Review Articles

Yale's Selective Book Retirement Program. By Lee Ash. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963. xii, 94p. $4. (63-17389).

This is the interesting report of a three-year study that was financed by a grant of $150,000 from the Council on Library Resources. There is a Preface by James T. Babb; a Foreword by John H. Ottemiller, who directed the project; and a Concluding Statement by Professor Raymond D. Morris. The working papers and the longer report by Mr. Ash from which this printed volume was abstracted are available at Yale for consultation.

The difficulties of selective retirement are not minimized, and the claims made for it are modest. Mr. Babb writes, "Although we believe that our Selective Book Retirement offers a palliative to the increasing space problem in research libraries, we recognize that it is not a solution." Professor Morris observes that the selection of books for retirement "is time-consuming, requiring the best judgment that we can muster, which means that it is an expensive program. It could very well turn out that it will prove so expensive in execution that (as with microreproduction) there will be a point beyond which it will not be feasible in terms of economy."

In view of this economic question, it might have been desirable to include a more rigorous analysis of costs. During the course of the project, 74,648 volumes were transferred from the main stacks to storage by size, 28,443 were discarded, 17,259 were transferred to other libraries (2,572 of these to libraries outside the university), and 14,188 new acquisitions were sent directly to storage. Adding these, and dividing their total of 134,538 into the $81,936.60 spent for salaries of the processing staff for the project, the report concludes that processing cost 61¢ per volume. The 14,188 new acquisitions, however (except for some of the new theses), were not handled by this staff, and the cost that is reported includes nothing for materials, for 95,777 photoclerk exposures, for space occupied by the project staff, or, apparently, for refiling cards.

Space in the main stack is calculated to be worth $1.68 per volume; space in storage comes to 42¢ per volume. On this basis, the library saves $1.26 on space for each volume transferred to storage; but, if processing takes 61¢ or more, then selection, requiring consideration by faculty or high level professional personnel, might indeed cut the total saving to a minute sum. The report notes that it is easy at the beginning of such a program to deal with subjects of little interest to the university's teaching and research, but, "As those subjects are completed, the selecting becomes more time consuming and difficult; and, as the staff moves to subjects that are heavily used, hours of work produce but meager results." When one considers what it costs to store a book by size (42¢ for space, plus 61¢ or more for processing, plus high priced time for selection), one begins to wonder if a book worth that much is not worth the whole $1.68 that it is now taking on accessible and classified shelves.

Obviously, then, this is a significant chapter in the story of storage, but no means the last one.—*Edwin E. Williams, Harvard University.*

Methods of Information Handling. By Charles P. Bourne. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1963. xiv, 241p. $12.95. (63-20628).

It is difficult for a textbook writer to review the work of a colleague who has written a text in the same field. If there is overlap, it can be said that the overlap is unnecessary; if different material is presented, it can be said that there is unnecessary detail; if material has been omitted, that can also be criticized. Obviously, the reviewer has used his best judgment in his own work, and therefore his review might tend to be overly critical.

But try as I might, it was not possible to be anything but glowing about this excellent book. The Bourne book is a good one; it

adds substantially to those existing in the field in the following ways:

1. The information storage and retrieval field is viewed broadly—going beyond the traditional library and even beyond the specialized information or documentation center. Rather, the information that is considered covers the broad spectrum, ranging from numerical to nonnumerical information; the systems considered range from the manual to the computer-oriented.
2. The organization of the field is pleasing: starting with fundamental filing problems; continuing with organization of information; then on to coding (called "the indexing shorthand"); going on to machine language representation; punched card systems; computer systems; and finally to microfilm and image handling equipment.

The book is interspersed with cost estimates and practical words of caution. The author has obviously made a special attempt to illustrate the book exhaustively, since there are no less than 176 figures and 23 tables in the numbered sequences, and more of them unnumbered. Their production is rather uniformly good.

From rags to riches is the situation we now have with regard to textbooks in the information storage and retrieval field. Only eighteen months ago there were none, and now there are three. Of course, there are overlaps, but not unhealthy ones. The instructor who now wishes to use a text for an introductory course in the information sciences can use parts of each text, or he can follow closely any one of them.—*Allen Kent, University of Pittsburgh.*

The Place of a Research Library in a Liberal Arts College, Proceedings of a Symposium Held at Bowdoin College, February 21-22, 1963. Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College, 1963. 84p. $2. (63-25194).

The achievements of the brilliantly conceived and admirably carried out Bowdoin College conference on *The Place of Research in a Liberal Arts College* held in February 1963 are now available to a wider audience. Frederick Wagman, graduate of a liberal arts college and the director of a large university library, was in an excellent position to make comparisons. He was fretful about junior colleges and the new "universities" with inadequate resources, to say nothing about faculty and student research needs. The task of selecting materials for a college library is more difficult than selecting materials for a large university. Coordination of the teaching and research programs is essential in both colleges and universities. Mr. Wagman suggested that the resources, staffs, and buildings have to be generous if the prestige colleges are to maintain their status in the years to come.

The second speaker, Eileen Thornton, is responsible for directing the library of Oberlin, a prestige college. With smaller faculties and a more compact curriculum, the college nevertheless has marked problems of recruitment and retention of faculty members as specialized interests emerge that may change the variety of materials demanded. The increased number of periodicals and serials required to support teaching programs and to meet faculty and student needs, means ever increasing budgets, staff, and buildings. Good basic collections plus staff members prepared and able to identify suitable topics for student specialization are essential. An increase in independent work may reduce the faculty load but will increase the library staff load and will affect library staff budgets.

Bowdoin was represented among the speakers by Professor Athern Daggett, Professor Emeritus Edward C. Kirkland, and Librarian Richard Harwell. They commended Bowdoin for its library resources assembled over a long span of years. Mr. Harwell suggested that faculty-library relations are a two-way street. Professor Kirkland reminded the conference that the library is a central fact larger than architectural terms but extending to basic policy, library staff, and faculty appointments, promotions, and replacements. What counts is students and professors at work together in classrooms and the library.

The conference closed with an address by Verner W. Clapp, president of the Council on Library Resources. He defined a research library as a place in which one can go to the sources and trace a footnote back home. The possibility of assembling a million-volume library in microform will not