

THE LIBRARY KEEPER'S BUSINESS*

By A. D. OSBORN

AT no time in the history of civilization have the purposes and importance of libraries been as clearly defined as at present. You can see precisely what I mean when you analyse the proposition that the current arms race is, at bottom, a race for supremacy in research, and libraries are basic to research. It should be clear to all that national and economic survival to-day depend on superiority and priority of research ; and the research worker, if he is to carry out his investigations adequately, must have effective access to the mass of books, periodicals and pamphlets that relate to his field of inquiry.

In fact, collections of books and periodicals are so fundamental to research as we know it in the middle of the twentieth century, that one can very properly turn to the money and effort expended on libraries as the most revealing index of the defensive and offensive commitments of both the United States of America and Russia, just as one can use them as an index of any nation's determination to survive. Hence, it should be a rather sobering thought that dawns upon us when we realize that countries which come under communist domination, as well as countries in which there is a sharply rising tide of nationalism, immediately set about the task of promoting libraries as a basic part of their educational, cultural, industrial and military programmes. They do this to a degree that can, and should shame many of the democracies, just as the United States was shocked into action a year ago when a group of its senior university administrators reported to the country by newspaper, wireless and television, on the lead that Russia had gained in the matter of education and libraries.

Let me bring the matter a little closer home. Is it not rather disconcerting to know that Indonesia, our neighbour to the north, is as good an actual buyer as Australia, and at the same time a much better potential buyer, of American scientific and technical publications than is this country of ours? English, which is our mother tongue, is becoming the second language of Indonesia, a country which, despite its high rate of illiteracy, can capitalize on its dedication to a cause. I hope the Australian people will draw the same inference that I do, namely, that in Australia, if libraries are taken as an index of our national determination to survive, there is much to be done, and done promptly, before we can rest assured. It is true that the C.S.I.R.O. has plugged a gap and is giving sterling library service : and it is true that great forward strides have been taken in local public libraries, in reference and research libraries of all types, and in the Commonwealth National Library.

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But much remains to be done and above all in our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Here just permit me to say in passing that the foundation of all good library use, and especially public and university library use, needs to be laid in the schools ; yet fine school libraries are almost lacking in Australia just as fine university libraries are.

Three days ago I attended the dedication of the new Baillieu Library in our sister institution to the south. Various speakers, in praising the new structure, said that it was fortunate that the University could now turn to other problems since the library was so well provided for. No greater mistake could be made. A building is not a library, and the dedication of a building should afford the occasion for saying that efforts ought now to be doubled and redoubled to build up resources of books and periodicals for the lasting benefit of the academic community as well as the community in general.

Unless people are constantly on their guard in a democracy, complacency may dull the fine edge of the advantages we enjoy. It *is* possible for a democracy to go to sleep. I saw an instance of the harmful effects of complacency early in the Second World War when I had to give a hand with the complete and rapid reorganization of an institution which for long had been celebrated for its pre-eminence. It was the United States Army Medical Library. Up until the war Americans were fond of saying that they had the greatest medical library in the world. They repeated with pride Sir William Osler's eulogy that the *Index-Catalogue* of that library was America's greatest gift to medicine, and considering America's many and notable contributions to medicine his eulogy was high praise indeed. When war broke out, the Library was unable to give the service which the armed forces expected of it. It came as very much of a shock, too, to discover that at that time Russia had the three largest medical libraries in the world and that no fewer than seven of the first ten, in point of size, were in the Soviet Union. I took the opportunity to inquire of informed people whether these figures were trustworthy. I was told that they were, but that the Russian achievement was not altogether fair because the Soviet Union did not belong to the Copyright Union ; without asking permission it issued a Russian edition of any material it wanted, whereby Russian medical libraries, like Russian libraries in general, grew in quality and extent. Since a librarian is nothing if he is not a bookman, and therefore acquisitive through and through just by instinct, I can only respect the Russian determination to provide excellent facilities for medical men and students. The democracies have a right to expect equally intelligent determination. May I point out one significant fact ? The Nazis did not promote libraries ; instead they tried to choke off sources of information. Soviet Russia has developed its research collections on a grand scale. It is not repeating the Nazi mistake. It is evidently a power to be reckoned with much more seriously.

I believe that I can best give you insight into the library keeper's business by showing how certain functions have developed historically. Librarianship is one of the very oldest of the learned professions. I do not need to take you back as

far as does *History Begins at Sumer*, a book in which you will find quite interesting early library history ; but rather let me begin with the great library at Alexandria. There we find three of the essential aspects of librarianship developed to a supreme degree : zeal for collecting, skilful organisation for use, and conservation of the resources so diligently brought together and arranged. Acquisition was carried on vigorously, intelligently, by fair means or foul. Manuscripts were constantly borrowed from Athens, with sums of money left behind as pledges for safe return. When a manuscript had been copied in Alexandria, of set purpose the original was retained and the copy returned, so causing the pledge to be forfeited. In this and other ways, then, the greatest library of antiquity was gathered together ; and from that day to this, the hallmark of the librarian has been his acquisitive nature, his burning desire to gather in the materials of research, to organize them for use and to safeguard them in quarters that are adequate for their permanent conservation. These are the qualities that should come to your mind when you think of the librarian as a bookman, an expression by which we mean, not a person who is fond of books, but a person who has an informed knowledge of books. Let me just add that the librarian as a bookman is not a dragon guarding the treasure. His sense of values tells him, first that a book without a reader is valueless, and second that a reader without a book is the epitome of frustration. For these reasons, he feels impelled to collect books to serve immediate or potential users, just as he wants readers to make the fullest use of the resources that he and his colleagues have been able to assemble.

As I pass on from the high-water-mark of Alexandria, I ought to pause a moment to mention that the Romans had two different words for a librarian. One was *librarius*, and the librarius was a minor official, commonly a slave. The other was *bibliothecarius*, and the bibliothecarius was the higher official, the professional librarian as we would call him nowadays. You may have observed that on the continent of Europe, the French, Germans, Russians and others have taken their word for librarian from the Latin *bibliothecarius*, whereas our English word "librarian" comes from the designation for a slave. Actually, this little pleasantry need disturb no one, for the librarian is as fully dedicated to service as any other professional man. He does not collect books as a philatelist collects stamps. On the contrary, those books, periodicals and pamphlets which he acquires are added to the collection because he believes that, sooner or later, they will be of value to the seeker after information, the student, the research man, the historian or the bibliographer.

In the Middle Ages the extent of the decline from the half-million or more items in the Library at Alexandria can be gauged from the fact that, up until the twelfth century, there were relatively few European institutions which contained more than a hundred manuscripts ; even in the fifteenth century, two or three thousand items represented an outstanding collection. Nevertheless, some developments in library practice took place. It became customary to make an inventory of all items in a library, not for library purposes it is true, but to provide a record of the treasures held by an institution, the manuscripts being accounted as treasures.

Inventory has remained a standard library process through the centuries that followed, and the inventory record has turned into what is known as a shelf-list. Sheer size has forced the largest libraries to discontinue the practice of making an inventory of their collections. Thus, for example, the last inventory taken in the Library of Congress was in 1902.

Also in the Middle Ages the separation of a library into a reference and circulating collection became general. The reference books tended to be chained to desks, while the unchained books were the ones that could circulate.

Perhaps the most significant mediaeval advance was the development of union catalogues. The best known one was compiled by John Boston of Bury, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. For the benefit of scholars he recorded the holdings of 195 British libraries he had visited. Union catalogues of books and periodicals are among the librarian's most valued tools today.

Speaking of books as tools, I am reminded of an experience I had years ago, when I was on the staff of the Commonwealth National Library. All our book orders had to be approved by the President of the Senate who, before becoming a Member of Parliament, had been a carpenter by trade. Whenever he noticed a book that cost more than one or two pounds he vetoed it. But if ever we said that the item was a tool it was immediately reinstated. The carpenter's esteem for fine tools came to the fore as he realised that all people should have the tools they need for the skilled performance of their work.

Whenever the matter of book censorship is debated, it is worth recalling that monastic libraries were not averse to collecting what they considered to be heretical writings. There was no fear that these works would corrupt the minds of the monks; instead the attitude was that unless the material was collected, there was no way of answering it, no way of counteracting it. The idea of censorship came in somewhat later. It arose in France and was essentially political in character. The fear was that reactionary pamphlets might incite people to revolt against the government. From political works, censorship then spread to items that authorities of one kind and another felt should be withheld from the people at large on religious or moral grounds.

As a class, librarians are opposed to censorship of any kind. They are aware that censorship tends to be local and temporal in character. What one community bans, another accepts, just as what one generation considers to be harmful is accepted by later generations. In the eighteen nineties for example, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* were banned in certain localities. To-day, quite generally, both books are regarded as children's classics.

Perhaps it is fair to say that the censor tends to look at a book as an isolated case, whereas the librarian sees books in the mass. Since the invention of printing in the middle of the fifteenth century, more than fifteen million different works have poured from the world's printing presses. By contrast, I believe that there are now only 160 titles on the censor's list in Australia. Even if that number were

to be multiplied ten times, a hundred times, the censor's task would be futile in proportion to the total mass of the printed record. With 15,000,000 titles in existence and with a fresh million now appearing every decade or less, you can see that the censor's position is very much like that of a modern King Canute trying to hold back the flood-tide.

These thoughts about censorship are essentially modern in character. However they stem from the fact that censorship as such was not practised in mediaeval libraries.

In the transition period when the printed book was establishing itself in the second half of the fifteenth century, and throughout the sixteenth century, the principal advances in library techniques came from the bibliographers. Particularly notable in this connexion was the work of Andrew Maunsell, an English bookseller, who at the end of the sixteenth century issued lists of books in print. These lists were notable because they used the English language for the transcription of title-pages which were printed in English, whereas earlier practice had been to employ Latin rather than the vernacular in library catalogues. Further, Maunsell issued his lists in the form of a dictionary catalogue ; that is, he included authors, titles, and topical subjects in a single alphabet. To him, then, we owe the inception of the dictionary form of catalogue which has gained a tremendous vogue this century.

Maunsell's work undoubtedly influenced Sir Thomas Bodley, who, at the turn of the century, established the great Bodleian Library at Oxford. However, Bodley's outstanding contribution to library administration was his exploitation of modern methods of acquisition. He sent his messengers throughout Europe to acquire from appropriate sources the titles he felt were necessary for the Bodleian. Then, when he had shown discrimination in the development of the collection and had used enterprising methods to secure the material, he demanded that the items should be catalogued in such a way that unwanted duplicates would not be bought. In the same spirit that motivates the modern librarian, he wanted to see that the available funds were wisely spent. On the other hand, he had enough practical sense to realize that money should not be spent to make the records so thorough that duplication of inexpensive pamphlets would be avoided, when the cost of the remedy was considerably greater than the cost of duplication. Here was the dawn of our modern methods of international collecting.

So consequential was Bodley's contribution to the conception of a university library, that it is sad to record that, despite its copyright privilege, the Bodleian failed to acquire the first folio of Shakespeare when it appeared. Contemporary playwrights were not held in sufficiently high esteem for the Bodleian to feel that it had any responsibility to collect and preserve the works of Shakespeare, even though they were available without cost. The case points up one great difficulty which confronts the library keeper : by what unerring instinct is he to acquire the works his institution ought to have not only in the immediate present but in the more remote future ?

Sound development of the bookstock is the greatest challenge the librarian faces and it was with this in mind that I pointed out the necessity of his being a bookman through and through.

If the problem of developing library resources was a difficult one at the time at which the Shakespeare first folio appeared, it is infinitely more complex to-day. In those days one might debate the relative merits of large books and small, preferring and collecting the folios while expressing comparative lack of interest in the octavos by shelving them in less accessible spots in so far as they must be acquired. But after all, that was a simple situation to face. By contrast, in the twentieth century we have increasingly vast numbers of periodicals to add to the complexity of selecting and collecting. In the field of science alone there are to-day well over 50,000 periodicals appearing currently and the number is added to daily; or, to take just one aspect of contemporary science, there are at the moment 6,500 medical journals now being published. These periodicals are of first importance to the scientist who has urgent need for information disseminated, not with the slowness with which books are written and published, but with the much faster speed of the periodical press. So great is his insistence on speed that in recent years a major part of his information appears in near-print form, as what are known as technical reports, since mimeographed and other near-print material can be produced and distributed in a matter of days rather than the weeks or months required for normal periodical production. Almost as prompt and timely as the periodical is the pamphlet, which therefore ranks second in priority for collecting. Except in local public libraries, the book as we have known it since the invention of printing, has to take third place in our twentieth century table of collecting priorities, a statement which underscores the urgency of contemporary research and information services yet by no means implies even the slightest diminution in the value and significance of the book itself. At the same time the statement discloses the complexity which has crept into the library-keeper's business, forcing him to act on the premise that out of the periodicals and pamphlets of the day will come many of the books of to-morrow. On the other hand, it does nothing to bring out the difficulties of collecting from all seven continents and in all languages regardless of whether they use the Roman alphabet or not, and of attempting to acquire items that are not in the trade as well as those that are.

I can give you another insight into the complexity of twentieth-century libraries by adding that the 50,000 and more scientific periodicals now being published contain each year some two million individual contributions to knowledge. Without my even suggesting what the figure might be if we added on the contributions to journals in the humanities and social sciences, I think you can form some judgment of the immensity of the librarian's task as he attempts to control the massive literature of the day, and to acquire what he ought from it. Fortunately the librarian is not alone in this task but joins forces eagerly with those who are promoting and undertaking bibliographical and abstracting services of all kinds.

Here let me add that we are not, we must not be, in what some scientists are pleased to call the twilight of the printed book. Our civilization would suffer greatly if this were so. There is a humanistic value to the book which we must preserve at all costs. Scientific aids to learning are of inestimable value ; to a high degree, though, they are substitute mediums designed to serve the high tempo of latterday life.

We must have more of them because of the expansion of service they can provide. I regard it, for example, as a major service when a busy doctor can listen to a tape recording of the latest periodical articles in his field, listen as he drives from home to the office, from patient to patient. Without prejudice of any kind, then, permit me to repeat that books do and must play a vital role among the humanistic qualities whose sum we comprise under the term ' culture '.

After the Bodleian, the Library of the University of Göttingen provided the next large scale advance in library organization and administration. Library development in Great Britain and in the United States was profoundly influenced by the vigorous program that was put into effect in Göttingen in the second half of the eighteenth century. One incident is worth recalling. Joseph Green Cogswell was so impressed with what had been done to develop and to organise a systematic research collection at the University of Göttingen that he returned to Harvard University where, as Librarian, he tried to persuade the University authorities that the time had come to develop a similar research collection there. When he could make no impression on the President and Fellows of Harvard College, he resigned and turned to teaching for a number of years. A decade or two later the opportunity to show how he could apply the lessons learned at Göttingen came when he became Librarian of the Astor Library which came into existence through the bequest of John Jacob Astor in 1848. Within six years, Cogswell gathered together a larger and far finer collection than Harvard University had been able to develop in the course of two hundred years.

In Great Britain it was the British Museum which particularly benefited from the Göttingen insights. The Italian expatriate Panizzi, who later became Librarian of the British Museum, was the one who brought an intimate knowledge of Göttingen to the authorities in Great Britain. Thanks to his knowledge and ability, the British Museum was able to reorganize itself and to set the pattern for research libraries generally from the middle of the nineteenth century almost to the present time.

By the eighteen thirties the number and type of reader in the ranking British library called for a complete reassessment of modes of operation. Hitherto the attendance in any library during the relatively short and exclusively daylight hours of opening had been slight and the typical reader's wants were easily filled since the principal requests were for the classics and genealogy. It was typical of service to readers in those days, that the individual, on entering a library, was rather generally invited to sit down while he was given personal service by officials who were not infrequently called " living catalogues " for their ability to lay their hands on desired items without benefit of a catalogue or of subject classification.

By the third decade of the nineteenth century, the number of readers at the British Museum reached 200 a day and their wants were as wide as the fields of knowledge. This was the age of popularization of knowledge, when writers scanned the literature of the developing sciences in order to write treatises that surveyed their subject.

Thomas Carlyle can be taken as the representative of the new type of reader whom we today would classify as a research worker. He came to the Museum to consult source material for his *History of the French Revolution*. But when he asked to see all the pamphlets and other works issued in Revolutionary France, the officials had to admit that they had no way of serving him. The living catalogues were completely unequal to the occasion, whereupon Carlyle observed caustically that a library without a catalogue was like a Polyphemus without an eye. He further ran counter to tradition when he asked for accommodation for his research assistants, a type of person not encountered before and a type the Museum was unwilling to admit. So great was Carlyle's concern over the inability of the British Museum to give service of a type that we today would consider completely routine, that he put much energy into the establishment of the London Library, an institution which, for a century, has given outstanding service.

Several epoch making volumes of parliamentary papers recount the soul-searching that was necessary before reorganization could take place and permit the British Museum to serve the new age of research, information, and adult education. The amateur had to be listened to patiently—the amateur who, for instance, could classify 2,000 books a day and therefore was impatient of the sound methodology urged by Panizzi, the informed administrator, who stood as the prototype of the emergent professional librarian.

Panizzi's advent did not, of course, bring about the sudden departure of the gentleman or amateur librarian. That type of individual was to be found in major libraries for many years to come. Two incidents which took place in the eighteen nineties mark stages in the trend away from the amateur to the fully informed and highly qualified library administrator. In the city of Milwaukee there was a distinguished librarian named Linderfeldt who was elected President of the American Library Association, but you will not find his name in the ranks of former presidents because in the year of his election he was accused of misappropriating library funds. The Public Library had received money from fines but there were no records to show what had become of the funds so acquired. In the public scandal that followed, Linderfeldt lost his head, slipped across the border into Canada and went to Scandanavia where he started life afresh as a medical student and doctor. After he left, the funds were accounted for and his name was exonerated; but clearly the time had come when a librarian must follow business-like procedures and certainly must follow the governmental precept of "no expenditure without appropriation".

Shortly afterwards, Spofford, the Librarian of Congress, was removed from office because a considerable sum of money was missing after hundreds of small accounts had been paid into the Library, mostly for copyright registration.

Eventually the money, some £12,000, was recovered in the books in Spofford's former office where he had absent-mindedly placed it as it came in, day by day, to serve as book marks in the various volumes into which he had dipped.

Events like these marked the passing of the gentlemanly tradition in librarianship. Henceforth the librarian must be an administrator able to conduct the affairs of a large and complex enterprise in a completely efficient and business-like manner, and this in addition to his qualifications as a bookman. How big the librarian's responsibilities as an administrator can become you will realize when I say that the Library of Congress to-day has a staff which numbers close to 2,800 and its annual budget is well over £5,000,000.

It would be misleading if I did not qualify the observations I have just made about professional and amateur librarians by saying that at any time an exceptional personality of acknowledged ability is attracted to the ranks of library administrators, there is nothing but clear gain to the profession as a whole. From my personal observation as a member of the Librarians' Committee at the Library of Congress in 1940, I question whether any professional librarian in the world, with just one or two possible exceptions, could have done the truly remarkable job that Archibald MacLeish, the poet, did in starting the Library of Congress on the upgrade after its drastic decline. By those of us who know the situation before and after 1940, the Library of Congress is today all the more appreciated as being the most massively impressive and professionally exciting library to be found anywhere in the democracies; and for the change of direction a gifted amateur deserves full credit.

The coming of the professional librarian was signalled still further by the formation of library associations and the establishment of library schools. Hand in hand with these developments went a rapid expansion of bibliographical services, particularly in the form of national bibliographies and indexes to periodicals. Around the turn of the century, libraries quite generally, in the English speaking world at least, were reclassified and recatalogued according to modern and standard schemes. I believe it is correct to say in this connexion that the Library of the University of Sydney was the first to introduce the Dewey decimal classification into Australia. The early part of the century was the golden age of library classification. Today, reclassification on any scale should be out of the question; the gains are generally not worth the cost. Instead, all possible energy should go into productive work.

If you had gone into almost any library last century, you would not have been accorded access to the bookstock. It was around the turn of the century that the stacks were opened to readers and books were put on public display in reading rooms. Today we take open access for granted, but its value was borne in on me when I heard Dr. Bishop, the distinguished Librarian of the University of Michigan, recount the sad deficiencies of closed shelves. As the only way in which he, as a student, could gain access to the books themselves, he formed the habit of browsing through the books which had been returned to the circulation desk by other borrowers. Readers of today are fortunate indeed when they can go direct to the books themselves.

I have said that, following its reorganization under Panizzi, the British Museum set the pattern for research libraries for many years to come. Of late, however, a change has taken place of which responsible people in this country should be fully aware. When I began library work in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library in Melbourne in 1920, it was customary to say that the libraries of the world were divided into three classes : small, medium-sized and large. In the last two decades a fourth category has appeared which, for want of a better epithet, we may call the very large. At the present time there are perhaps only four libraries in this category. They are the Lenin Library, the Moscow State University Library, the Library of Congress and the Harvard University Library, two national institutions and two university libraries. In another ten or twenty years an appreciable number of the present large libraries will also be in the category of very large institutions.

The administrative problems and the methodology in these very large libraries differ sharply in many respects from what is standard practice in large libraries, but that is not what I want to point out to you at the moment. The great concern for Australians should be that there is no large library in this country at all, let alone any very large one. There are several which can foresee that they will be large institutions before many years have elapsed ; but if you were to take all the books and periodicals in all the universities and university colleges in Australia, you would be able to create just one large library and not a particularly large library at that. I believe that the quality of research and research workers in this country is so high that every effort should be put forth to create several large libraries which perhaps, next century, may then look forward to becoming very large, like more fortunately situated sister institutions in Russia and the United States of America. Here in the University of Sydney the challenge we face is to see that a large library is developed rapidly in keeping with the character and standing of this great University.

It is no accident of history that the two great world powers at the present moment have far and away the greatest libraries and library systems the world has ever known. If, to-night, I gave you no other insight than this, you would, I am sure, go away with a feeling that action, and vigorous action, must be taken in the interests of Australian national welfare to see that this country takes all the steps it should, both to assure its survival and to guarantee its future greatness. I said in the beginning, that libraries are an index which we can use in the present-day world to test a nation's determination, both to survive and to grow in international standing. This idea is not original with me but came from the American university administrators who in 1958 reported their findings on the Russian educational pattern. It was they who had the insight to use libraries as an index of the Russian commitment to education and research.

In the Lenin Library, the Russians have the world's greatest book collection. It acquired tremendous resources at the time of the Russian Revolution, when the libraries of the nobles were confiscated, just as the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris had grown great at the time of the French Revolution through taking its choice of the nobles' collections. It acquired much fine research material after the expropria-

tion of the Eastern zone of Germany at the end of the Second World War. Then, on top of these major developments, the Russian Government has provided all the funds necessary for large-scale acquisition of books and periodicals from all parts of the world. Second to the Lenin Library in extent and quality is the collection at the Moscow State University. Because of the wealth and resources in the Soviet Union, we do not need to be ashamed of our achievements beside those of the Moscow State University Library ; but we should be shamed into action when we realize that the combined resources of the Australian universities and university colleges can be matched in extent and exceeded in quality by almost any one of the 800 or more universities that have sprung up in the four decades of the existence of the Soviet Union. Wherever you turn in European or Asiatic Russia, you will find excellent library buildings, staffs and bookstock, all designed to give the faculties and students really excellent service.

The visiting American educators reported facts such as I have just recounted, warning the American public that steps must be taken to overcome the Russian lead in these directions. Immediate expression was given to American determination, on the part of both government and private enterprise, to see that the gap was closed for the obvious reason that the future welfare of the United States depends on the continual replenishment of highly trained research workers ; these people should be able to enjoy resources and facilities at least as good as those available in the Soviet Union. On the private side, for example, the Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh came back with the resolve to have in his institution as fine a library as that of Harvard University with its six-and-a-half-million volumes.

I want to emphasize as strongly as I can these developments in Russia and the United States. It was with them in mind that I said in my opening sentence that at no time in the history of civilization have the objectives and the importance of libraries been as sharply defined as they are at present. Our libraries are an integral part of our line of defence. They inform our research people of developments in any part of the world. They are part of an equalizing process whereby any country can tap the common fund of knowledge if it will only set itself to do so, can build on that common fund, and open the way for fresh advances. Our libraries exist as never before to help in maintaining the kind of civilization we would like to see maintained in Australia. The leaders of the democratic and communist world are fully aware of the national importance of libraries ; and this less wealthy but highly vulnerable continent cannot afford to overlook a situation which is so plain to others. For the sake of emphasis, our neighbour in the near north, Indonesia, is at least as good a customer for overseas scientific literature as we are ourselves.

There is a thirst for reading in this country and a thirst that is not being satisfied, first because of the cruelly high cost of books, and second because few bookshops exist outside the seven capital cities. The welfare of the booktrade, of libraries and of civilization at large depends on the availability of an adequate supply of books. For all of them the book supply represents a very significant life-line. The time has come in Australia for a thorough review of the whole publishing and booktrade

situation. It may be necessary to take protective measures similar to those which were adopted in the United States last century when it was desired to put the publishing business on its feet. In order to secure American copyright, British publishers were required to print editions in the United States. Considerable thought should be given in this country to requiring British and American publishers to issue Australian editions if their works are to be given copyright protection here. A British book costs an Australian reader the British price plus a quarter as much again to take care of exchange on sterling ; but that is not all : it costs all that plus another fifty per cent which is added on to cover local booktrade costs and profits. Such a price places a premium on education, research and information. Let me ask you to set side by side with this enhanced cost, this restraint of trade if you will, the fact that our colleagues at Harvard University can walk a few hundred yards to a bookshop where they can buy British books for less than they would pay for them in London ; and far less than the Australian cost ; or a colleague at Columbia University can walk into British Books in New York City and again acquire the product at an attractively low rate, even though the United States is a wealthy country. Within the framework of our Commonwealth of Nations is it not false for British publishers, in their efforts to earn dollar credits, to sell their products at a far lower price in a non-member country than is required in a Commonwealth country which is so interested in the British book market that it acquires two-fifths of all books exported from Great Britain ? What I have said about the high cost of books in Australia represents a problem of national importance which should, without delay, be tackled on a very high level indeed. I want to make it clear that the welfare of libraries is intimately connected with the welfare of the booktrade. The librarian, the bookseller and the publisher need to sit down together to discuss the problem of supply in a completely objective manner. And because the matter is so far reaching, I believe that it ought to be the subject of a Federal Commission.*

I came back to my native land because I felt that the Murray Report offered a certain guarantee that one could provide staff and students in the University of Sydney with something of the kind of facilities for study and research that staff and students enjoy in Europe and America. I have come from twenty years at a university which is not content to say, as so many American universities do, that the library is the heart of a university. At Harvard it is asserted that the library *is* the university. The line of reasoning that leads to such a statement is that the student body is replenished year by year, the buildings could be replaced, a new faculty could be built up, but the wealth of material in the university library could never be restored if anything happened to it. For many years while I was at Harvard there was a Provost who actually ran the University while the President was away on national affairs. So strongly did Provost Buck feel that the welfare of the University Library had to be safeguarded, that he is now the Director of the Harvard

* Since this was written, developments have taken place in the Australian book trade such that one leading representative could say, " The colonial phase of the Australian book trade has now come to an end ".

Library. But before he became Director he set out six points which he considered to be obvious truths. I believe that they are well worth passing on to you.

First, he said, the library is the heart of education. Every educational advance depends upon the library's resources, and in large measure, the degree of the advance is proportionate to the potential of the library to respond. This, he said, is why there must be great university libraries. He added that the library has been the heart of the educational process from the time when universities began—when professors had to read books to their students—and despite their great laboratories, even scientists must continue to consult books.

Second, methods and fashions in education change from generation to generation but each generation uses the library as a means of realizing its aims. Hence the library remains the great conservator of learning. An investment in a library is a permanent investment, he declared, guaranteeing returns for centuries to come. This is why it is not enough to collect only what is needed by the professors who happen to be on your Faculty to-day.

Third, quality education is impossible without a quality library. When working on the development of the general education programme at Harvard, Professor Buck compared the student in many college courses to a traveller abroad who keeps his nose in the guidebook and never looks at life around him. Teaching with textbooks means offering the student only a guidebook instead of the variation and depth of experience to be found in living books. The Harvard Law School is a great school, he went on to say, it also has the greatest legal library in the world. These two facts are related. They demonstrate that you cannot have education of quality without a library of quality.

Fourth, you cannot have quality faculties without quality libraries. As Provost he used to find the resources of the Harvard Library very helpful when attracting professors to the Faculty. The rather high salary scale was less important—living costs vary, and so do people's habits in using money. The most important consideration was the morale of the Faculty, which involved the University's policies with regard to academic freedom and the way in which a professor was allowed to operate. Second only to this in importance was the Library. In terms of cash, he estimated that it was worth three thousand dollars a year per man. This is a consideration that should not be lost sight of by those who administer great universities.

Fifth, a library is vital to proper exploitation of our intellectual resources. And sixth, libraries are essential to maintenance of free access to ideas and to the functioning of the untrammelled mind. Thought control will never be successful so long as books are freely and widely available. Here the laboratory can never take the place of the library.

Professor Buck summed up his credo by saying, "Call them simple or call them obvious—I should urge that they be repeated repeatedly and positively. Let me apologize no more, but proudly assert that the library is a vital organ of the university,

and that he who directs its policy is potentially second in importance only to the president as custodian of the institution's well being."

Australian scholars have made their mark throughout the world: Gilbert Murray, for example, in the classics, Samuel Alexander in philosophy, and Elton Mayo whose philosophy of business administration is standard practice in the United States as you will know if you have read Whyte's *The Organization Man*. These are but a few of a long list that could be cited. Wherever you go in Great Britain or America, you find Australian students, research men and faculty members who more than hold their own with the best that older established countries have to offer. With such a wealth of potential, this country must see to it that there is quality education with quality faculty to go with quality students. And lest I should be regarded as not impartial in the matter, let me fall back on Paul Buck who, as a distinguished history professor, and as former Provost of Harvard University, said, "You cannot have these things without a quality library."

I entered library work in Australia in 1920. Since then tremendous advances have been made. What I have said to you tonight is that we must deliberately raise our sights. I had a school teacher at Wesley College where I went in Melbourne, who was fond of saying scornfully, that the Australian standard was, "near enough is good enough". For the past twenty years I have been at Harvard where the administrative philosophy is that "a good Faculty is not good enough". That University insists on having an excellent Faculty. In much the same way, I believe that we ought to be aiming in Australia, not at good libraries, but at excellent libraries such as will compare favourably with those abroad; and I feel a considerable sense of urgency when I say that what could be referred to rather picturesquely in former times as the library keeper's business, has now suddenly come into prominence as an index of a university's or a nation's determination to achieve and survive.