

PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

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Librarians are, quite properly, deeply concerned with the probable role of the library in the post-war era. Realization that the library should be an effective force in community life necessitates planning to meet the obligations which will be imposed by such a position. As usual, the American Library Association offers assistance. *Library Planning* (A.L.A., \$1.50) by Louis R. Wilson summarizes the planning done by the A.L.A. and its affiliates and suggests areas for further development. There are sections dealing with planning in all types of libraries and in all phases of library service. Some of the suggestions could be undertaken by the larger libraries only, others by the library with only one professional staff member. There is an

underlying emphasis on the necessity for a reconsideration of aims and objectives with perhaps a re-direction of efforts. Many of us are wondering where the library is going. Dr. Wilson's pamphlet shows us how we may help to determine and guide its course.

It becomes increasingly evident that one of the most perplexing of the many post-war problems will be that of employment. Coming to the aid of the librarian who is faced with the question of how the library can best contribute to the solution of this problem is another recent publication of the American Library Association, *Today's Handbook for Librarians* by Mary A. Sweeney. Miss Sweeney, Director of Occupational Guidance Service at the St. Paul Public Library, has compiled a manual of information relative to the many agencies which are helping to solve the employment problems of returning veterans. She does not suggest that the librarian should assume full responsibility for the social and economic readjustment of her community, but she does indicate the ways in which an enterprising librarian can most effectively cooperate with those local agencies which are charged with that responsibility. By supplementing the material in this pamphlet with local information, the librarian can be prepared to take an active part in the solution of her town's employment problems. Nor are these problems of the future. Already men are being discharged from the services and others are being released from war industries. Now is the time when the data in Miss Sweeney's *Handbook* should be made available to those who must fit these two groups into the local economic pattern.

The length of this column in the last issue made necessary the mere mention of a book which seems worthy of more detailed attention. Margaret

Hutchins' *Introduction to Reference Work* (A.L.A., \$3.50) is a thorough analysis of the fundamentals of good reference service. Dealing with such basic problems as the selection and organization of reference materials and the administration of reference service, Miss Hutchins' book is full of valuable suggestions, both for the novice and for the experienced reference librarian. What might have been a rather dull account of the theory and practice of reference service is enlivened by the well-chosen examples of inquiries and inquirers. While the beginner may be more concerned with where the answer was found, the older hand will find pleasure in observing, "Sounds just like Mrs. Blank." And for the reference librarian who chooses to venture into the realm of professional self-analysis and evaluation, the book may well serve as a personal yard stick. Constantly recurring throughout is Miss Hutchins' keen awareness of the pleasure of reference work—a feeling which will be shared by all who have experienced the exhilaration that comes from assisting a patron to locate a half-forgotten quotation, to capture an elusive bit of information, or to enter intelligently into a new field of study.

When publisher turns author, the result is likely to be interesting to most of us in the book world. Such is the case in the publication of *The Bowker Lectures on Book Publishing* (George Grady press, \$2.50). The four lectures comprising the volume give an insight into the history, the problems, and the accomplishments of book publishers in America from the era of the ornate "gift book" to the modern paper-covered reprint. In view of the close relationship which exists between publishing and library service, the *Bowker Lectures* are recommended to reveal something of the other side of the picture.