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Special Libraries of New South Wales

DEVELOPMENT

Developments in science and technology and the growth of industry over the last twenty years have been paralleled by the growth of special libraries. In this world-wide trend Australia has not lagged behind and New South Wales has played her part with the other states.

Before World War II there were very few special libraries in New South Wales organized in accordance with standard practice, and in the charge of trained librarians. The marked improvement in special library services is due not only to the development of library consciousness among students and research workers but also to a realization of the importance of a well organized library service by administration and management and the greatly increased facilities for training of librarians.

The New South Wales Division of the Special Libraries Section is in touch with about eighty-five special libraries in the Sydney area. These fall into the following categories:

1. Libraries attached to State or Commonwealth Government Departments, including C.S.I.R.O. 30
2. Libraries attached to institutions and learned societies 15
3. Libraries attached to industrial organizations 35
4. Libraries attached to hospitals 3

STATE AND COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS

In New South Wales, for some time, the staff of the state departmental libraries has been provided from the staff of the Public Library of New South Wales. This provision of trained staff has resulted in the improvement of library services and collections. Libraries exist in most government departments and mention of the special features of a few of the larger ones may be of interest.

As well as providing library services for the staff of the Department of Public Health, this library is responsible for providing technical and recreational books for the institutions under the control of the Department, that is, mental hospitals and state hospitals. Book buying, processing and cataloguing for these libraries is done centrally and the book stock is exchanged to meet the various requirements of the institutions. Likewise the library of the Child Welfare Department serves the various homes under the charge of that Department.

A special feature of the collection of the library of the Department of Agriculture is the emphasis placed on serial publications. A world-wide coverage is held of bulletins issued by departments of agriculture, universities and agricultural colleges and experiment stations. This library provides services for branches at Head Office and for libraries of agricultural colleges and research stations.

The Department of Education Library, as well as providing research facilities for the staff of departments at Head Office, serves Inspectors and officers stationed throughout New South Wales. By exchange arrangements with overseas education authorities a valuable collection of curriculum material is being built up.

Other State Departments with libraries have their special features according to their particular subject fields. One of the newest libraries is that of the Railways Department, established in 1958, and it shows promise of becoming an important research library. The Electricity Commission of New South Wales, set up in June 1953, is also one of the newer special libraries and is building up a good collection in electrical engineering and allied subjects. An interesting feature is their centralized book buying, cataloguing and indexing, which enables the library to give

library into spacious new premises with a three story book-stack. The collection is classified by the Barnard Classification which was originally devised for a similar collection on tropical medicine. This is a joint project of the Commonwealth Government and the University of Sydney.

The Dental Hospital's library contains the Fisher Library's collection on dentistry as well as that of the Institute of Dental Research; it uses Black's expansion for dental libraries of Dewey's classification. A collection of textbooks provided by the Sydney University Dental Undergraduates Association augments the resources of the library.

NEWSPAPER LIBRARIES

The newspaper libraries are an invaluable source of information for a world wide coverage of current events. Their excellent indexing systems make such information readily available. The main Sydney newspaper libraries are the combined library for the "Sydney Morning Herald" and the "Sun", and the libraries attached to the "Mirror" and the "Daily Telegraph".

BANKS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES

In the economic field there are good libraries attached to several banks and insurance companies. These provide sources of specialized information not otherwise available. Both the Commonwealth Bank and the Rural Bank of New South Wales have collections to serve the needs of their economic departments, and are particularly strong in information dealing with international finance and economic trends in relation to Australian development. Two of the major libraries serving insurance companies are those attached to the Australian Mutual Provident Society and the Mutual Life & Citizens Assurance Company Ltd.

HOSPITAL LIBRARIES

Most of the large hospitals have technical library service. Probably the best known are those attached to the Royal North Shore, Sydney, and Prince Henry Hospitals. These libraries are distinct from the Medical Records Libraries.

INDUSTRIAL LIBRARIES

The largest group of special libraries are those provided in industrial and commercial organizations. Some of these libraries have been established for many years and their periodical holdings are most valuable.

The library of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company founded in 1928 is one of the oldest in Sydney. It covers the fields of pure and applied science and technology. As the interests of this company have developed in many directions so the library has progressively expanded. It provides information for members of the C.S.R. organization at the mills and refineries and to subsidiary companies. The library of The Commonwealth Industrial Gases Limited was established in 1941. Again the fields of interest are pure and applied science and engineering with particular emphasis on metallurgy, industrial and medical gases. This library provides service for all the Commonwealth Industrial Gases Branches in all states by establishing small collections of basic books and periodicals, and by the issue of a regular library bulletin and sets of cards giving references to articles of interest in current periodicals. The Australian Gas Light Company, which is engaged in the manufacture and distribution of coal or town gas has the most comprehensive collection of literature available in this field, including both English and American journals. Australian Paper Manufacturers Limited, although its head office library is in Melbourne, has a flourishing and well organized branch library at its Botany mill. The main emphasis of its collection is on the chemistry and technology connected with new developments in the manufacture of pulp and paper. Imperial Chemical Industries of Australia & New Zealand Limited, is another example of a well organized and well equipped branch library of which the head office is in Melbourne.

The library of the Sydney County Council Electricity Supply is probably the oldest library concerned with electrical undertakings. It circulates journals to all