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Reviews of Library Literature

Pitt's Catalogue—New Edition

UNION CATALOGUE OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PERIODICALS IN THE LIBRARIES OF AUSTRALIA. Edited by E. R. Pitt. Second edition. C.S.I.R.O., Melbourne, 1951.

All librarians and users of libraries must welcome with open arms the new edition of Pitt's Catalogue.

The amount of work required to collect, orientate, to check and to recheck all the information used in a work of this nature and importance, is something that the average user can hardly begin to realise. I think that to the Editor, to the editorial committee, to the C.S.I.R.O., and all who had a hand in its production, all librarians will join in saying "Thank you".

There are, however, for the Special Librarian, one or two points which cause considerable concern. We borrow a great amount of material from each other, and in this borrowing and lending speed is not only the essence of the contract but in most cases it "is" the contract.

Therefore to include only the partial holdings of 66 company libraries out of an available 170 would appear to cause a loss of efficiency. It is of much more value to us to obtain a loan from a library in the next street than to spend possibly a longer time in obtaining the same journal from one of the larger libraries. Sir David Rivett said in the foreword to the first edition, "Ready access to periodical literature is essential to every worker in science", and to the special librarian the emphasis is very much on the "ready".

Would it not be possible in future editions to publish all this information and perhaps have the Catalogue in a number of volumes, say one for Victoria, one for N.S.W., and perhaps one for the other States? Revision of one volume at a time may then be possible.

It is of course realised that the cost of production of the Catalogue bears little relation to the actual price to the purchaser, but if the inclusion of the more complete information increased the price to purchasers to some extent, the time saved by doing so would justify the additional cost.

One other point that would appear a little difficult to understand, is the reason for the designation of Companies' Libraries by symbols such as CL- and a number. The old method of well-known initials would not appear to have much against it, and is much less confusing than numbers, which have to be continually referred to and which sometimes appear as different ones for the same company in different States.

These two thoughts are offered in the hope that they may be of some use to editors in the future.

H. J. D. MEARES,
Librarian, Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd., Sydney.

BOOKS ARE TOOLS: The Organization of Small Technical Libraries for South African Industry, by Hazel Mews. South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. Pretoria, 1951.

This is a pamphlet of only 28 pp., but it is well organised and has eight good illustrations in addition. A similar pamphlet for small technical libraries in Australia would be useful.

J.M.

NEWSPAPER LIBRARIES, by J. Lewis. The Library Association, London, 1952.

The latest Library Association pamphlet is devoted to a largely neglected and barely understood field of librarianship — the British Newspaper Library. The pamphlet attempts, in its too few 75 pages, to survey the methods in use and the problems involved. It demonstrates that uniformity in newspaper libraries is practically non-existent, every conceivable shape and size of card, folder and envelope being used for filing indexing purposes. Dewey, if he could talk, would regret the almost utter neglect of his classification. Nevertheless, the accent is on the necessity for quick reference, and expedients which are foreign to slower moving and normal library practice must be followed. This essay makes no reference to the bustle and hurry of a newspaper office, the impatience of staff writers wanting material NOW, or it will be too late. But it does show that modern newspapers appreciate the value of accuracy