# Recent Publications

## BOOK REVIEWS

***Books in Singapore; a Survey of Publishing, Printing, Bookselling, and Library Activity in the Republic of Singapore.*** Cecil K. Byrd. Singapore: Chopmen Enterprises, 1970. 161p. $10.00.

Singapore probably has library services and book industries more nearly adequate to its needs than any other sovereign nation between Japan and the Mediterranean Sea. Indeed, it may have excess capacity at both ends of this bookish spectrum, as Cecil Byrd's new book ably attests.

Dr. Byrd wrote this volume for the National Book Development Council of Singapore while on sabbatical leave from his regular post as university librarian at Indiana University. His extensive previous experience both as a book and library surveyor specifically, and as an intrepid Southeast Asia hand generally, qualified him well for the task, and his report is a creditable piece of work.

Singapore is a tiny tropical island of 225 square miles in the Malay Straits. Vacated by the British less than a decade ago, and separated from the Federation of Malaysia only five years ago, its two million inhabitants speak four major languages—Chinese, English, Malay, and Tamil—plus a host of minor ones. Yet literacy may be as high as 75 percent since good schooling is available and used in each of the four language streams, and book activity of all kinds is vigorous and extensive. This book describes it comprehensively.

In the area of printing, publishing, and bookselling Dr. Byrd records the dimensions of the book, periodical, and newspaper markets. He analyzes the use of textbooks from elementary grades through the university to adult education needs. He studies importations of paper and books and the economics of printing and publishing. He described less admirable characteristics of the industry: censorship and piracy, in particular.

The description of library activity in the Republic is similarly comprehensive. There are accounts of the resources, staff, plant, history, and prospects of libraries designed to serve the needs of Singapore's six institutions of higher learning. (The University of Singapore library holds a half million volumes.) The author finds that, as in so many other places on the globe, school library service is in greatest need of improvement. (There were in 1968 fully seventy-eight government-operated and forty-eight government-aided secondary schools with library holdings ranging from 450 to 59,000 volumes each.) Public library service is well rendered out of the National Library's half million volume collections. There are several special libraries of note. Sixty-seven qualified librarians man the nation's libraries and perform its bibliographic services, a number far greater than the per capita ratio of librarians elsewhere in Asia.

This book, however, is more than simply descriptive; it is also prescriptive. Its fifteen chapters are replete with pregnant admonishments. Censorship, avers Dr. Byrd, should be discontinued. Copyright laws should be passed. Centralized processing should be developed for school libraries. The proliferation of special libraries should be brought under control. And more.

As was said at the beginning of this review, the volume documents an excess capability in Singapore of both publishing and library expertise. The book industry has already recognized this phenomenon, and within the past eighteen months several Western publishers have effected liaisons with Singapore interests that foretell a huge expansion of the industry there. The library community might ponder doing likewise. Southeast Asia needs a strong regional library school, yet nationalism seems to mili-

tate against upgrading any of the existing schools to such stature. The advanced stage of Singapore's library profession, however, her central geographic location, her multilingual base, and her seeming economic and political stability combine to create a favorable climate for such a school. Will the library profession be able to benefit from this excess capacity with as much alacrity as the publishers have shown? Time will tell.

This will be a valuable book for publishers, booksellers, and librarians with interest in the comparative aspects of their work or in Southeast Asian affairs.—*David Kaser, Cornell University.*

*Library Systems Analysis Guidelines.* Edward A. Chapman, Paul L. St. Pierre, and John Lubans, Jr. New York: Wiley Interscience, 1970. 226p.

This book attempts to be what its title says it is, a volume of guidelines, not a how-to-do-it book. In the preface the authors state that "this book aims primarily to provide guidelines for library administrators and library systems analysis in analyzing and evaluating existing operating systems and in designing new or improved ones." They then go on to state that "this guide is also adaptable for introducing library school students to the concepts of systems study in the library." The authors refer the reader to other volumes when discussion touches methodologies such as time study, sampling, organization charts, etc. There is also much internal cross-referencing which sometimes makes the volume inconvenient to use.

This volume has had a long genesis, which its authors readily admit. It began as the proceedings of an institute held at Rensselaer in the mid-60s; parts of it afterward were used at a preconference tutorial for the American Society for Information Science; and parts were published as a portion of a LARC report; finally, portions appeared in the ALA volume, *Library Automation: A State of the Art.* Many changes have occurred of course since these original attempts, but the concepts discussed all have their bases in an analysis done at Rensselaer.

The needs and advantages of systems studies are well delineated and defined. The multiple authors may be the reason one feels unevenness of treatment of certain portions. Chapter two, "Planning and Conducting and Systems Study," is particularly pertinent and well written. However, even here, that unevenness can be seen. The chapter begins with "In the Introduction the causes of the increased complexity in libraries have been given in some detail." Although it may be a matter of relativity, when one turns to the introduction (five pages long), the reader is given four reasons: (1) The increased quantity and sophistication of the demands of library users (twenty-four lines); (2) The substantial increases in library book funds (fourteen lines); (3) The increase in interinstitutional cooperation (twenty lines); and (4) The shortage of professional librarians (six lines). The data used and assumptions made seem based on 1965–66 and earlier data and are extrapolated on a straight-line basis which is contrary to the economic world of today. We wonder if the person who handled Chapter two read the introduction?

The volume states that the necessity of studying and improving on-going systems is necessary in and of itself, and does not necessitate commitment to mechanized or computerized solutions, yet the trend that systems analysis studies will aid in justifying computerized or mechanized solutions is felt throughout the book. The aforementioned feeling is emphasized by the use of nonconventional expression for library functions: "library functions in the framework of two major types of systems: the data processing and the informational. The data processing system may be defined as the organization and the methods involved to perform operations necessary to effect the form or content of information needed to satisfy the library's *management requirements* and goals." Then the word data processing systems is used throughout the book within this context. However, the reader must remain aware of the authors' definition lest he be misled.

The library is still modelled in the traditional linear form although displayed in the form of intersecting circles as if they were Venn diagrams. This concept of the