

Reference Books of 1944-1946

Reference Books of 1944-1946 . . . Fourth informal supplement to *Guide to Reference Books*, Sixth Edition, by Isadore Gilbert Mudge. Constance M. Winchell. American Library Association, 1947. 94p.

This fourth supplement will be, Miss Winchell hopes, the last to bridge the interval between the sixth and seventh editions of the work that has long been referred to simply as "Mudge." Alice Kroeger's labors at the turn of the century laid the foundation for Miss Mudge's excellent book, and it is fitting that Constance Winchell, who succeeded Miss Mudge as reference librarian at Columbia University, should be carrying it on.

Reference Books of 1944-1946 differs little in size, scope, and arrangement from the three supplements which have preceded it. In the Preface gratification is expressed at the increasing flow of books from Europe, tempered by regret that the flow is still far from steady. This has resulted in the omission of a number of items that the author would like to have included. Certain books which are important mainly in connection with the war are listed for historical rather than immediately practical purposes.

Because the seventh edition of the *Guide to Reference Books* is expected by 1950, the index, which is so useful in a classified work of this kind, has not been cumulated with that for the other supplements. To check an item in the work as a whole it is now necessary to consult three indexes, not a heavy task, nor a frequent one for any individual user, and a saving in time and labor in the preparation, and of cost and bulk in the product.

Care has been taken to keep the record of books entered in previous supplements up-to-date. The Library of Congress *Catalog* is a case in point; and for this work the anticipatory note on future parts is an example of the generous service *Reference Books of 1944-1946* gives.

Works which have been revised since an earlier listing are also recorded, in keeping with the declared policy. Henley's *Twentieth Century Book of Formulas, Processes and Trade Secrets* appears yet again, for the sake of "slight revision and a few extra-numbered pages." The value of this kind of

entry is open to question. The old familiar faces crowd the new, and as the supplements come only at three-yearly intervals, librarians are unlikely to rely on them alone for data about latest editions. Mention of all important changes, and perhaps of minor changes in foreign publications, is valuable; small alterations to reference books in English might be better left to editions of Mudge itself, supplementary information to be obtained from the usual bibliographical sources.

Restatement and possibly amendment of the criteria which determine inclusion as well as repetition of entries would be helpful in a future supplement of this kind. The fifth edition of *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory*, published this year, is listed in *Reference Books of 1944-1946*. What is the principle followed with cumulative publications such as Wilson's? The 1945 volume of the *Bibliographic Index* is entered, and this before its final cumulation, but certain other periodical indexes appear only in their final form. Mindful of Miss Mudge's statement in the Preface to *Reference Books of 1935-1937* that no attempt was made "to record new volumes of established reference annuals unless some discontinuance, irregularity of publication, or note-worthy change" called for comment, Miss Winchell might consider the extension of this policy to all works which appear regularly and are to be continued indefinitely. The use of open entries, similar to the record of *Agricultural Index* in the sixth edition of *Guide to Reference Books*, would be sufficient indication that a work is appearing at the intervals indicated in the description. The result would be a considerable decrease in the number of entries and a greater prominence for those that are fresh. Other titles that merit inclusion could be listed without increased costs.

In this connection, may a reviewer make an informal suggestion about these informal supplements? They and the *Guide to Reference Books* are so good that any way of making them even better is worth considering. The tool is used and valued in many countries; might it not enlist their far-flung aid? The editor includes only those books she herself has examined. Her field of selection is limited by the completeness of bibliog-

raphies and the distributing efficiency of publishers. If persons overseas whose work brings them into contact with new reference books were to send a brief description of these to Miss Winchell she might be helped in her task of assembling titles for examination. In the final result the very great use-

fulness of the *Guide to Reference Books* and its excellent supplements, of which *Reference Books of 1944-1946* is typical, would be increased for all who make use of them, both in this country and abroad.—*Wilma Radford, library assistant, Public Library, New South Wales.*

Governing Boards and Libraries

Men Who Control Our Universities: The Economic and Social Composition of Governing Boards of Thirty Leading American Universities. By Hubert Park Beck; with a foreword by George C. Counts. New York, King's Crown Press, 1947. x, 229p.

College and university libraries are on the way to gaining equality of status and consideration with other instructional departments. Librarians therefore should be reviewing their boards of trustees with the same kind of concern as is appropriate to their classroom-teacher colleagues. The matter of fact is that the librarian's concern is greater because the average trustee understands the role of librarians less than he does that of teachers.

Dr. Beck's book is an indispensable aid to the librarian who wishes to look squarely at his trustee situation. Of special interest to the administrator and student of administration are the numerous tables (p. 168-98) which show the distribution of board members by occupation, age and length of service, offices and directorships in business enterprises, and method of designation. The information bearing on socio-economic backgrounds will have extraordinary meaning for librarians operating in publicly supported institutions where boards of governors must represent the claims of their institution upon the tax funds of some governmental unit. In addition to general analyses which describe the composition of governing boards on a nation-wide scale, the author has provided much enlightening data for the thirty individual universities studied.

The author addresses his study and conclusions to an extremely broad audience composed of all who are interested in the relationship of social forces and backgrounds to education. Librarians will therefore find practically nothing that relates specifically to their functioning in institutions of higher

education—with the exception of the reported fact (p. 58) that 5 out of 734 board members were librarians or museum officials. (This small representation is not as deplorable as it may seem when one notes the "total absence of professional sociologists, economists, psychologists, political scientists, social workers, and social welfare administrators" from governing boards.) There is a good deal, however, which should stimulate thought and inference among librarians of college, university and endowed research libraries.

One may well, for example, raise questions about the educational accomplishment of members of governing boards. A very large percentage (72 per cent) hold earned bachelor's degrees; a still higher percentage show educational achievement beyond the high school. From the point of view of improving financial support generally, and salary scales for librarians in particular, may it not be desirable to have larger numbers of board members with an educational background which has demanded more extensive and serious use of libraries such as is implied in any program of graduate study? Again, one notes that the age-level data places most board members in college some thirty to forty years ago, in a period well before libraries assumed their enlarged role in the instructional program.

As one reads in Dr. Beck's book of the numerous and varied business, institutional, and charity activities in which individual board members engage, he is inclined to question whether the paucity of time and energies left for a college or university would not of necessity result in superficial interest. With all of these activities (p. 105-06), board members can hardly be expected to attain a working acquaintance with the aims, operations, and needs of one part of a university—its library. It would be interesting to know how frequently, if at all, members of govern-