



## Collecting in the National Interest

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THE CONCEPT that book resources are important in the national interest is not new. Over a century ago Charles Coffin Jewett in one of the first surveys of libraries in this country expressed the belief that "Books constitute a large element of the intellectual wealth of a nation."<sup>1</sup> Even earlier, in the 1840's, the Committee on Organization of the then nascent Smithsonian Institution recommended the establishment of a national union catalog and bibliographical center and the building up of collections which would supplement, without duplicating, library resources already available:

Your committee conceive that . . . the Smithsonian Institution may . . . become a centre of literary and bibliographical reference for our entire country. Your committee recommend that the librarian be instructed to procure catalogues . . . of all important public libraries in the United States; and . . . Europe, and the more important works on bibliography. With these beside him, he may be consulted by the scholar, the student, the author, the historian, from every section of the Union, and will be prepared to inform them whether any works they may desire to examine are to be found in the United States; and if so, in what library, or if in Europe only, in what country of Europe they must be sought.

Informed by these catalogues, it will be easy, and your committee think desirable . . . to make the Smithsonian library chiefly a supplemental one; to purchase, for the most part, valuable works which are not to be found elsewhere in the Union. . .

In following out this mode of collecting a library for the institution, whenever a particular class of works of importance is found to be specially deficient in the libraries of our country, the vacancy may be filled.<sup>2</sup>

In a contribution to the second great survey of the libraries of the United States, that of 1876, Justin Winsor, then superintendent of the

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Boston Public Library, carried these basic concepts a step farther by suggesting a system of regional depositories for publications of secondary importance, the institution of exchanges between these depositories, and centralized cataloging arrangements:

For a given bulk the labor which must be bestowed on pamphlets, broadsides, scraps, etc., to render them of any use in a library—assorting, cataloguing, binding, etc.—is vastly greater than for books; and, as labor is money, and as money should be made to go as far as possible in a library, there is no reason why ordinary libraries should give any of their resources to this end, except so far as the matters to be preserved are of local interest. . . . A few great libraries in the country, the chief one in each principal geographical section, should do this work, and they should open an exchange account with each other. . . . The lesser collections will do the best thing for the future historical investigator if they will make regular contributions into the larger repository of all such grist as may come to their mill, so that it can there be cared for and rendered available for use by indexing of one kind or another. The cost of this work is large, and the chief libraries should by all means provide for it.<sup>3</sup>

Toward the turn of the century, one of Winsor's successors as librarian of the Boston Public Library, Herbert Putnam, was called upon to advise a Congressional committee engaged in studying the Library of Congress just prior to its removal from the Capitol to its own building. It was his opinion that:

"while a library 'universal in scope' is pleasing in idea, I am quite clear that a library universal in scope is not practicable, unless you are sure of unlimited funds. . . I should say it was desirable that this Library should pursue the plan that other libraries throughout the United States are following of differentiating—in its case of laying particular stress on the material particularly appropriate to it under its title as a National Library.

"This would include material on law and legislation, and necessarily (under the copyright) all publications issued in the United States. But when you come to general literature outside of that, certainly when you come to other specialized literature . . . it ought to take account of what other libraries have and are seeking to do."<sup>4</sup>

On the same occasion W. I. Fletcher, librarian of Amherst College, called attention to the considerable number of government libraries in Washington, citing especially those of the Department of Agriculture, the Surgeon-General, the Geological Survey, the Census Bureau, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. He urged "thoroughgoing

### *Collecting in the National Interest*

coordination and cooperation" between these libraries and the Library of Congress to prevent "wasteful duplication" and promote "their harmonious co-working," and suggested an "advisory council" which would work toward a unified system of federal libraries. Melvil Dewey, who was present at the same hearing, expressed similar ideas.

Historians as well as librarians have, from an early date, concerned themselves with the over-all national resources for research. Studies made by Jewett and others in the middle of the nineteenth century had demonstrated the gross insufficiency of these resources. A survey of collections relating to European history made as late as 1911 by the American Historical Association's Committee on Bibliography reported these resources as still insufficient and badly distributed. The Committee compiled a check list of 2,197 titles basic for the study of European history and sent it to 305 libraries. Only one library, Harvard, had as many as half the titles and only 12 libraries had more than ten per cent. Of the 2,197 titles only 1,884 were located somewhere in the United States. Some sections of the country, notably New England and the Middle Atlantic states, had from two to nine copies of works not be found elsewhere.

The committee concluded: "(1) that no American library contains all the sets which may be needed by any historical worker in his work, (2) that the cooperation between libraries in the matter of interlibrary loan is seriously limited by the lack of knowledge as to where copies are located, (3) that the desultory attempts of individual libraries to supply lacks by purchase results in waste from unnecessary duplication and competition for copies, (4) that the geographical distribution of present books is bad." <sup>5</sup> It added that although it is "neither to be expected or desired" that every library should contain every title on the list, there should be at least one copy in each geographical section. This of course was written when communication and transportation were much slower than at present.

The committee's chairman, E. C. Richardson, in an article a year later <sup>6</sup> wrote:

To attempt to build every university library up into a complete apparatus in itself is to attempt the impossible. Even the independent attempts of a dozen libraries to reach approximately this stage results in enormous expense of unnecessary duplication, while there are still tremendous lacks common to all.

The remedy for this is systematic cooperation between the thirty libraries which spend \$1,000,000 a year for books. The definite assumption of certain classes of books by certain libraries, and the dis-

tribution of copies to be purchased, so that each geographical locality shall have a copy instead of massing the same, would increase the efficiency result by much more than the cost of organization.

The first World War and the peace conference which followed it found the libraries of this country seriously deficient in the resources required for the detailed study of foreign areas. As Andrew Keogh, then librarian of Yale, put it, ". . . in our national emergency our libraries were not equal to the demands made upon them, individually and collectively . . . territorial questions had to be studied in just such detail, and in many cases the answers were not to be found in this country, and owing to war conditions could not be obtained." He urged that the research libraries "organize their material and their effort so that unnecessary duplication may be avoided, that what is lacking may be known and provided, and that the literary resources of the nation may be made available easily and quickly."<sup>7</sup> It took a second World War to drive these lessons home.

In 1916 the American Library Institute had adopted a "plan of cooperation by specialization" under which research libraries would accept certain specialties and would engage to build up their collections in these fields. The basic aim was to insure the presence in each of seven regions into which the United States could be divided of "at least one reference copy and one lending copy" (either in the original or in photostat) of books in each subject.<sup>8</sup> During the 1920's the main features of this plan, with some additions, were promoted by the American Library Association, the Bibliographical Society of America, and the American Historical Association but little progress was made in putting it into operation.

Prerequisite to any national scheme of acquisition was a national record of materials acquired, and this did not exist. Towards the end of the period in 1927, a gift by J. D. Rockefeller Jr. made possible the active development of the National Union Catalog at the Library of Congress under the supervision of Richardson. The enormous and rapid progress of the catalog in inventorying the important books of major American libraries (in five years, 1927-1932, the catalog increased its two million entries to a record of nearly nine million copies of more than seven million works<sup>9, 10</sup>) once more stimulated thinking and planning toward a national scheme of collecting. Richardson, who not only directed the union catalog project but was at the same time chairman of the American Library Association's Committee on Bibliography, developed in 1930 for the A.L.A. Executive Board a series of twelve projects, all revolving about the union catalog idea.

### *Collecting in the National Interest*

These included plans for a subject union catalog and for the cooperative selection, purchase, cataloging, and warehousing of books.<sup>11</sup>

At just this time, 1929, the Social Science Research Council joined forces with the American Council of Learned Societies in an effort toward "the improvement and preservation of research data" and established the Joint Committee on Materials of Research. During the ensuing decade this committee, under the successive chairmanship of S. J. Buck and R. C. Binkley, was to make signal contributions to the development of thinking and apparatus with respect to the materials for research, especially in the social sciences and humanities.<sup>12</sup> At an early stage the committee discovered that "One of the most difficult problems . . . is that of bringing about coöperation among libraries so that copies of all important materials may be preserved and conveniently distributed and unnecessary duplication may be avoided."<sup>13</sup> Although, before its demise, the committee made certain concrete proposals for solving this problem, especially in connection with the reorganization of the Library of Congress under Archibald MacLeish,<sup>14</sup> the onset of World War II and Binkley's death in 1940 led to its discontinuance. A similar organization, if gifted with similar leadership, could be very useful today.

Meanwhile, the thirties continued the coacervation of data proving the need for a national plan of acquisition. Douglas Waples searched a list of about 100 journals and 500 monographs in economics, law, government, and sociology published between 1927 and 1933 in England, France, and Germany against the catalogs of five major American libraries—the New York Public Library, Library of Congress, Harvard, Chicago, California, and Michigan. The New York Public Library made the best showing but none of these institutions had all the works on this carefully selected list of important titles.<sup>15</sup> Studies by R. B. Downs, W. J. Wilson, and C. B. Joeckel revealed anew the unequal distribution of the national book resources, the great differences between the major geographic regions, and the tendency of these inequalities to perpetuate themselves. Joeckel, writing during a period of federal aid programs, revived for the second time the turn-of-the-century recommendation of a "Federal Library Council . . . to coordinate the policies and procedures of the libraries of the Federal Government." More fundamentally he proposed that, "The Federal Government, through grants-in-aid and the services of its own libraries, should aid in the development of regional centers for library service and in a general program of cooperation and coordination of library resources on a regional and national scale." And finally

that "A system of permanent annual Federal grants-in-aid to libraries is essential to the maintenance of an adequate Nation-wide minimum of library service."<sup>16</sup>

In 1941 a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York made possible the establishment in the Library of Congress for one year of an Experimental Division of Library Cooperation, under the direction of H. A. Kellar. The Division issued a publication on library cooperation which devoted a chapter to the "acquisition, control, and mobility of materials for research in American libraries." It envisaged a plan under which there would be "at least one copy somewhere in the country of all books infrequently consulted; at least two copies (one for lending and one for reference) in a number of strategic centers of all books frequently referred to; and an adequate distribution in every research library of all books constantly used." The chapter called attention to the incompleteness of the national resources for research and recommended, among other measures, coordinated purchases and exchanges, storage libraries, regional depositories, and "an intense specialization in designated fields by all of the major research institutions of the country."<sup>17</sup> Kellar conferred with librarians in all parts of the country and plans were made for working out a general statement and a detailed program for submission to librarians and university administrators, under which there would be initiated cooperative measures for dealing with common problems. The entry of the United States into World War II prevented for the time being the execution of these plans.

It was the war, however, and the efforts made to meet wartime needs which finally led to the implementation of concrete and far-reaching programs for collecting in the national interest. The Library of Congress was requested to establish, for the Office of the Coordinator of Information (later the Office of Strategic Services) and with funds transferred for the purpose, a Division of Special Information, to provide reference and research material to the Coordinator's staff. More than one hundred experts on foreign countries were drawn for the purpose from the faculties of the country's principal universities. Much was accomplished but the efforts of these specialists to provide essential information demonstrated for the second time in a generation that the resources of the United States were inadequate to meet the demands made upon them by a nation at war.

Some of these inadequacies were remedied through the efforts of the Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Pub-

### *Collecting in the National Interest*

lications which was set up by the government as an emergency measure and through the efforts of the Joint Committee on Importations, an emergency-created body representing seven national library associations. The Interdepartmental Committee did particularly effective work in acquiring through special channels, and reproducing on microfilm current foreign publications, chiefly newspapers, periodicals, government publications, and scientific and technological journals.<sup>18</sup> The Joint Committee on Importations was successful in obtaining through commercial channels, as long as these remained open, many foreign publications which could not have been acquired by individual libraries, and it secured the release of some large shipments which had been impounded by Allied military authorities.<sup>19</sup> The American Council of Learned Societies sponsored a War Emergency Program for Microcopying Research Materials in Britain,<sup>20</sup> and other bodies also made substantial contributions toward meeting the nation's wartime needs.

The most important effort toward meeting these needs, however, was undoubtedly the Cooperative Acquisitions Project which was established to distribute the publications collected in the national interest by the Library of Congress Mission. As early as 1943 the Library of Congress had sent a representative to Portugal and Spain. Between that date and 1945 he extended his activities to North Africa, Italy, and France, working in close cooperation with our armed forces. These activities, while highly beneficial to the Library of Congress, could not meet the needs of non-governmental libraries nor did they extend to German publications, the lack of which was particularly felt. Consequently, the Association of Research Libraries, the American Library Association, and the Library of Congress made joint representation to the Secretary of State and to the War Department which culminated in 1945 in the dispatch to Europe of the Library of Congress Mission, representing the research libraries of the country. Its duties were to secure multiple copies of publications for the war period in order to assure their availability in the scholarly and research institutions of the United States. In all, over two million pieces were acquired through purchase, through the transfer to the Mission of materials confiscated by the Army from military and Nazi organizations, and through other sources, while negotiations with the Soviet authorities resulted in the release of nearly \$200,000 worth of publications, chiefly serials, which had been stored in Leipzig during the war by German publishers and dealers for American institutions.

At home a Committee to Advise on the Distribution of Foreign

Acquisitions was formed to devise the criteria for the distribution of the materials acquired by the Mission, with representatives from the several research councils and library associations. The actual work of distribution continued for several years. When it was terminated in the fall of 1948 a total of 820,000 books and periodical volumes, representing approximately 2,000,000 pieces, had been sent to the cooperating libraries, at a net average cost to them, including the purchased material, of seventy-five cents a volume. R. B. Downs wrote, in summarizing the achievements of the Cooperative Acquisitions Project, that through its instrumentality "there is available in the United States an unsurpassed collection of European wartime publications, far richer than would have been possible if we had been forced to depend upon the efforts of individual libraries."<sup>21</sup> Dan Lacy, in a somewhat later summary, declared that the project "made the World War II period one of the strongest, rather than one of the weakest, periods in the holdings of American research libraries."<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps the most important result of the Cooperative Acquisitions Project—more important even than the materials which it acquired—was that it demonstrated for the first time on a really large scale what American libraries can accomplish when they work together toward a common goal and, as E. E. Williams has pointed out in the *Farmington Plan Handbook*,<sup>23</sup> a successful accomplishment in cooperation on this scale encouraged efforts toward a longer-term acquisitions program in the national interest. But another important result was in the expression of government policy toward such projects. In a letter dated August 4, 1945, Archibald MacLeish, Assistant Secretary of State, wrote to the Librarian of Congress on behalf of the Acting Secretary of State as follows:

"The Department of State agrees with the Library's [i.e. the Library of Congress'] view that the national interest is directly affected by the holdings of the private research libraries. It would, therefore, interpose no objection in principle to the employment of federal government facilities to assist in maintaining their specialized collections where normal channels of acquisition are inoperative."

However, the letter went on to state,—

"The Department would wish to be assured that the private libraries had agreed upon and carefully planned a program of cooperative buying, and that they would continue to support such a plan as long as Federal assistance was granted them."<sup>24</sup>

The policy thus formulated has been since employed in connection



### *Collecting in the National Interest*

with several acquisitions problems of American libraries in areas in which obstacles of one kind or another to ordinary commercial procurement have existed, e.g. in the Soviet Union, Communist China,<sup>25</sup> and Afghanistan.

The Farmington Plan has been described with such thoroughness in the 1953 publication by Williams just mentioned and in the approximately 90 references cited in his bibliography that extended discussion of it here is unnecessary. The Plan originated in the fall of 1942 at Farmington, Connecticut, in the deliberations of the Executive Committee of the Librarian's Council, an informal body of distinguished librarians and men of letters who had been invited by the Librarian of Congress the year previous to advise him on national programs. The ultimate aim was agreed to be to possess, at some point in the United States, one copy at least, in original or reproduction, of every title, wherever published, of which American scholars might have need. This aim could best be achieved, it was thought, if American research libraries would divide responsibility for the coverage of the various fields and subfields among them. The result, so far as each particular library was concerned, would be an affirmative responsibility to secure everything of importance in specified areas, accompanied by complete freedom to purchase or not in all other fields as the needs of the library dictated. As a beginning, the Farmington meeting proposed that agreement between libraries should be limited for the time being to newly published works.

K. D. Metcalf, director of the Harvard University Libraries, then president of the American Library Association, and Julian Boyd, librarian of Princeton University, took the lead in drafting a formal proposal along these lines and in securing the support of librarians, associations of scholars, and the presidents of a number of the more important universities. An application for a grant to cover the work of organization was submitted to a foundation but the necessary funds were not available under wartime conditions.

In 1944, therefore, Metcalf brought the Farmington Proposal before the Association of Research Libraries, which appointed a Farmington Plan Committee with Metcalf as chairman. Several members of the Association undertook the checking of a typical year's book production in one foreign country, computed the number of books in each subject, and estimated their cost. Sample lists were sent to sixty libraries for a report of their holdings. Other preparatory steps followed but it was not until 1947 that the partial reopening of the foreign book markets made it possible to bring the proposal before American li-

braries in terms of a concrete operation. In two conferences attended by representatives of 40 libraries agreement was reached on a division of fields of responsibility in acquisition and on methods of purchasing and distribution. It was further agreed that the Farmington Plan should go into operation in 1948, beginning with the publications of France, Sweden, and Switzerland as a preliminary test.

Early in 1948 the Carnegie Corporation of New York made a grant of \$15,000 to cover the expenses of a Farmington Plan Office for three years. By the summer nearly one thousand volumes had been received and in the fall a representative of the Plan visited twelve European countries in its interest. In 1949 the Plan was extended to Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Norway, in 1950 to Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, in 1951 to Australia, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain, in 1952 to 13 countries and colonies in the Caribbean area, and in 1953 to Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Yugoslavia and 22 nations and territories in Africa and Asia. As of 1953 the Farmington Plan was in operation in 99 countries and possessions. Its further extension to the Latin American countries not already included, to Japan, New Zealand, Oceania, and the Union of South Africa had been approved, the number of participating libraries had grown to 62, and the possibility of broadening the Plan's coverage to include serials and publications outside the book trade was being studied. Surely, the Farmington Plan marks one of the high points to date in the history of library cooperation in this country.<sup>23</sup>

But, by the same token, the effectiveness of the Plan as a method of acquisition in the national interest needs to be closely regarded. In 1949 C. W. David and Rudolf Hirsch made a "rash investigation" into the first few months of the Plan's operation, showing that it had achieved a far from perfect score,<sup>26</sup> but a review of Swiss publications for 1949, made in 1951-52, showed that 90 per cent of the eligible material had been supplied.<sup>27</sup> Further studies, and careful weighing of their results, are obviously needed.

The American Library Association's Board on Resources of American Libraries, has, for more than thirty years, worked steadily and effectively for the development of interlibrary cooperation on the national level. Created in 1923 "to study the present resources of American libraries; to suggest plans for coordination in the acquisition of research publications by American libraries" it has made notable contributions in its chosen field. The Board's 1935 report, *Resources of American Libraries; a Preliminary Study of Available Records and of Efforts Toward the Coordination of the Resources of American*

### *Collecting in the National Interest*

*Libraries* summarized developments up to that time and laid the ground-work for future progress in many important directions. The surveys conducted for the Board by R. B. Downs of the resources for research of Southern libraries (1938), of New York City libraries (1942) and of American library resources in general (1951) are landmarks of lasting usefulness as is also his *Union Catalogs in the United States*. The 1941 conference on library specialization and the annual reports on important materials added to libraries in the United States were likewise sponsored by the Board. It has done much to promote regional union catalogs and cooperative microfilming projects and has worked closely with other library groups and with the research associations in the furtherance of common interests.

The 1946 Conference on International, Cultural, Educational, and Scientific Exchanges, sponsored jointly by the Board on Resources and the International Relations Board of the A.L.A., made a contribution of permanent importance toward the solution of problems in the whole field of international exchanges. The Carnegie Corporation of New York underwrote the expense of preparing and publishing memoranda on the major topics to be discussed and the proceedings themselves. For this purpose E. E. Williams and Ruth V. Noble brought together a comprehensive study covering, among many other topics, cooperative acquisitions and specialization, exchange of documents between governments, and exchanges between libraries. It was the first thorough and scholarly survey of the entire field and it provided historical perspective as well as a review of current activities. The conference was attended by 33 representatives of libraries, foundations, learned societies, and federal departments. All phases of the subject were explored and the recommendations for action adopted there have been followed up with concrete results in a number of directions.<sup>28</sup>

Four years later L. J. Kipp conducted for the Library of Congress under a grant from the Interdepartmental Committee on Scientific and Cultural Cooperation a survey of the government's programs for the exchange of publications with Latin America and of the programs of private institutions insofar as they complemented the government's programs or made use of their facilities. Kipp's report was published in the spring of 1950 and was widely distributed to government agencies and libraries in this country and abroad. It described the historical development of exchanges in general, their legislative bases and objectives, the operational machinery of the programs with Latin America, problems which must be faced, and important current de-

velopments such as the use of microphotography, the Farmington Plan, and the activities of Unesco. The roles of the United States Book Exchange, the Department of State, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, the Armed Forces Medical Library, and the Department of Agriculture were helpfully analyzed and eighteen specific recommendations for action were presented.<sup>29</sup>

Many individual libraries in their acquisitions programs have kept the national interest in mind. This has been true, for example, of the federal libraries. Earlier in this article mention was made of the pioneering efforts of the Smithsonian Institution, of the stress laid on specialization by Herbert Putnam, and of the suggestion that a "council" of government libraries be established. Reference was also made to the Experimental Division of Library Cooperation at the Library of Congress, the wartime Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications, the Library of Congress Mission, and the Kipp survey of the government's exchange programs.

The Canons of Selection adopted by the Library of Congress in 1940 recognized the primary roles of the Department of Agriculture Library and the Armed Forces Medical Library in their respective fields and pledged the best efforts of the Library of Congress toward the strengthening of these complementary collections. They acknowledged the primacy of the National Archives as regards the official manuscript records of the federal government and emphasized that the Library's chief concern "as regards local manuscript records is to stimulate their location in appropriate localities." Finally the Canons stipulated that "where, aside from such official documents, other American libraries, whose collections are made broadly available, have already accumulated, or are in process of accumulating, outstanding collections in well-defined areas, in which areas the Library of Congress is not strong, the Library of Congress will satisfy itself with general reference materials and will not attempt to establish intensive collections."<sup>30</sup> The Library's Acquisitions Committee, in existence since 1943, in charting the development of the collections and determining subject fields for special emphasis, has been constantly guided by these general principles.

In 1946 a number of eminent persons, each representative of a class of users of the Library's services, were invited to form a Library of Congress Planning Committee. Their report, submitted the following year, presented a program for the future development of the Library in matters of service to Congress, to the other federal agencies, to local libraries, educational, scientific and learned institutions and

### *Collecting in the National Interest*

organizations, to industrial and commercial enterprises, and to individual investigators. In describing the kinds of collections which the Library should maintain the committee stressed the necessity for coordination of effort and elimination of duplicative collecting both in the federal library system and in that of the nation as a whole.<sup>31</sup>

A 1944 survey, *The National Medical Library*, noted the founding of the Army Medical Library (now the Armed Forces Medical Library) in 1836 and its emergence since 1865 as a great research institution with the most impressive collection of medical publications in the United States. The surveyors found that the Armed Forces Medical Library serves to a large extent as the central medical research library for the country, that it lends books by interlibrary loan to a tremendous extent to libraries all over the United States, and that this service has been greatly extended through the use of microfilm and photostat, with hundreds of thousands of pages of microfilm and several thousand photostats and photoprints produced each year. They recommended that the Library of Congress transfer to the Armed Forces Medical Library one of the two copyright copies which it receives and this has been effected. They also called attention to the need for a more definitive division of fields of collecting between this library and the Department of Agriculture Library.<sup>32</sup>

In the same year, Scott Adams wrote, "the library drew up a directive for its acquisition policy, defining fields of interest, and setting as an ideal the acquisition of one copy of any work of importance to medical research, regardless of language and date of publication. In carrying out this directive, the library has assumed the responsibility of supplying to agencies of the federal government all library materials in the field of medicine necessary to the national interest. As a corollary the library has accepted responsibility under the Farmington Plan of acquiring these materials in the interests of the private research libraries of the nation." He goes on to add that the library's services are "supplementary, not competitive. . . . The library's collections augment the resources of private libraries; the bibliographical activities . . . interpret these collections, providing services which could not be performed by libraries with smaller resources."<sup>33</sup> The directive referred to was amplified in 1951 in a statement on scope and coverage which carefully defined the library's acquisitions policy in each subject field with due regard to the collecting policies of the other major federal libraries.<sup>34</sup>

The Department of Agriculture Library serves as the national library for agriculture and has the largest agricultural collection in the

world, containing over 1,000,000 volumes in the field of agriculture and the related sciences. Ralph Shaw, in a 1948 summary, stressed the service given by this library to the country as a whole through interlibrary loans, field branches, photographic reproductions, and current bibliographies. He also described the limitations imposed by the library's administration to avoid duplicating the collections and services of other great research libraries. Purchases in fields beyond the collecting scope of the Department of Agriculture Library are limited to working collections needed for current use and recourse is had to the Armed Forces Medical Library and the Library of Congress for literature in their fields.<sup>35</sup>

A number of other federal libraries, for example, those of the Bureau of the Census, the Patent Office, and the Weather Bureau have collections of national scope and render a country-wide service. The collections of these specialized libraries are often the largest to be found in the United States and other libraries in the Washington area refrain from efforts to duplicate them. The resources and services of these libraries are briefly described in *Library and Reference Facilities in the Area of the District of Columbia*, a joint publication of the Washington, D. C. Chapter of the Special Libraries Association and the Library of Congress, now in its fourth edition (1952).

University libraries, individually and as a group, have from the beginning taken the lead in movements designed to strengthen the national resources for research. This is equally true of the great reference libraries in such cities as Boston, New York, and Chicago. These great libraries, whether attached to universities or to municipalities, are in a sense national assets. Their vast collections are major components of the total national resource and each renders a service which extends far beyond the campus or city in which it is located. A number of them, for example the New York Public Library and the Harvard University Library, have conducted surveys of their collections and prepared blueprints for their planned development which take into account national as well as local needs. Such men as Richardson, Keogh, W. W. Bishop, Metcalf, and Downs, to name but a few, have been in the forefront of every program for interlibrary cooperation in this country. The university and reference libraries have sponsored and executed such cooperative projects as the Farmington Plan, the New England Depository Library, and the Midwest Inter-Library Center. The next article in this issue reviews in detail the cooperative acquisitions programs that have been discussed and tried in recent years, and tests this trend with an actual sampling, on a regional basis, of recent acquisitions practice.

### *Collecting in the National Interest*

In 1942 Julian Boyd wrote, in the working paper for the crucial meeting at Farmington, Connecticut, "American research libraries cannot place in the hands of American scholars the records of knowledge that they need, for the simple reason that a least two-thirds of the estimated thirty million research titles of printed books in the world do not exist in even a single copy in any library in America. . . . No single library is great enough or can become great enough to meet the responsibility alone. It is a responsibility which can be met only by the united strength of all libraries and the unwavering faith of all librarians." <sup>36</sup>

Since that date the picture has considerably improved. The Farmington Plan, with its allocation of responsibilities by subject and area to achieve comprehensive coverage, to avoid unnecessary duplication, and to reduce costs, has established a basically sound pattern for developing our library resources in the interest of the nation as a whole.

On the other hand, much remains to be done. The Farmington Plan now covers important categories of monographs of research value currently published in nearly a hundred countries, but its omissions are significant. Quite apart from the geographic exclusions (among which are China, the Cominform Countries and the United States), the list of categories of excluded material fills a whole page in the *Farmington Plan Handbook*, and comprises dissertations, government documents, maps, music, newspapers, periodicals, and numbered series issued by societies or academic institutions.

There have not been wanting, it is true, various attempts to fill some of these gaps. The Committee on National Needs of the Association of Research Libraries was successful in extending the coverage of the Plan to certain areas using non-Roman alphabets, especially in the Middle East, to which the Plan had not previously extended and has explored the conditions prerequisite for making generally useful the stocks of books in non-Roman alphabets now present in the United States.<sup>37</sup> When it appeared that among these prerequisites were standards of transliteration of non-Roman alphabets into the Roman alphabet, and rules for cataloging Oriental books, the Association of Research Libraries took steps toward the filling of these wants. Its own Committee on Transliteration is presently active,<sup>38</sup> and the A.L.A. Division of Cataloging and Classification has appointed a Special Committee on Cataloging Oriental Materials.<sup>39</sup> Similarly a committee of the Association of Research Libraries has proposed a plan for assuring the availability, with least duplication, of microfilms of important foreign newspapers <sup>40</sup> and the A.L.A. Board on Resources

of American Libraries has performed a major task toward assuring preservation and availability of American newspapers.<sup>41</sup> There is also pending a recent proposal by the Board for bringing into the United States copies of older books discovered to be wanting here,<sup>42</sup> but the major problem of retrospective publications, mentioned by Boyd, still remains to be solved and is rarely discussed. Various informal agreements, delimiting spheres of interest, are in effect but have not been welded into a national plan.

Deserving of mention, as representing a curious twist of the concept of "collecting in the national interest," is the present status of discussions regarding the dispersal of collections to provide for continuance of national life and culture in the event of the destruction of the great metropolitan libraries by aerial warfare. One national library association has been impressed with the suggestion for building up, by cooperative effort and through the judicious use of duplicates, of "shadow collections" in newer and more remote institutions, mirroring the great collections of the older libraries.<sup>43</sup> A joint committee of the Council of National Library Associations has countered this proposal with one for dividing the country into areas, each of which would attempt to make itself self-sufficient in the basic materials of research, using for the purpose a series of standard lists to be compiled for each of the sciences and arts. Thus assured of sufficiency in the staples of research, preparations against bombing could be limited to the removal of rariora.<sup>44</sup> It may well be that techniques of microfacsimile reproduction could put such a scheme within the limits of feasibility.

But even this proposal emphasizes the importance of bibliography to planned collecting, and there is present need for greatly improved bibliographical controls over the materials being acquired from abroad by American libraries. Cards representing their Farmington Plan receipts are forwarded by the cooperating libraries for filing in the National Union Catalog but the publication of this catalog is yet to be achieved, and it is not yet a subject catalog. Publications cataloged by other libraries through cooperative arrangements appear in the currently issued Library of Congress book catalogs but these catalogs do not include all the receipts of Farmington Plan libraries. *The Monthly List of Russian Accessions* does provide a national coverage for one important area of the world and the possibility of publishing the Cyrillic National Union Catalog in book form is being explored with some prospect of success. *The East European Accessions List* and *New Serial Titles* are being expanded to include the acquisitions



## *Collecting in the National Interest*

of all major American libraries in the fields covered by these publications but these efforts represent only a first step toward meeting the overall need.

Thus it is clear that it is impossible to discuss "collecting in the national interest" without touching on almost the whole range of principal activities which make up library work. There was little use in elaborating a national plan of collecting prior to the construction of the National Union Catalog and the Union List of Serials, and neither of these would be possible without standards of cataloging and transliteration. Although much progress has been made since 1920 in this whole area, the problems toward further progress are just as formidable, while the urgency is greater. In 1927 it was estimated that the world's annual production of monographic works was 161,489 titles.<sup>45</sup> A recent estimate places the figure at 329,276.<sup>46</sup> This, then, is the number of books which should be regarded as having a potential "national interest," and the number of periodicals, newspapers, maps, music, and other forms of material are comparable in immensity. But without the tools of selection, recording and service, it is merely frightening to regard these masses of material. Consequently, the present interest in the utilization of the National Union Catalog,<sup>47</sup> the push toward a current *Union List of Serials*,<sup>48</sup> and the experiments with telefacsimile<sup>49</sup> may all be considered as trends basic to and encouraging for collecting in the national interest.

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