

Service to the Public

Ten Year Report of the New York Public Library, 1946-1956. New York: New York Public Library, 1957. 86p.

The *Ten Year Report of the New York Public Library, 1946-1956*, is a significant study in library administration which should prove to be interesting and profitable reading for anyone associated with a large and complex library system.

It presents briefly and lucidly an account of the problems and contingencies facing the Library in the several areas of administration and management and outlines the steps taken to resolve the problems and foster the development of the institution.

The report is presented in five sections: I—The Report of the President, II—The Reference Department, III—The Circulation Department, IV—The Library as a Whole, and V—Finances and the Future.

The report of the president reviews briefly the service objectives, volume of service rendered, some of the general considerations of administration and management, and an analysis of the Library's financial position and problems.

The section on the reference department is largely devoted to the book collection. Trends affecting the acquisition of books and other materials on a world-wide basis are reviewed. Changes in the Library's acquisition program, and cooperative programs undertaken with other libraries are described. Significant specific acquisitions in important subject fields are enumerated. Under technical processes, the changes initiated to improve efficiency in the procedures and methods used in processing materials which resulted from a survey conducted by a firm of management consultants are set forth. The section on the reader use of the reference department is especially interesting. Part of the material presented resulted from the Library's own statistics and observations, and part of it resulted from a survey made by outside experts. Trends in the volume of use of the various subject divisions over the ten-year period are indicated. Fluctuations in the volume of telephone reference service, mail service, and room use are analyzed. The report

then raises the interesting question of what is "normal use," that is, the point at which library can give the most effective service to the greatest number of people.

The section on the circulation department reviews the development of the branch library system and its services. In the ten-year period it is noted that the number of branch agencies increased from fifty-four to eighty-two, and the book collection rose from one-half book per capita to three-quarters book per capita. Changes in service were characterized by the inclusion of non-book materials in the collections of extension agencies, the creation of specialized library service to young adults, and the establishment of a municipal readers' center. Trends in volume of use of the established children's services, reference services, group activities, etc., are set forth. The organizational and procedural changes reported are numerous. They include the consolidation and centralization of processing activities with resulting assembly-line operations, the formulation of a regional branch plan and the foundation of four regional branch centers, the development of staff "manning tables" and the establishment of three staff positions for service coordinators in the areas of adult service, young adult service and children's service.

Under Section IV, The Library as a Whole, the historical separation of the reference and circulation department in terms of service, administration, and financial support is noted. In the past decade the steps taken to reverse this trend are cited; namely, the establishment of uniform policies, procedures and personnel practices, and the creation of offices and positions which encompass both departments. These positions include the public relations office, business office, personnel office, editor of library publications, and an executive officer for fund raising. The work and accomplishments of these offices in coordinating the activities of the entire library system are described in detail.

Under Finances and the Future, the report points out that the income from both private and public funds has increased in the past decade, but not as rapidly as the increased use, need, and demand for library services and facilities. This led to deficit financing which in turn created problems for

future support. An analysis of trends in income from state aid, and the results of continuous fund raising campaigns are described.

Although the report is a straightforward, businesslike document, devoid of the popular, decorative type of presentation which has been much used in recent years, it is

very readable and includes many analogies in terms of the human elements of library service.

The report is an excellent one, and constitutes a real contribution to the literature on the large public library.—*Gertrude Gscheidle, Chicago Public Library.*

Selected Reference Books of 1957-1958

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Stein (*Guide V236*), the present compilation follows, with certain modifications, the subject arrangement of that work. There are separate subject and author indexes. Prof. André Aymard has contributed an "Aperçu bibliographique sur les publications récentes concernant la Gaule antique, 1945 à 1955."—E.S.

Lancaster, Joan C. *Bibliography of Historical Works Issued in the United Kingdom, 1946-1956. Compiled for the Sixth Anglo-American Conference of Historians.* London, University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1957. 388p. 25s.

Listing historical works published in the United Kingdom during 1946-1956, this is a cumulation of six annual exhibition catalogs prepared for the Anglo-American Conferences of Historians, to which have been added the titles of such other historical works as could be found in order to make the bibliography as comprehensive as possible. As such, it serves as a continuation of L. B. Frewer's *Bibliography of Historical Writings Published in Great Britain and the Empire, 1940-45* (*Guide V12*) although it does not include works published in the Commonwealth as the Frewer did.

Classified, with an author index, the bibliography contains 7,382 numbered titles and lists books on all countries and periods, with

the British section quite naturally being the largest and comprising about half of the volume.

Mauritius. Archives Dept. *Bibliography of Mauritius (1502-1954) Covering the Printed Record, Manuscripts, Archivalia and Cartographic Material* [compiled by] A. Toussaint and H. Adolphe. Port Louis, Mauritius, Esclapon Ltd., 1956. 884p.

This, the first comprehensive bibliography of Mauritius, attempts to list as fully as possible "all printed, manuscript and cartographic material relative to the Island of Mauritius and its dependencies from 1502 to the end of 1954, whether available in Mauritius itself or in other countries." It lists some 8,865 items divided into six groups: A, Books and pamphlets issued in Mauritius from the introduction of printing in 1768 through 1954; B, Periodicals, newspapers, and serials, 1773-1954; C, Government and semi-official publications issued in Mauritius and Great Britain, 1810-1954; D, Publications relative to Mauritius issued abroad in English, French, Dutch and other languages, 1600-1954; E, Manuscripts and archivalia, 1598-1954; F, Cartographic material, 1502-1954.

There is an index of individual and corporate names and titles of periodicals in one alphabet.

Under the heading, "Le Jazz Hot," the **Duke** University *Library Newsletter* for April, 1958, reports that "Volume 154 of the *Catalogue Général des Livres Imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale* bears proudly on its spine: 'Rock-Roll.'"