

Book Reviews

Optimum Storage of Library Material.

By Julius Grady Cox. Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Libraries, 1964. xv, 222p.

This study is one in a series in development at Purdue University where the library and some of its problems are being examined by tyro industrial engineers. This particular problem, compact storage, has been investigated and reported in the form of a doctoral dissertation. It is important that this be kept in mind, for this may explain and perhaps justify the presentation and limitations of the content.

The abstract (p. xiii) which precedes the formal report, states, "the primary purpose of this research is to develop, discuss, and demonstrate compact storage models." The "models" in the language of the engineer here are arithmetic, statistical, or mathematical models, and not a group of actual mockups, which are occasionally used in library building planning. The author used the libraries of Purdue University and Auburn University in Alabama as physical models for on-site investigation.

The study touches on a wide range of elements which contribute to creation of the problem area. Most of these elements are recorded and briefly defined, mainly with questions of costs in view. All of the factors alleged are valid and require attention, but the treatment is cursory and in no place is consumer reaction considered. The author moves too quickly into the clearly favored and more familiar ground of purely physical considerations. He does point out that other studies at Purdue and elsewhere will treat these skimmed areas separately.

His research on shelf storage of books presumes continuous and full loading in linear, in height, and in depth variants. In addition he considers vertical spacing of shelves in single sections, length of ranges, and over-all height of ranges. He develops tables for optimum use in terms of cubic space and compares this with standard or

unsized shelving. For each pertinent factor one finds full tables of variations, together with a multitude of mathematical formulas designed, it seems, to clarify the graphic presentation. In merely two hundred pages, beginning with chapter two, this research paper proves beyond any question (a) that you can shelve more books if they are grouped by size, (b) that you can shelve even more books if you use shelves to their full depth, and (c) that you can divide most books into three to five average heights. There is extensive discussion of the "constraints" which influence the methods of shelving books, elements such as varying thickness, height or width of the book, the thickness of the shelf itself and over-all height of shelf units, as well as flexibility of shelf handling. Each of these is faithfully analyzed, tabulated, and curved and now constitutes a reliable record of all the various ways shelving can be used for the storage of long series of oblong or similar objects of varied sizes. †

The author honestly states in the final paragraph of his work "This research, at best, has made a contribution to only one aspect of one library function." This is a fact. It is also a fact that the contribution is purely academic, and as such, it will join thousands of other unread (except by reviewers) and unused doctoral dissertations. As an exercise in method, from the viewpoint of the industrial engineer, this is undoubtedly a classic example of good practice. From the point of view of the practicing librarian, this is a classic example of *reductio ad absurdum*.—Jerrold Orne, University of North Carolina.

Library Support of Medical Education and Research in Canada. By B. V. Simon. Ottawa: Association of Canadian Medical Colleges, 1964. xvii, 133p. \$2.

This survey was initiated when a Royal Commission on Health Services was appointed by the Canadian Government in 1961 to "inquire into and report upon the

existing facilities and the future needs for health services for the people of Canada." It was sponsored by the Committee on Medical Science Libraries of the Canadian Library Association—Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques and the Association of Canadian Medical Colleges/L'Association des Facultés de Médecine du Canada.

The terms of reference for the survey were: to ascertain and assess the resources of the twelve medical school libraries and to offer suggestions for their improvement and development within a coordinated nationwide plan for a biomedical information service. Miss Simon conducted the survey during the spring and summer of 1962. A questionnaire followed by a visit to each medical school was the method used to obtain the information. While the answers to the questionnaire were prepared by the medical librarians, some seventy-three interviews were held, including those with university presidents, deans of the medical schools, chief librarians of the universities, and heads of departments in the medical schools.

The results of the survey are analyzed under four main headings: (1) library needs for medical education and research; (2) library collections and services; (3) the organization of medical library service; and (4) a nationwide program for Canada. Although each of these headings has a number of subheadings, the lack of an index is a disadvantage. In addition to the analysis there is a summary of conclusions, a summary of proposals, and an estimate of costs for a five-year program. A copy of the questionnaire and statistical results are contained in an appendix.

The proposals for a nationwide program for improving access to the resources of medical literature in Canada include: (1) the establishment of a National Medical Bibliographic Centre and Information Service; (2) a program of financial aid to medical school libraries to enable them to bring their collections up to recognized standards; (3) the establishment and maintenance of an auxiliary provincewide library service for the continuing education programs; (4) the setting-up, in all teaching hospitals, of medical libraries which meet professional library standards; (5) the setting-up of a program for the training of

medical science librarians at an accredited Canadian library school.

The survey shows that the collections of medical literature in Canada are to be found chiefly in the medical school libraries. Thus the publication of the survey not only adds a valuable document to the literature on medical education but presents the first comprehensive survey of the medical library resources of a nation. Even though it portrays the Canadian scene, the survey will be valuable for other countries whose medical school libraries are faced with expanding research programs, continuing education programs, lack of supporting libraries in teaching hospitals, and the new interdisciplinary teaching programs.—*Olga B. Bishop, University of Western Ontario.*

The Heritage of the English Library. By Raymond Irwin. New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1964. 296p. \$5.50 (64-54587).

In this thoroughly delightful volume the author, who is director of the school of librarianship and archives at University College, London, continues the research he began with his *The Origins of the English Library*, published in 1958. He has flung his net wide and made a good catch, although it is remarkable that by the time he has reached half of the fourteen-chapter book he is only beginning a discussion of Cassiodorus Senator and his Vivarium (fifth century A.D.). The volume is not strictly a history of English libraries, but neither is writing one Professor Irwin's expressed intention. What he has accomplished instead is a very readable, brightly written account of how libraries and collections of books started in Western Europe and what they contributed to culture from the time of the Greeks and Romans to the eighteenth century, when the habit of reading took firm root. (It will be noticed that very little is said about the nineteenth century or thereafter.)

From the offset we are shown the essential need for paying attention to background in the study of the history of libraries. There follows a brief but meaningful discussion of five influential factors in the establishment of libraries: the economic, the literary, the social, the book trade, and the evidence of research. On the last point the author sin-