JOHN R. RUSSELL

First Seminar of Indian University Librarians

The first Seminar of University Librarians held at Jaipur, India, November 16-19, discussed government support of university libraries, status and salary scales for librarians, interlibrary loans, union catalogs, and library cooperation. Following the recommendation of the seminar participants, the Indian Academic Libraries Association was revived in order to provide leadership for future cooperative activities and meetings. Six American librarians participated in the seminar by chairing sessions, presenting papers, and taking part in the discussion.

SIX AMERICAN LIBRARIANS were privileged to attend the first Seminar of University Librarians held at Jaipur November 16-19, 1966, and to take part in discussions of university library problems with the thirty-five Indian librarians who were the leading participants during this four-day conference. The seminar was organized by N. N. Gidwani, director of libraries at Rajasthan University in Jaipur, who put all the facilities of the university at the disposal of those attending, including the very attractive university guest house at which most of the participants resided and ate their meals. The formal sessions of the seminar were also held at the university guest house. Social functions took place at the university vice-chancellor's residence, in the Rajasthan University library, the Hind Hotel, and the City Palace, all of them giving the participants an opportunity to get better acquainted with each other, and to see the university campus and some of Jaipur, the beautiful "Pink City."

Mr. Russell, Director of Libraries at the University of Rochester has been on leave as Library Consultant at the American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad, India.

The American guests at this very interesting and fruitful conference were W. W. Bennett, director of United States Information Service libraries in India; Robert L. Cain, Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur; John C. Crawford, director of the U.S. Library of Congress American Libraries Book Procurement Centre, New Delhi; John R. Russell and Mrs. Russell, American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad; and Carl White, Ford Foundation. The Indian participants were some of the leading librarians of university and institute libraries from many sections of India. While those in attendance came from academic libraries in different parts of two of the largest countries in the world, the similarity of problems in all the libraries represented, both Indian and American, was striking.

The seminar was very well organized and was conducted in a most efficient manner. In addition to the eight regular sessions, and the session "to finalise recommendations," there was an inaugural session and a concluding session, at both of which the Vice-Chancellor of Rajasthan University, M. V. Mathur, and N. N. Gidwani, the director of libraries, spoke. (The Vice-Chancellor's position

in an Indian university is equivalent to a university president's position in the United States.)

Upon arrival the first morning the participants were given copies of the papers that had been prepared for the seminar, a program for the entire conference, and a list of the participants. Each morning the detailed program for the day was distributed, and before each of the three sessions during the day, a program for the session with the list of papers to be covered and the discussion points to be debated was provided. The thirty-eight papers varied in length from a single page to twenty-two pages. The lists of discussion points for the eight sessions ranged from nine to nineteen numbered points. For each session a chairman and a reporter were chosen by nomination from the group, and stenographers took down the proceedings in shorthand. At the first session a committee was selected to prepare the list of recommendations to be discussed and approved or disapproved at the final working session, the members being N. N. Gidwani, J. S. Sharma, librarian of the Punjab University, and K. S. Deshpande, librarian of Mysore University.

Since the papers that had been prepared by various participants and by a few who were not present were in the hands of those attending, they were not read in full. Instead, the writer of a paper was allowed a few minutes to summarize his major points or to explain further those he wished to have considered by the group. In the few cases where the writers were not present, others in the group substituted for them and commented briefly on the papers. S. R. Ranganathan, for example, had prepared two interesting papers but unfortunately could not be present. His papers were distributed and commented upon by others.

Following the brief talks by the writers of papers, the discussion points in the lists that had been prepared in advance were taken up one-by-one and debated vigorously or passed over as not pertinent. Formal votes were not taken, but after discussion of a point the chairman announced the "sense of the house" on that point. If his statement was not contested, it stood, and the Committee on Recommendations had a good basis for preparing the final recommendations. The discussion on many of the points was lively, sometimes heated, and demonstrated the keen interest that the participants had in improving library service and the library profession.

Three important Indian government reports were referred to in the discussions: *Report of the University Education Commission* (1951), known as the "Radhakrishnan Report"; *University and College Libraries, Containing the Report of the Library Committee of the University Grants Commission* (1965); and *Report of the Education Commission* (1966), known as the "Kothari Report."

A wide range of subjects was covered in the eight sessions. The topics assigned for each session are itemized below.

1. The place and role of the library in the Indian university and how it can play a more effective role in our educational endeavor.

2. Interlibrary cooperation between university libraries and special academic libraries in acquisitions and services.

3. The University Grants Commission and the university libraries.

4. The role and qualities of the university librarian in India—his selection and training.

5. Coordination between university libraries, departmental (seminar) libraries, and college libraries, to pool resources and channel efficient service and adequate coverage.

6. Norms for university libraries.

7. Leadership of the university library to the colleges and the community.

8. Means and methods for accelerat-

ing progress of Indian university libraries.

A few of these topics may need some clarification. The University Grants Commission which was established in 1956 is an autonomous body that determines the amount of money that will be given to each university and its libraries from the total amount provided by the national government. It is the most powerful policy-making body in higher education in India. It was evident from the discussion that the university librarians appreciate the support that UGC, as they call it, has given to libraries since 1956 and look to it for increasing support in the future, not only in financing, but also in upholding and enforcing high standards for academic libraries.

A large number of universities and institutes have been founded in India since 1947, and their libraries often began as decentralized departmental or seminar collections before a central library building was available. Hence the question of centralization of library resources was thoroughly discussed. Opinion of the group on the desirability of complete centralization was divided, but most of those present seemed to favor having a central record of the books that are in the departmental libraries and central control over book acquisition. The colleges that are affiliated with a university often are numerous and scattered. They operate as semi-autonomous institutions having their own libraries and often operating quite independently. The importance of close cooperation between the college libraries and university libraries was also brought out in the discussion.

The final session of the seminar was devoted to the consideration of thirty-two recommended resolutions that had been prepared by the committee. Since these recommendations came out of the earlier discussions of the points raised in the papers or by the members during the sessions that had preceded, they were generally approved without much further discussion, or with minor changes in wording. The full list of resolutions need not be given here, but certain of them may be of special interest. Two resolutions were related to the activities of the University Grants Commission:

> To recommend to the UGC that a Standing Library Committee be appointed to advise the Commission on all matters concerning the development of libraries. (18)
>
> To recommend to the UGC that a Library Wing be established with a qualified librarian at its head. (19)

The first of these provides for an advisory committee presumably to be made up chiefly of librarians who would not be directly employed by or members of the UGC. The second provides for an office to be established within the UGC Secretariat, the librarian employed to head the Library Wing thus being an employee of the UGC.

In the realm of finance three general resolutions were approved:

> That the forecast of the cost of the academic library system be worked out for the decade 1966-1976. (17)
>
> That 10 per cent of the university budget be provided for the development and management of the library. (26)
>
> That all book grants be deemed as non-lapsable grants for the purpose of audit. (28)

The long-standing problem of imports that had been magnified by the devaluation of the rupee was treated in three resolutions:

> To recommend to UGC that it should arrange to make available to university libraries sufficient foreign exchange for the import of books, periodicals, reprographic and audio-visual materials. Further resolved that films, filmstrips, maps, globes, linguaphone and long-playing records of educational value should be allowed to be admitted duty free. (20)

That UNESCO coupons be made available to libraries. (21)

That the ban on research materials including maps, atlases, and publications imposed by the Government of India be lifted and the libraries be permitted to obtain such materials with special permission. (32)

The first two of these are concerned with the problem of limitation on imports because of lack of foreign exchange. The third refers to the ban on any imports of library materials from certain specific countries.

A number of the resolutions dealt with the position of the head librarian and his staff:

That the university librarian be accorded the status and privilege of the head of a university postgraduate teaching department. Further, that the other professional staff in the library be accorded faculty status and privileges enjoyed by the cadres of the teaching staff. (1)

That the university librarian be made a member-secretary of the library committee and further that the library committee will function in an advisory capacity. (2)

That statutory recognition be given to the university librarian. (5)

That the prevailing practice of appointing honorary librarians should be abolished. (14)

To recommend to the UGC that a librarian be nominated on the visiting committee appointed to scrutinize quinquennial plan proposals of universities.

To recommend that the university librarian be made an *ex-officio* member of all academic bodies. (22)

To recommend that the librarian should be directly responsible to the vice-chancellor of the university for the administration of library services and resources of the university. (23)

Three resolutions dealt more specifically with salaries and classification of library staff:

That the UGC scales of pay for the library staff be implemented by all the universities. (3)

That the UGC may not advance financial grants to universities which do not implement the new scales of pay for the library staff. (4)

That the designations of library staff be rationalised as under:

	Designation	Equivalent Status
Group I	Librarian . .	Professor
	Deputy Librarian	Reader
	Sr. Asst. Librarian	Lecturer
	Jr. Asst. Librarian	Asst. Lecturer, Instructor
Group II	Sr. Library Asst. .	Technical Assistant
	Jr. Library Asst. .	Upper Division Clerk
	Assistant . . .	Lower Division Clerk
Group III	The remaining supporting staff to be stenographers, typists, accounts clerks, skilled helpers, peons, etc. (23)	

Two resolutions were concerned with improving inter-library loans:

That the Draft Code for Interlibrary Loans as formulated by the IASLIC (Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centres) be implemented. (8)

To recommend to the Union Government that postal rates for books sent out on interlibrary loan be reduced in order to promote the maximum use of available book resources in the country. (9)

The preparation of tools that would be of assistance in interlibrary loan work was the subject of two resolutions. In the first of these the union list is limited to the humanities and social sciences because INSDOC (Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre) is compiling a union list of serials in science and technology:

That the compilation of a union list of serials in the humanities and social sciences be undertaken. (10)

That all the academic libraries should compile a catalogue of theses and manuscripts available with them. (11)

Finally, probably the most important resolution of the group was:

> That the Indian Academic Libraries Association be revived. (29)

This Association was established about five years ago and has been dormant for some time. At the eighth session of the seminar the question of its revival was discussed. One member of the group expressed the opinion that the academic library organization should be part of the Indian Library Association while others favored a separate association. It was decided to have a meeting of the Indian Academic Libraries Association to get it re-established, so at the close of the eighth session IALA was convened, and a president, B. V. R. Rao, librarian of the Indian Institute of Science, was elected, since that office had been vacant due to the death last spring of S. Das Gupta, librarian of the University of Delhi library. It was decided to suspend the constitution temporarily and empower Dr. Rao to invite others to assist him in getting the Association reorganized. The question of sponsorship of future seminars similar to this one had been considered earlier, and it was felt that the IALA would be the most suitable body to arrange such special conferences in addition to having regular meetings of the Association.

This summary would not be complete without recognizing the very substantial contribution that was made to the advancement of the academic library profession and library service in general by the many very able Indian librarians who presented papers and participated so actively in the discussions. They very kindly honored the American librarians present by inviting them to take an active part in the proceedings. William W. Bennett and Carl White were asked to preside as chairmen at two of the important sessions of the seminar. Papers were presented by John C. Crawford and John R. Russell and Mrs. Russell. Carl White's *Survey of the University of Delhi Library,* published by the Planning Unit of the University of Delhi in 1965, was reviewed by P. N. Kaula, librarian of Banaras Hindu University, and Dr. White answered the questions raised and explained the purpose of the survey. Library cooperation had been one of the topics discussed at the seminar, and the seminar itself provided a splendid opportunity for increasing the understanding of the problems of Indian and American libraries that will lead to further national and international cooperation. ■■