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## Services

### SERVICES Recently Initiated or in Prospect.

#### *The British Museum*

The *British National Bibliography* provides an interesting experiment in collaboration between the British Museum and a semi-commercial non-profit-making institution. The *British National Bibliography* started in 1950 and aims at printing weekly lists with quarterly and annual cumulations of all the material, excluding maps, music and some government publications, received in the Copyright Office of the British Museum. It is administered by a council on which the British Museum is represented. In fact, the chairmanship of the council and of its executive committee has been in the hands of the keeper of the Department of Printed Books. The staff of the *British National Bibliography* are allowed free access to the copyright books, as they arrive, and working quarters are provided for them by the Trustees of the British Museum. The Museum has gained from the association by receiving publications sent in under the Copyright Act in many cases before publication; it has also had its attention drawn to publications which had not been deposited owing to an oversight on the part of the publishers; it also finds the classification supplied by the *British National Bibliography* of value in its own subject indexing; and it has been able to cumulate on cards all the entries which have appeared in the *British National Bibliography* from the beginning. This latter, classified, catalog on cards of all English books printed since 1950, has been placed in the Reading Room and made available to readers. It is too early to judge how far a large classified catalog of this kind meets the need of the day to day users of the Reading Room, and judgment is suspended on this point for the time being.

A notable and very useful additional service introduced in the Reading Room is the Inquiry Desk placed at the entrance. This has had the effect of enabling new readers to obtain the books or information required more quickly than has previously been the case. It has

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also relieved considerably the pressure on the superintendent and his assistant, who can devote more attention to the examination of the reference collection in the Reading Room with a view to bringing it up to date and making it conform more to current needs. The re-decoration and renewal of equipment in the Reading Room, and the installation of new fluorescent desk lighting has also considerably increased the amenities of the room.

Modifications in the layout of the Map Room have made it possible for a larger number of users to be accommodated, and for the public to take advantage of the specialist knowledge of the staff of this section. Unfortunately the space available is extremely limited, and no further development along these lines can be contemplated in the present quarters.

Alterations in the layout of the staff quarters in the State Paper Room will make it possible to provide accommodation for readers there once more. In recent years the serial holdings of the State Paper Room have been transferred to visible index files, and it is expected that the services to the public will be considerably increased.

As previously stated, advantage has been taken of the reconstruction of the damaged portion of the bookstacks to install a special room for the consultation of microfilms. It is expected that this will be in operation in the near future. It is also expected that this same room will house a collating machine which has been ordered from the United States.'

At the request of the British Museum, Her Majesty's Stationery Office has installed in the Museum Bindery a Barrow laminating machine, which was put into operation in February, 1955.

One of the most important functions of a national library is to display its treasures and to allow the public, whose money supports the institution, to see the objects in the collections. The British Museum Library has long been famous for its exhibition of notable manuscripts, autographs and printed books both western and oriental. For many years it has had on display an exhibition illustrating the history of printing. The number of cases available for exhibition was reduced as a result of damage during the war, but even so, an attempt has been made in the last few years to extend the range of its exhibitions. The year 1953, the year in which the Museum celebrated the 200th anniversary of its foundation status, was marked by a series of twelve exhibitions, each designed to demonstrate the richness of the collections in the main literatures of the world. This was a large task but was completely successful. Public interest was aroused and the staff

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gained enormously in knowledge of the collections. The practice of mounting exhibitions to mark centenaries and other important events has now become established.

### *The National Central Library, London*

The British National Book Centre instituted as a special department in 1947 for the recording and redistribution of redundant books and periodicals in the United Kingdom has grown rapidly.

“. . . a point was reached early in 1954 when a decision had to be taken not to admit new participants. It is an indication of the value placed on the Centre's interchange work that, by the end of the year, there was a waiting list of 60 libraries.

Offers of material from co-operating libraries amounted to 64,928, an increase of 23,799 over the preceding year. Thirteen book lists and 12 periodical lists, containing 42,021 and 7,535 entries respectively, were issued and over 2,000 wants advertised. For the material 70,724 requests were received as against 48,052 in the previous year. Interchange was arranged of 107,972 volumes and periodical parts, an increase of 43,507. Including material from the Centre's own stock and transfers arranged direct between libraries, the total interchange amounted to 122,963 volumes and parts.”<sup>1, 2</sup>

### *The National Library of Wales*

It is hoped, when the new Central Block becomes available for use, to open the Library in the evenings till 7:30 or 8. It now closes at 5 p.m.

### *Bibliothèque Nationale, France*

Three new services have been instituted in the Department of Acquisitions:

The Slavic Section is primarily concerned with an inventory and a union catalog of all Russian publications in the libraries of Paris. The Slavic Section is also maintaining a supplement to the *Catalogue des Périodiques Slaves . . . des Bibliothèques de Paris* published in 1929. The Russian collection is growing rapidly primarily through exchange.

The Oriental Section is bringing together all activities in connection with the near-eastern materials both manuscript and print and the development of special catalogs of these materials.

In 1950 a new section was formed to develop adequate listing of the many official publications of the governmental departments. Unlike the United States or Great Britain there is no central office for the printing and distribution of official publications and this section provides the bibliographical organization offered by a central agency.

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The Photographic Service provides all types of photographic services. It is also systematically preserving on microfilm the irreplaceable archives and documents in the Library.

An interlibrary loan service to the provincial libraries in France and to foreign countries has been established. The number of items handled by this service grew from 395 in 1945 to 4,271 in 1951.

### *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence*

The Library has recently engaged, for the first time, in direct international borrowing. For several years, the Centro Informazioni Bibliografiche in Rome functioned as the agency for sending and receiving loans to and from foreign countries. Now this Library also provides direct service, which, because of its expedition and efficiency, has greatly increased the number of international interlibrary loans.

### *Millî Kütüphane, Ankara*

The Institute of Bibliography has recently been opened within the National Library. It publishes a bulletin of acquisitions of foreign publications in Turkish libraries (*Yabancı eserler bülteni*). The Library has recently undertaken to microfilm the rich manuscript collections of Turkey, starting from Istanbul. All manuscripts are sent to the Millî Kütüphane where they are microfilmed. The original is then returned to its own library, while the microfilm reproduction is retained by the Millî Kütüphane. Thus a complete library on microfilm of all Turkish manuscripts is being developed.

### *The Jewish National and University Library, Israel*

The installation of projectors has enabled the public to make use of microfilm collections. In the near future the acquisition of a manifold machine for catalog cards will enable the Library to supply other libraries with copies of its cards at a moderate cost.

Services in prospect include personnel training to be made possible by the opening of a library school within the organizational framework of the Hebrew University and the Jewish National and University Library. Leon Carnovsky, of the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School, recently surveyed the library personnel needs of the country, and made recommendations on policy and curriculum.

### *The National Diet Library, Japan*

Two years ago the Library inaugurated an interlibrary loan system, through which books and other materials in its collections are made

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available to persons resident at remote points. To date this has been a one-sided operation; studies have been undertaken to determine the feasibility of a similar system to be conducted by local libraries.

A Reference and Bibliographical Room has been established in the General Reference Division, where 7,000 inquiries were received in 1952, and more than 10,000 in 1953.

In order to facilitate their accessibility, the reports of the Publications Board of the United States Department of Commerce have been photoduplicated and lent to the Prefectural Library in Osaka. During the calendar year 1955, additional sets will be made for loan to the central libraries in Nagoya and Kukuoka.

### *The General Assembly Library, New Zealand*

The Library has recently purchased a microfilm camera with which it is microfilming all New Zealand newspapers (with eight exceptions) for permanent preservation. Some difficulty is at present experienced owing to the lack of suitable processing facilities in New Zealand but it is hoped that these will be overcome shortly and that copies of the films then will be readily available.

### *Bibliothèque Publique de la Régence de Tunis*

Interlibrary loans are made. Theses printed in the universities of France are automatically being deposited. A microfilm collection has been initiated.

### *Biblioteca Nacional, Argentina*

The Library cannot alter the nature of the services it offers.

### *Biblioteca Nacional, El Salvador*

For the past few years four branches have been operated in the more densely populated sections of the city; the local home-lending service has increased; and with the cooperation of the Post Office Department, the extension of this service to outlying areas of the country is under consideration.

## *References*

1. The National Central Library. *38th Annual Report of the Executive Committee for the year ending 28 February 1954*. London, Malet Place, 1954. pp. 15-16.
2. Allardyce, A.: The British National Book Centre. The First Five Years. *Library Association Record*, 20:344-350, Nov. 1953.