Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Social Issues and Library Problems; Case Studies in the Social Sciences. By Kenneth F. Kister. New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1968. xxv, 190p. $7.95 (68-27447).

The purpose of this book, Professor Kister informs us in his preface, is "to train librarians for professional work with the literature of the social sciences" by means of the case study method. On the whole, it is a useful book and goes some distance toward achieving this objective. The thirty cases pose significant library problems in the social sciences as well as related fields such as history and education. The settings include academic, public, and special libraries of various sizes; but most of the problems are pertinent to social science librarianship generally. The questions emphasize bibliographical matters, reflecting the author's very sensible view that "the first requirement for professional [sic] librarians is an understanding of the formal bibliographic system which provides access to the literature and its contents." Kister goes on to argue that bibliographical expertness "becomes the basis for professional judgments regarding the selection, acquisition, organization, and retrieval of the literature." This contention is well demonstrated in the cases, which are complex and involve problems in collection development, reference techniques, public relations, professional and ethical judgments, and that *bête noire* of librarianship, censorship. The introduction provides a brief but useful appraisal of the nature and development of the social sciences, their literature, and its bibliography.

Much of the book's strength derives from the case study method. By using cases to pose his problems, Kister is able to demonstrate the complexity of library problems, the inapplicability of simple answers, and the importance of evaluation and judgment based on expert knowledge. The situation presented in "Science of Man," for example, requires not simply the development of a basic reading list, but also the evalua-

tion of bibliographical sources, judgments regarding reference practice, and a consideration of the "scientific" nature of the social sciences. "The Balancing Act" calls for an appraisal of reviewing media, a discussion of the merits and possibility of an ideologically balanced collection, and a consideration of the role of the public library. Such an approach is commendable and should help to produce librarians with the breadth and flexibility that today's information problems require. The sample analyses appended to the last case provide a welcome added dimension: a guide to the book's use for both the student and the instructor as well as a demonstration of the amount and variety of thought and effort that the case study method can provoke.

Unfortunately, this method has serious pitfalls as well as advantages, and Kister is not able to overcome them all. Much of the material in this book is characterization or background which has no relevance to the problems posed. At best, it is unnecessary weight or poor amateur fiction; at worst, it conveys "information" which seems most inappropriate—stereotypes of old maid librarians, bumbling scholars, callow young librarians, and ludicrous interpersonal situations which present a vision of libraries and librarians that is trivial, embarrassing, and quite at odds with the serious and sophisticated approach that pervades the book's problems and introduction. Anyone assigning this book to library school students should recognize these shortcomings and their implications. However, if used as its author suggests, to complement other materials and teaching methods, *Social Issues and Library Problems* should prove an asset to courses in social science bibliography.—*Eldred Smith, University of California at Berkeley.*

The Management of Libraries and Information Centers. By Mildred Hawksworth Lowell. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1968. 3 vols. $17.50 (68-12642).

Perhaps the most refreshing thing about

these volumes is that Dr. Lowell has expanded the concept of management far beyond the building of budgets and plotting of work flows to include the importance of people in all of these efforts, and has therefore produced three excellent works which will be of great value to all students of librarianship.

The set comprises three volumes, each with a different purpose and subtitle. Volume I, entitled "The Case Method in Teaching Library Management," begins with a short introduction discussing the concept—or concepts—of "management," its definition by various authorities in the past, and its relation to librarianship, and then proceeds to chapters discussing the case method as a teaching technique, its history and development, and the types and kinds of cases that can be isolated. The following chapters on using the case method in class and the techniques for gathering data and writing cases are very good. The final chapter contains five library "in-basket cases" which we are told will be "useful in evaluating a student's or a participant's potential in coping with the administrative aspects of a managerial situation . . . (etc.)." They are nice cases, but I am not quite sure why they are here except to make the book 168 pages long instead of 99. An appended bibliography of A-V aids for teaching management completes the book.

Since Volume I deals with the essentials of a rather dry subject, namely how to teach management, it tends to be dry. It is to Dr. Lowell's credit that she has made it thorough, scholarly, and yet not totally unreadable. Little gems like: "An ingredient of maturing in a profession is the haunting trepidation about one's own adequacy to assume a more responsible leadership role" come over you with the suddenness of Tom Lehrer's "sliding down the razor blade of life," and suggestions like the development of a body of library management principles from the raw data of collected cases point nicely toward areas for research.

To me, however, Volumes II and III are the real prizes, perhaps because the enigmas of library administration have filled my waking (and some sleeping) moments for many years. In the course of this time I have read many so-called "case studies" of administrative problems and have found a large proportion of them dull, implausible, or ridiculous, attempting perhaps to elucidate a principle by offering the situation in the extreme, but often making librarians seem to be fanatics or simple-headed ninnies—of which, of course, like any profession, we have some but not, I submit, the number implied by these cases. Dr. Lowell admonishes us not to "forget that most library employees are dedicated and efficient," though of necessity they play problem roles in these cases. The admonition is well taken but, more than anywhere else I have read, the cases here "tell it like it is" and present the fairest picture I know of people, places, and situations in the library world.

Both volumes (II and III) are really combinations of textbook and syllabus, containing lecture notes, lists of reading assignments, bibliographies, and texts of case histories.

Volume II, subtitled "The Process of Managing," presents the history and development of management and its application to library situations in lecture outline form, and over 300 pages of cases studies on various well-chosen segments of library administration.

In Volume II personnel problems are ingeniously avoided, so that Volume III, subtitled "Personnel Management," may deal in a similar fashion with employees and their cares. Again the cases are grouped by type of problem, such as "Recruitment, Selection, and Employee Appraisal," "Discipline, Grievances, and Justice," and so forth.

In the past I have questioned most seriously the content of "administration" courses simply because I do not believe the student has the background to appreciate the problems. Here Dr. Lowell has carefully developed the background with the problem, and has, one is tempted to say, reduced the essence of libraries (which are mostly people, not books) to clear and graphic forms. I would hope that many library school students will have the opportunity, through these cases, to learn more of what libraries are all about.—
Gustave A. Harrer, University of Florida.

Carnegie Libraries; Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development. By George S. Bobinski. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969. 257p. $8. (68-54216).

In this adaptation of his doctoral dissertation Mr. Bobinski treats in factual detail the history of Carnegie public library philanthropy in the United States. His comprehensive study of the expenditure of more than $40,000,000 for the erection of 1,679 public library buildings in 1,412 communities, covering all aspects of the subject, including a survey of 225 communities which had Carnegie grants available and did not use them, is both detailed and yet easy-to-read and charming. Perhaps the only faults one might find with it are in the relatively short six-page "personal appraisal of Carnegie's philanthropy" and, in light of the emerging social consciousness of librarians, in his dismissal of the lack of influence that Carnegie exerted on the provision of integrated library service for Negroes in the South and of the question that was raised in some communities of the source of Carnegie's wealth. His comment is that, "It seems unnecessary now to consider the question of how Carnegie made his money and whether it was morally right for communities to accept it as library philanthropy. Andrew Carnegie was no worse, and perhaps even better, than the other capitalists and industrial leaders of his time in respect to wages and working conditions" (p. 186-7). More personal comments and evaluation on a number of the matters dealt with, especially on these two matters of social significance, would have added a great deal to the book.

There is little in this book of specific interest to the academic or research librarian. Apart from a paragraph on a few joint use facilities, such as that provided for Cornell College and the community of Mount Vernon, Iowa, academic libraries are entirely outside the scope of this book; and as Carnegie's aim was to improve popular access to books, his grants to large city libraries, such as the New York Public Library, to which he gave over $5,000,000 in 1899 to build sixty-six branch libraries, were gen-erally to provide for branches and other facilities to be used by the general public rather than to provide for research facilities. Carnegie's philanthropy did have an impact on academic libraries. Primarily in the period between 1902 and 1908 some $4,283,048 was given toward the construction of 108 academic libraries; and, while Bobinski stresses the fact that grants were not made to public libraries for collections, 311 academic libraries, mainly in the 1930s, did receive grants totaling $2,592,800 for library development which, in general, meant the purchase of books. Hopefully, someone will devote the same care and effort to that aspect of Carnegie philanthropy as Mr. Bobinski has to the public library aspect, for that story is as important and worthy of study and could well result in as pleasant and readable a book as this one. *—Norman D. Stevens, University of Connecticut.*

Library Effectiveness, A Systems Approach. By Philip M. Morse. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968. 207p. $10. (68-25379).

Professor Morse has attempted the most difficult task of bridging the gaps between the librarian, the systems analyst, and the operations researcher. The latter two in some areas are considered to be synonymous. His book, divided into two categories (namely, the theoretical models and the application of theory), is well organized and provides an introduction to the theory before it is discussed and applied to the libraries at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It would appear from the standpoint of reviewer, however, that to comprehend the material fully the reader should have at least one semester of probability theory. The librarian with little or no mathematical background will have considerable difficulty comprehending the models, although the trained systems analyst and the operations researcher will comprehend them with little or no difficulty. It would seem that the book is more readily suited to the systems analyst and the operations researcher who currently are working in library systems analysis. The book is of value to the librarian only to the