BOOK REVIEWS

Subject catalogues; headings and structure, by E. J. Coates.

London, Library Association, 1960, 186pp. 22s. (Members of the L.A., 16s. 6d.)

Subject cataloguing is of primary importance in librarianship, yet it has been neglected except for the publication of a few articles in periodicals. This book bridges a gap that has persisted far too long, and Mr. Coates was an obvious choice of author. His long experience with the British National Bibliography and his up-to-date approach to the problems of both cataloguing and classification ensured that the product of his pen would be both authentic and comprehensive. This book is, indeed, a reliable guide to subject cataloguing, and can be recommended to cataloguers and to students possessing a background knowledge of the subject.

Indexers can benefit considerably from reading this book, and those interested in chain indexing will be particularly fascinated by the chapters devoted to “Chain procedure for subject indexes to classified catalogues”, “Chain procedure applied to the Decimal Classification”, and “Chain-procedure and the alphabetico-specific catalogue”. References for further study are provided at the end of each chapter, and a necessary introduction to the terminology employed is contained in Chapter I.

Attractively produced, this is a worthy addition to the Library Association’s list of publications, and will be of practical value as an invaluable guide to subject cataloguing.

Library assistance to readers, by Robert L. Collison, with a foreword by W. B. Stevenson. London, Crosby Lockwood, 1960, xviii, 131pp. 13s. 6d.

This third edition of Mr. Collison’s most useful book is welcomed as being of vital importance. Never before have readers been so much in need of assistance. Librarians have devised methods of arrangement, classification schemes and cataloguing codes that are difficult enough for trainees in the profession to comprehend, yet they too often expect casual readers to find their way among the intricacies of the average public library.

Mr. Collison begins logically with directing the public to the library by means of advertisements and sign posting, describes the various departments, and provides guides to the classification and the catalogues. Part II deals with library publications, covering library handbooks, bulletins and booklists, special catalogues and bibliographies, notices, annual reports and similar material. Advisory work with readers is covered in Part III and is one of the most important services. Personal contact between librarian and reader should be given top priority, and should not be delegated to junior assistants. It can accomplish more benefit for library publicity in a few minutes than innumerable notices, signs, admonitions, leaflets, catalogues, handbooks and plans of arrangement. The Readers’ Adviser represents the Library, and should be a responsible, qualified individual with a pleasant personality, and a thorough knowledge of books and human nature.
This but briefly touches upon the contents of a book devoted to a major aspect of librarianship. Libraries are erected, staffed and stocked for the benefit of readers, and since these cannot receive individual attention at all times, they must be encouraged to help themselves. Mr. Collison's guide is a "must" for students of librarianship, and can be read with profit by all intelligent users of public libraries. The well-chosen illustrations and low price, combined with the authoritative text, make this volume an outstanding item in Crosby Lockwood's New Librarianship Series.

*Library administration*, by S. R. Ranganathan.

2nd edition, Bombay, etc., Asia Publishing House (1959), 678pp. 44s.

The writings of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan are extensive and cover most aspects of librarianship. Unfortunately they incline to be interdependent, so that in reading an individual book one is referred to others for fuller comprehension. This book is divided up into chapters and sections fitted with a faceted mnemonic notation, for an exploration of which one is referred to the Colon classification. As a result of this numbering the sections are not always consecutive, which is rather confusing when one finds that in the index, headings are referred to by these mnemonic numbers. The index is a most curious conglomeration of unfamiliar terms that appear to be out-of-place in a book devoted to library administration. No doubt it will be hailed by devotees of the Colon classification and the Five laws of library science.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1935, and this revision "meets the urgent need of those entrusted with the routine administrative work in libraries, old and new, throughout the world"—so reads the blurb. It may prove useful in Indian libraries, but much of it is minutely and laboriously detailed. Should routine methods be so conscientiously carried out in any library, the assistants would not survive long enough to place a book on the shelves. They would be checking the sections in *Library routine* from O1 First experience, to 3988 Librametry, wondering if a step had been omitted! The book reads like a detailed staff manual leaving little to one's common sense, while the planning and execution demand a high degree of intelligence and knowledge of Dr. Ranganathan's trend of thought.

We must mention that the book production is far better than that of most books emanating from India, and it is hoped that the publishers will maintain this high standard.

J. L. T.


Librarians and others at home in the world of books will not need to be reminded of Professor Hogben's many interests. He is the author of the best-selling *Mathematics for the million* but his name must appear in many medical indexes as the inventor of a test for pregnancy. Since the war he has been Professor of Medical Statistics in the University of Birmingham, and it is his experience in this
field which has led to the publication, with his colleague Dr. K. W. Cross, of *Design of documents*. Professor Hogben's liking for the alliterative title has led him astray this time. Even the sub-title "a study of mechanical aids to field enquiries" suggests something wider in scope than what we have here. This monograph is, in effect, a description of a particular punched card system—that used at Birmingham to provide, among other things, an index to the case-records of hospital patients. Nevertheless the reader who has some knowledge of punched cards will find here many useful ideas.

M. P. Curwen.

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**SOME RECENT REFERENCES ON INDEXING**


Miller, Howard L. How to use AGDEX. *County Agent and Vo-Ag Teacher*, 16, April, 1960, pp. 26-27.


