prevent unnecessary duplication of materials and to encourage uniformity in operating techniques.

#### *Functions Unique Among the Divisional Librarians*

Just as there are many functions which the Divisional Librarians have in common in fulfilling their positions in the University of Nebraska Libraries, so also are there functions which are peculiar to one or another division. The following brief description of the latter types of function is by no means exhaustive but is intended rather to provide illustrations of variations between the three positions held by the Divisional Librarians.

There is one feature in particular that makes the work of the Divisional Librarian in the Social Studies different from the work of the other Divisional Librarians. The Social Studies Division presents a special problem in coordination of activities within the central library building because of the physical layout of this division. Occupying the entire third floor of Love Memorial Library, this division is made up of three large reading rooms. One is devoted to government publications, one to education materials, and the third and largest to books, pamphlets, and periodicals in the subject fields of history, sociology, political science, social work, geography, psychology, business administration, and military and naval science.

Without the guidance of the division head, the subject librarians in each of these reading rooms are inclined to think of their units as separate areas rather than as parts of a coordinated division. Further, they come to think of themselves as "reading room" librarians rather than subject librarians. This has implications where the managing of materials in the stacks is concerned, and where building up research collections for the future use of scholars is involved, since the materials in the reading rooms are primarily of the type that are of most concern to undergraduate students. Coordination of the several physically separated areas in the Social Studies Division is further necessary to insure uniformity in procedures, record keeping, reporting, maintenance of card catalogs and vertical files, and so forth. An additional significant advantage of coordination is the broad experience the subject librarians get in providing service to students and faculty members. Being indi-

viduals on the staff of a division, as opposed to having only reading room affiliations, these subject librarians are frequently called upon to answer questions anywhere in the Social Studies Division. Furthermore, the scheduling of Librarians and Student Assistants for service is simplified when all members of such a large division are trained and experienced throughout the division rather than in a single subject area.

The only Reserve Desk in the entire library system at the University of Nebraska is in the Social Studies Division and is accordingly under the supervision of the Divisional Librarian in the Social Studies.<sup>1</sup>

Outside the confines of the central library building, the Divisional Librarian in the Social Studies has one branch library to supervise. This is the Teachers College High School Library. It presents a different kind of problem for the Divisional Librarian, not only because of its physical separation from the rest of his division, but because in addition, selection of its materials is quite distinct from selection of the types of materials usually purchased for a university library.

The Divisional Librarian in the Social Studies is also the person who is logically called upon to carry on liaison activities between the central library building and the College of Law Library. Since there is so broad a range of subjects common to both social sciences and law, e.g., international relations, sociology, business management, taxation, insurance, and social work, coordination between the Social Studies Division and the College of Law Library is important. Without cooperative methods considerable duplication of materials would be a natural result and there would be wide variations in procedures, reports, and record keeping techniques. As stated above, this liaison function enables the Divisional Librarian in the Social Studies to represent the Librarian of the College of Law at the administrative meetings with the Director of University Libraries and the other Divisional Librarians.

The Humanities Division of the University of Nebraska Libraries is much more compact than either of the other subject divisions. The only laboratory library in this division is in

architecture, and it is attended by the Secretary of the Department of Architecture who is indirectly under the supervision of the Divisional Librarian in the Humanities. The remainder of the Division is housed in a single large room of Love Memorial Library and in adjacent stack areas. With such a compact area to administer, the Divisional Librarian in the Humanities is enabled to place more emphasis on providing direct service to students and faculty members than are the other two Divisional Librarians. Then too, although there is no such area as a general reference room in the University of Nebraska library system, the physical accident of proximity to the information center at the Loan Desk in Love Memorial Library results in the directing of more of the general questions to the Humanities Division staff. Thus, in administrative meetings, the opinions of the Divisional Librarian in the Humanities on matters affecting service to the public are particularly valid since his contacts with the problems of the students are so much more numerous and so much more direct.

As has been implied, the "division" concept as applied to University libraries is administrative rather than physical. That this is true is well illustrated by the division pertaining to science and technology. At Nebraska, for example, as well as at most other universities, there are small collections scattered throughout the campus designed mainly to serve specific departments, such as Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, or general subject areas, such as biology.<sup>2</sup>

The Divisional Librarian in Science and Technology, therefore, has under his supervision, in addition to the Science Reading Room, the so-called "departmental" libraries. These consist of libraries for the biological sciences, chemistry and chemical engineering, and geology. Each of these libraries has a full-time non-professional staff member in charge, whose responsibility consists mainly of service to faculty and students, and who is directly responsible to the Divisional Librarian. Matters pertaining to book budgets, subscriptions to new periodicals, physical plant, equipment, personnel, and other administrative contacts with the department chairmen

<sup>1</sup>For a fairly complete explanation of this operation see the article by Vennix, A. J., "Two-Hour Reserve Desk at University of Nebraska," *Library Journal*, 77:1040-41, June 15, 1952.

<sup>2</sup>For a more complete discussion, see Blanchard, J. R., "Departmental Libraries in Divisional Plan University Libraries," *College and Research Libraries* 14: 243-248, July, 1953.

and faculty are handled by the Divisional Librarian. The Science Librarian, who is second in command of the division, supervises the branches in matters of daily routine.

The administration of departmental libraries is primarily a matter of faculty-library agreement and involves a great deal of planning and conversation based upon overall university educational policy and finances. The rate and direction of growth of these outlying collections are limited somewhat by the needs of the faculties of various departments for the same materials. Because book and periodical budgets are not without limit at Nebraska and afford very little duplication, the Divisional Librarian in Science and Technology is often called upon to act as arbiter in deciding where to house new subscriptions or expensive compendia. For the most part the general policy prevails that if there is a need for an item by more than one department and the item is not to be duplicated it will be placed in the Science Reading Room of Love Memorial Library and made equally available to all. Such problems which have no completely satisfactory answer for everyone concerned, often suggest to the Divisional Librarian that a course in diplomacy would not be inappropriate in the library school curricula. The example cited is just one of many instances which necessitates an occasional meeting with the entire faculty of the various departments, especially those departments which have libraries of their own.

Another type of outlying collection is the so-called "laboratory" library—an unorganized collection of materials necessary for the laboratory process of research and instruction. In the Science and Technology Division at Nebraska we have on the main campus laboratory collections in Physics, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and the Student Health Center. In each instance such collections are under the supervision of personnel in the respective departments, usually the departmental secretaries.

Because these collections vary from one department to another, they each represent individual problems. One problem common to all is the sometimes unplanned but oftentimes deliberate growth resulting from overzealous researchers who feel that they must have everything they need or might need within arm's reach of their desks. The Divi-

sional Librarian must weigh requests for additions to these collections in the light of other needs on the campus. It is necessary, also, to maintain a constant vigilance against the spurious birth of such collections in the various laboratories and offices. This is primarily a joint responsibility of the Divisional Librarian and the Public Service Librarian.

The College of Agriculture Library, an administrative unit, has undergone several changes in the past few years. Within recent years the Divisional Librarian in Science and Technology has also been the Librarian of the College of Agriculture, a dual position which the present incumbent holds. As such it affords an excellent opportunity to practice to the fullest the role of coordinator. Duplication of book and periodical purchases between agriculture and other departments of science can be avoided, particularly in the areas of biology, both pure and applied. Because the College of Agriculture also has four laboratory libraries outside the College Library in Animal Pathology, Entomology, Agricultural Chemistry, and Plant Pathology—uniform practices can be established among all such units at the University. The College of Agriculture is on a campus of its own, separated from the rest of the University. Therefore, this dual position insures a close relationship of the library activities of the two campuses and policies and procedures are closely coordinated.

Although there are recognized advantages in this dichotomy of responsibility, there are disadvantages due to the division of time between two campuses. Therefore the plan for the immediate future is to separate the positions, with a full-time appointment for each. The Divisional Librarian in Science and Technology will then serve as coordinator or liaison officer for the College of Agriculture Library in much the same way as he does for the College of Medicine Library in Omaha, some 60 miles distant. The Divisional Librarian will continue to represent all science collections on the three campuses in most library administrative meetings. Specific problems however, involving the College Libraries will be handled by the Librarian of each library. Also, each Librarian will represent his respective library in the larger general administrative meetings called by the Director, and in such committees as the Periodicals Commit-

tee, which passes on all requests for new subscriptions, and the Public Service Committee, which meets on problems involving public service.

As coordinator for the Science Reading Room and departmental and laboratory libraries, the Divisional Librarian in Science and Technology is able to achieve a number of things. He is able to establish uniform practices among the various units. He is able to establish effective communications between the units, as, for example, making each unit aware of the periodical holdings of the other units. He is able to establish a policy in cooperation with the Director as to size and content of the various units. He can assure the adequate building of collections in areas which seem to be the responsibility of no one unit, and in areas which so greatly overlap into two or more units that no one assumes responsibility for them. He can effectively utilize the staff of the various units to the best advantage of the Division as a whole by staffing each unit with personnel most suitably qualified for the responsibilities involved in each position. He is able to centralize the reporting for the Division, thereby achieving unanimity for the division and more effective administration. He is able to plan a coordinated budget which will more accurately reflect the book needs of the university in the fields of science and technology, thereby achieving a balanced picture of needs in the total science area rather than a distribution based

entirely upon demands. He is, as our British friends say, a scientific officer in the library, representing the interests of both the library and the departments of science.

### Summary

The Divisional Librarian in the University of Nebraska Libraries is, as has been described, a junior executive. His responsibilities range from book selection to administration. Much of his work is of a supervisory nature and requires a great deal of contact with other faculty members. He serves as the liaison officer between the library and the teaching and research departments. He is the principal representative to deal with the faculty on nearly all their library problems.

The position of Divisional Librarian finds its near equivalent, in the non-divisional type of library, in the position of Assistant Director. It has the added advantage, however, of affording better acquaintance and a closer working relationship with the faculty since each Divisional Librarian deals primarily with faculty in those subjects in which he is personally most interested. Because of his intimate knowledge of the development of the various departments, the Divisional Librarian is able to advise the Director of University Libraries, and helps to build a strong collection and a coordinated service program to support the teaching and research which is carried on at the University of Nebraska.

By KATHRYN R. RENFRO

## Cataloging in the Divisional Library

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA LIBRARIES have met a distinct challenge of the divisional plan of library organization by extending the concept of subject specialization in public service into the Technical Service Division. Since June 1951, the subject specialists employed in the divisional reading rooms have

been devoting half of their working week to the cataloging and classification of books.

Two situations have compelled such a program. The law of supply and demand has played irrevocable havoc in the cataloging profession during the last decade. It has become almost impossible to recruit catalogers, or to find librarians with the generally recognized qualifications of a good cataloger; a knowledge of cataloging method, of languages, and of subject matter. Secondly, with a public service

program geared to subject emphasis, it appears both logical and almost inescapable to develop a technical service area with an analogous organization and to employ the same personnel throughout in doing so.

Nebraska's Love Memorial Library is so planned that general library service is organized by subject matter in three divisions—the humanities, the social studies, and science and technology.<sup>1</sup> The divisional librarians are selected for competence in broad fields of subject matter and also in librarianship. In most cases the librarian in the subject division has a master's degree or an equivalent background of experience in one of the major fields included in the area. For example, the science division is staffed with one librarian trained in the biological sciences and another trained in the physical sciences. Such training implies not only academic study in one subject area, but also an interest in and knowledge of related fields of science. The assistant librarians in the divisions now work half-time in public service and half-time in technical service.

The Catalog Department is currently staffed with three full-time catalogers, the Catalog Librarian and two senior catalogers, plus eight half-time junior catalogers. In addition to administrative assignments the three full-time catalogers handle proportionate shares of original cataloging and also the training of the junior catalogers and the revision of their work. The junior cataloging staff is composed of two people from each subject division, that is two from the humanities, two from the social studies, and two from science and technology, plus one each from the libraries of the Colleges of Agriculture and Law. The College of Medicine Library is located over fifty miles away in Omaha, and hence it is not practical to include its ordering and cataloging processes in the centralized system in Lincoln. Each junior cataloger devotes approximately half of his working week to cataloging. These librarians, selected for subject competence, thus apply their competencies to a broad area of librarianship including reference work and book selection, and also including bibliography, cataloging, and classification. This is librarianship "across the board" as we call it, and as such it is produc-

<sup>1</sup>Lundy, Frank A. and Renfro, Kathryn R. "New Frontiers for the College Library." *Library Journal*, 76: 1092-1094, July 1951.

ing excellent results from both the public and technical service viewpoints. Norman L. Kilpatrick wrote in 1949: "The medium-sized university library requires subject specialists, but it cannot afford to recruit them for both the public service and technical processes division. Collaboration seems to be the answer."<sup>2</sup> Collaboration is proving to be a most productive form of organization at Nebraska. It can successfully be maintained, we believe, that catalogers experienced in reference work will produce a better catalog and that reference librarians experienced in cataloging will more competently interpret the collections to their patrons.

This thesis is not unique in library history. Libraries have frequently interchanged personnel between the reference and cataloging departments in the hope of gaining a more practical approach to mutual problems, as well as closer cooperation in solving them. In many cases the program has not been satisfactory because the period of duty was too short and too infrequent for the librarian to achieve professional competence in both areas.

In a paper published in 1942, John J. Lund proposed that the cataloging process in a university library should include a unified division for subject cataloging and reference service. This proposal was substantiated by two reasons. In the first place, subject specialists are required in both the cataloging and reference departments, and adequate coverage of the entire range of subject fields can be secured only by combining the staffs of the two departments. In the second place, a subject catalog, specialized knowledge of reference librarians, and bibliographies are all needed to guide the scholar to subject material in our collections. Proper coordination of the three can best be secured by combining them in one administrative unit.<sup>3</sup>

At the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School, Raynard C. Swank of Stanford University presented a paper on the status of a central bibliography department in the subject departmentalized library. Briefly, his proposal was that a central bibliography department prepare the unit cards for all new acquisi-

<sup>2</sup>"The Technical Services Division in Libraries: a Symposium." *College and Research Libraries*, 10:61, January 1949.

<sup>3</sup>Lund, John J. "The Cataloging Process in the University Library: a Proposal for Reorganization." *College and Research Libraries*, 3:212-218, June 1942.



tions, assign subject headings for books published before 1950, and forward all books to the service divisions. The subject specialists in the division then classify all books, assign subject headings for books post-1950, and determine location—reading room, branch or main stack. A union author-title catalog of all books in the system is employed, but no general subject catalog is maintained.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to Mr. Swank's hypothesis of the decentralization of subject cataloging and of the discontinuance of a general subject catalog, Nebraska's plan is one of coordination of subject specialization in the catalog department and of critical development of the general subject catalog. "General" reference work is already vestigial at Nebraska, and although it has not appeared functional or economically feasible to eliminate a general subject catalog, subject specialization can be incorporated to "build a better catalog." The general subject catalog offers the most convenient approach to those many subjects which cut across divisional lines of organization; for example, advertising material is divided between Social Studies for business aspects and Humanities for art aspects such as design, layout, and printing types. Author and shelflist records only are duplicated in the subject reading rooms.

The subject knowledge of the divisional librarian plus his acquaintance with both faculty and student interest and with the academic program are now being applied to the public catalog. An intimate personal knowledge of general and special subject bibliographies is being used to eliminate from the card catalog those subject headings and analytics which are already available through other media. Specific subjects emphasized in local teaching and research can now be surveyed critically and given appropriate emphasis. Classification is more discriminating when assigned by librarians with adequate academic training in the subjects dealt with. An open-shelf reading room collection of fifteen or twenty thousand volumes quickly illustrates variations and deviations in the classification of similar materials located in the book stack. It should be pointed out, however, that material is design-

nated for reading room collection on the basis of subject content in relation to undergraduate use rather than upon classification, and that classification is considered not only in relation to temporary location in a reading room but also in relation to book stack location and with due regard for policies already established; hence, coordinating authority is vested in the three full-time catalog revisors. Overall a more critical and evaluative treatment of books is being developed under this system than was hitherto possible.

The next step proposed in our program of subject application in technical service is the coordination of bibliographic work in the process of ordering with that in the process of descriptive cataloging. In this way a librarian in one of the subject divisions may initiate an order request for a particular title, search the bibliographic literature for verification and price necessary to process the order, descriptively catalog and classify the book upon receipt, and finally utilize the same material in reference work with students and faculty. The work of the librarian so employed is described and limited by the boundaries of the subject matter in which he has competence, rather than by concepts of form and process in traditional library organization.

Two limitations are obvious in a staffing plan such as the one described above. In the first place the administrative cataloging time expended in training two people for each budgeted position cannot be discounted. This has proved to be a heavy load in launching the experiment, and could only be counterbalanced to some extent by staggering throughout the year the assimilation of new personnel in the department. It is to be anticipated that in the future this initial training load will also be offset by the fact that one resignation will mean only a half-time replacement in that subject area in cataloging.

Another problem has been the individual's adjustment to what are physically at least two distinct areas of library operation. Library schizophrenics are a possibility. One helpful feature in making this adjustment has been to orient the new library staff member in the divisional reading room for several months, before dividing his work week between public service and technical service. This offers an opportunity to learn the policies and procedures of the subject area before being introduced to cataloging policies and techniques.

<sup>4</sup>Swank, Raynard C. "Subject Cataloging in the Subject-departmentalized Library." In Shera, Jesse H. and Egan, Margaret E., eds. *Bibliographic Organizations; Papers Presented before the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Graduate Library School, July 24-29, 1950.* Chicago, Ill., The University of Chicago Press, 1951. p. 187-199.

The weekly schedule has been experimented with in relation to half-days, alternate days and two and a half consecutive days in cataloging. Nebraska's professional staff works a 41 hour week. The half-day schedule in both public and technical service has proved to be the least productive, while the divided week is indicated by both staff and supervisors as best. Even so the criticism is made that in public service especially patron contacts and project assignments are limited to some extent by the short work week.

This total problem in adjustment can be countered in part by comparison with the adjustment of reference librarians in a more traditional type of library. No reference librarian alone can cover the desk schedule of a 75 to 80 hour service week, consequently faculty and student contacts are handled not by individuals so much as by the staff as a unit. A day's work may also include a problem in physics in the morning and a problem in classical literature in the afternoon. In contrast, the Nebraska staff working for example in the area of the humanities, cataloging books one day and answering reference questions the next day all in a definitely defined and limited subject area, does not face as many diverse complexities as the "general reference librar-

ian." It is true that a project may occasionally have to be tabled for a day or passed on to another librarian for immediate completion.

Although it is still too early in the experiment actually to measure the success of the plan, certain accomplishments are apparent. The Cataloging Department is now fully staffed, so that currently increasing programs of acquisition and cataloging are being assimilated and inroads are being made on the backlog of non-processed materials accumulated during the war and post-war periods. A staff of subject specialists is being developed which has the academic training to do more satisfactory subject cataloging, subject classification and reference service in a well defined subject area, rather than attempting it in so many fields that similar competence is not attainable. There are many intangible factors which cannot be measured. Perhaps the catalog will sacrifice some perfection in description detail and in uniformity, but more critically assigned classification and subject headings should more than compensate for the loss. Certainly subject unity throughout the organization will demonstrate the ultimate implications of the divisional plan.

## Congressional Bill Introduced

A bill has just been introduced into Congress to "authorize newspapers, permanently bound for preservation, to be transmitted through the mails at the rate provided for books." Congressman Harold Hagen who introduced the bill also favors an amendment which would authorize manuscript theses as well as newspapers to go book rate when sent to or from schools, colleges, universities, or public libraries, etc.

All librarians will certainly be grateful to Mr. Hagen for this action as well as the many other ways he has supported libraries in the past. Letters approving the bill and the amendment might well be sent to Congressman Edward H. Rees who is chairman of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, or to other committee members. This small but important piece of legislation might well pass without difficulty if it is given the prompt active support of all who read this notice. Be sure to send a carbon copy of your letter to the ALA Washington Office, Hotel Congressional, Washington 3, D. C.