

Review Articles

The Future May Be Better

Fifth Annual Report for the Period Ending June 30, 1961. Council on Library Resources. 66p.

The five year summary of the Council on Library Resources gives ample evidence of the dedication of the board and its officers to aid in the solving of a variety of library problems. Four broad areas of concern have received attention and grants. These are: improvement of the means of bibliographical access, improvement of the means of physical access, improvement of the administrative basis of library work, and fact-finding and planning for research and development. The renewal of the initial grant from the Ford Foundation for another seven to ten years is heartening. The 155 grants already made give promise of helping to solve a variety of problems that beset libraries. Of these, 63 were still in progress at reporting time. A few projects turned out not to yield the hoped-for solution; some of them may merit further study and investigation.

The grants for improvement of bibliographical access fall into the broad categories of standardization, improvement of bibliographic operations, coordination of effort, and improvement of bibliographic tools. Noteworthy is the assistance toward developing an international cataloging code. To date the Council has aided with studies of card-catalog stock and card-catalog reproduction. A satisfactory card duplicator is still needed—the grants in progress may offer solutions. Better means of compiling bibliographies and keeping them up to date are badly needed. This reviewer is still skeptical about automatic indexing, but is prepared to reverse judgment if evidence is forthcoming. The new grant from the Ford Foundation directs the Council to concentrate its work in the field of technical storage and retrieval. Cooperative processing may be feasible under some situations, but wide applicability to various types of libraries with

different classification systems seems impractical. The need for bibliographies of microforms is likely to increase rather than diminish as libraries increase their holdings of microforms. More crucial is the improvement of bibliographical tools—the new Union List of Serials, the guides to records of manuscript collections, and the inventory of musical scores are steps in the right direction, as are ways and means to aid in college library book selection as distinct from the acquisition of materials for large research collections.

The second broad category of grants relates to improvement of access to materials. Grants for broadening and strengthening the Farmington Plan, for the service of the United States Book Exchange, for photocopying and aiding the international flow of books and resources for Slavic studies only scratch the surface. Grants for improved use of storage space include the Yale University selective storage plan and the University of Chicago's *Study of Patterns in the Use of Research Library Materials*, and should have broad application. The Fussler-Simon study, *Patterns in The Use of Books in Large Research Libraries*, is a noteworthy contribution. This study or a summary of it should be made available so that the techniques used may be applied to other disciplines and in more libraries. Deterioration of paper plagues all libraries. The Virginia State Library grants may not help us markedly with books now on our shelves but may in time mean that some of the later twentieth-century publications will last. (The five-year report is printed on "Permalife" paper). Preservation includes binding and fire protection. Grants in these areas may yield notable advance. Copying techniques are of importance to many institutions and individuals. The legalities of copying have been investigated and reported to the library press. Thanks to the Council on Library Resources, we have the first journal to appear in microform. Retrieval of microtext as well as improved means of handling and reading microforms concern many of us.

Some thirty grants have been made to improve the administrative bases of library work, among them, interlibrary cooperation, the survey of federal libraries, promotion of the use of library services, setting of standards for school libraries, improvement of circulation systems, the planning of library buildings, and the testing of supplies and equipment.

Over twenty grants related to fact-finding and planning for research in library development. The largest grant went to the Rutgers University Graduate School of Library Service for its "Targets for Research" series. Five volumes in eighteen parts have been issued. They tend to be anthologies of library literature and are disappointing in format and too infrequently spell out the ways and means for future study. The final category of grants relates to the application of mathematics and mechanical and electronic devices to library work.

The text of the five year survey and the annual report for 1960/61 merit close reading and reflective thinking. The young Council has matured in these five years. Some "crippling frustrations" may be eased as a result of large and small grants. The majority of the grants were for less than \$10,000—seed corn that is well worth while. The larger grants, notably the Library Technology Project, with all of its various facets, is to be continued. Some of the frustrations remain with us—the grants may not yield a final solution, but better techniques may result in gradual improvement.

The second portion of the fifth annual report relates to the fiscal year 1960/61 with fifty-nine grants totaling over a million and a half dollars. Seven grants were extensions of earlier ones. A number of projects were completed; notably, the mechanization of bibliographic operations which made possible the conversion of the *Current List of Medical Literature* to the *Index Medicus*, making use of the mechanization of production, although further work needs to be done on retrieval of information for subdisciplines of medicine. Arrangements for the procurement of foreign publications under Public Law 480 are under way, and the study of circulation systems undertaken by George Fry and Associates was published by the ALA in 1961.

It is good to know that the Council is un-

daunted and is still seeking solutions for problems not yet solved or even identified, and is prepared to receive suggestions and applications from individuals and organizations for future investigations. Doubtless there are more worthwhile applications than money to grant. Some proposals will not merit encouragement, but judging from the first five years, the beginning has been good—the future may be even better.—*Flora B. Ludington, Mount Holyoke College Library.*

Retrieval Systems

The State of the Library Art—Volume 4, edited by Ralph R. Shaw. Part 1, Notched Cards by Felix Reichmann; Part 2, Feature Cards (Peek-a-Boo Cards) by Lawrence S. Thompson; Part 3, Punched Cards by Ralph Blasingame, Jr.; Part 4, Electronic Searching by Gerald Jahoda; Part 5, Coding in Yes-No Form by Doralyn J. Hickey. New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers, the State University, Graduate School of Library Service, 1961. 373p. \$8.00.

As the running head, but not the title page, shows, volume four of the *State of the Library Art* is about retrieval systems. This volume is a useful survey of some of the peripheral frontiers of librarianship which extend into documentation. The authors have worked hard on a difficult assignment and have produced a creditable first attempt to describe their topics. The extensive references are the nucleus of a good bibliography. Dr. Jahoda has made the greatest contribution to the literature with his part, followed by Miss Hickey and Dr. Thompson, in my opinion. The contents of the volume are of such interest that the authors and the editor should make every effort to publish a second, much revised and improved edition within a year.

It is difficult to review this volume without being so critical as to distress the authors and editor if not to alienate them from the reviewer. The value of the book is reduced by defects in organization and presentation