

Reviews

Bakewell, K G B: Industrial libraries throughout the world. Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1969. vii, 184p. (International series of monographs in library and information science, vol. 11) 56s. or \$ 7.50 [Sbn08 1033649]

What would one expect to find within the framework of a title like the above? Does one expect to have an historical account of the industrial libraries throughout the world? If so, the present volume will hardly meet the expectation. From the contents of the book it appears that the author has used the term 'industrial library' in the very broad sense of library and information provision in general which can contribute to increased productivity in industries by way of providing useful information. Hence, the book is largely a survey of the library, documentation, and information facilities available in the government agencies, research establishments, documentation centres, national libraries, and individual firms, etc. of most of the countries of the world. If this is the ideal burden of the publication one can easily realise how difficult the task has been for the author. It must be said that the author has tackled this difficult task admirably well. The short-comings that are there, reflect more the difficulties of the task rather than any deficiencies on the part of the author.

Let us first present briefly the broad contours of the contents of the book. The theme of the first chapter is libraries and productivity wherein the importance of libraries and information in raising industrial productivity is succinctly brought out by way of an well connected commentary using the available literature on the subject. The second chapter is a short account of the international scene, bringing out the work of the Unesco, FID, IFLA, and the International Atomic Energy Agency Library. Chapters 3 to 10,

covering about 122 pages, are devoted to the actual survey of library facilities grouped under countries as — Britain and Ireland, other European countries, USSR, United States and Canada, South and Central America, Africa and the Middle East, Asia, and Australasia. The last chapter is on managing the industrial library, bringing out in brief the operations involved in the administration of an industrial library. All these are very well supported by an excellent bibliography of 284 references, and a detailed index.

Coming to the main part of the book, i. e., the library and information provision for industries, the greatest difficulty, in such a survey, is definitely the maintenance of a balance in the treatment of different countries and their library services. The author is quite aware of this fact and maintains that 'lack of balance in the book is due to the absence of documentation on industrial library services in certain areas'. Taking the Indian scene, with which we are more familiar, we find the survey mentions some of the CSIR laboratories, the working of the INSDOC, a few company libraries (only three to be exact), the Technical Information Centre of the LRDE, two academic research libraries (TIFR and I I Sc), and the library of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, all within six pages of text. Surely, this is not a complete picture. For a traditional Indian industry like the textiles, much more important centres for information purpose are the Ahmedabad Textile Industry Research Association, Cotton Technological Research Laboratory, etc. Similarly there are the Tea Research Association, Cement Research Institute, Indian Institute of Packaging, Silk and Art Silk Manufacturing Industry's Research Association, etc. each of which is a source of information and have appropriate library provision for the respective industries whose interest they serve. But none of these institutions gets even a mention in the survey.

Again, on the question of imbalance, the reviewer is tempted to cite an example from the Canadian scene. Writing about the National Science Library of Canada the author mentions, "Considerable use is made of electronic methods of bibliographical control, and in 1965 the library began an experimental SDI project in the fields of chemistry and the bio-sciences, using an IBM 1401 computer". But the U.S. scene, as depicted by the author, is completely bereft of such glamour and sophistication. In fact the above is the only instance, in the entire book, where a SDI system in operation has been mentioned. Surely, the author cannot complain of 'absence of documentation on industrial library services' here, in this case the United States. Coming closer to the scene, we find that although the importance of the U.S. Bureau of Standards and its agency, the Clearinghouse (with an unnecessary hyphen put between clearing and house consistently) have been brought out yet there is no mention of the Industrial Referral Service started by the Clearinghouse, nor the National Standard Reference Data System or any other data banks or centres.

In many places the author mentions the systems of classification used in the libraries, the number of libraries using a particular system of classification, types of catalogue,

and so on but while depicting the U.S. scene, he pours out completely, perhaps, what he had in mind. He remarks, "...United States libraries have failed to appreciate the superiority of the classified catalogue as a retrieval tool... the U. D. C., which, with all its faults, is infinitely superior to the Library of Congress and Dewey schemes as a tool for the organization of scientific and technical information, has never achieved a position of importance...". In a world survey like this, perhaps, the author could have restrained himself from exhibiting such typically parochial disposition and such uncalled for championship of the classified catalogue and the U. D. C.

Some of the omissions and shortcomings (if they are taken so) mentioned above, it must be emphasized once more, reflect more the difficulties of the task the author had undertaken rather than any deficiencies on the part of the author. In spite of them, it has to be admitted, the book presents the best survey of its kind and will meet the requirements of practising librarians, students, and others interested in getting a recent and reliable picture of world development and trend in library provision that can help industries by supplying useful information.