

**JAMAICA LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION  
BULLETIN**

## C O N T E N T S

Editorial.

Address delivered on 25th January, 1951,  
by H. Holdsworth, M.A., F.L.A.,  
President of the Jamaica Library  
Association.

Text of a broadcast on the Library Cen-  
tenary by A.S.A. Bryant, F.L.A.,  
Director of Libraries.

Notes and comments.

Jamaica Library Service - Staff Library  
announcement.

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## E D I T O R I A L

This edition brings us into the second year of the Bulletin's existence; the occasion is marked by the appearance of our new printed cover, and by an increase in size, as a result of the continued supply of good 'copy'. The two articles have been revised by their respective authors for the convenience of a reading instead of a listening public.

We hope that the forthcoming Country Meeting in Port Antonio will furnish further interesting material for future issues, so that the Bulletin, as a barometer of the Association's progress, may continue to rise.

We regret that we shall be unavoidably absent from this meeting, but we venture to take up editorial space to wish it the success of the previous re-unions.

At the same time we would like to invite articles from all members of the Association, so that, if possible, the Bulletin may achieve larger size, or more frequent editions.

W.F.C.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE  
JAMAICA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, 25th Jan., 1951,  
by H. Holdsworth, M.A., F.L.A.

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Last year the Library Association in London issued a pamphlet entitled 'A century of public library service; where do we stand today?' which is an assessment of the progress and present condition of libraries in Great Britain. It has good reason to be proud of its achievements: 23,000 libraries or service points, 42,000 books in stock; 12,000,000 registered borrowers; over £6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> million spent in 1949. The report states: 'What a story of service to the community lies behind these figures? The schoolchildren who are helped in their reading. The students who depend on the public library for research and background reading. The workmen who have achieved better jobs through private study. The business men who use the Reference Library for directories, code books and other quick reference material. And the millions who do not read with a purpose, but for pleasure and instruction, and incidentally become better-informed citizens in the process'.



If we, as an Association, now in being for one year, make an assessment of library progress in Jamaica, we find ourselves with considerable assets. The Institute's West India Reference Library has built up a magnificent collection, sometimes I think more prized abroad than at home, and has pioneered the way in local library work and bibliographical undertakings. The Library of the Department of Agriculture and the Archives in Spanish Town are firmly established; the Jamaica Library Service is making rapid progress throughout the island; the University College has voted a considerable sum of money for library purposes; and several members of our library staffs are studying for and have passed Library Association examinations.

We are starting new library developments at a time which is at once auspicious and inauspicious for such developments; inauspicious because the war played havoc with libraries and the book trade and produced a shortage of the materials which are necessary to replace out-of-print books, and because the damage to libraries and bookstocks caused an

immediate demand for the duplicate material of luckier libraries. The 'Book of Needs', compiled by Unesco, summarises library losses in war-damaged countries, and after reading the figures quoted one is surprised that the needs of libraries in countries which escaped the direct impact of the war are considered at all. Poland lost 14,000,000 books out of an estimated national total of 22,000,000 in its libraries, Warsaw losing 76% of its material, a calamity which prompted the post-war government to set up a Department of Libraries under the Ministry of Education. The Philippines lost six scientific libraries, one High Court Library, fifteen University libraries, 85% of its school libraries, its National Library, and 90% of its travelling libraries. France lost 2,000,000 volumes, and so on. On the other hand the time<sup>is</sup> in certain ways auspicious, because the strong desire for international collaboration and understanding has in the post-war years been implemented by the establishment of international bodies to promote cultural relations between nations, and of national bodies to further the cultural side

of their countries' foreign policies. Although, when it comes to practical help war-damaged countries are a prior consideration these organisations, so called undeveloped, or under-developed areas ( of which, so far as the library field is concerned, we can claim to be one) are also a matter of interest to them. I refer to the international creations such as Unesco, and to national organizations like the U.S. Book Exchange, the American Medical Library Association Exchange, and the National Book Centre, London, which promote the exchange of library material throughout the world.

Our constitution sets out what we must do as an Association. We must somehow win for libraries the public support upon which the financing of them depends. Professional members can best convince the public by example, by giving services of a quality that will gain public esteem. Members can lobby; they can button-hole officials, M.H.R.s, councillors, business men; and they can enlarge on libraries in cultural groups and associations with which they might be associated. We must win the support of the

press. And I think we must as an Association think in terms of general library service rather than of individual libraries, and remember that a national library service is commonly ~~supposed~~ to comprise school libraries and children's libraries (for, as the Library Association leaflet states, 'On our work with children now depends the future of our library service'); public libraries, which interpret ideas to and inform the citizen, with their offshoots the prison and the hospital libraries; special and government libraries which preserve for the student and scholar the written record of the administration and government of the country and amass as much as possible of the world's recorded knowledge. They all complement each other; and their difference in aims is only one of degree; and we as an Association are concerned with them all. I should like to steal a passage from the address of the President of the South African Library Association, Mr. D. H. Varley, who in 1947 justified his Association's policy as follows: 'The development of library services ... is in truth a matter of compelling urgency. If there is one lesson

we should have learned in the last ten years, it is this: the consequence of apathy and ignorance are now likely to be extinction. This is no longer, as Arnold Toynbee puts it, a bad joke, but an imminent possibility. There is, as (President Truman) has aptly said, ' a deep relationship between the urgency of events and the process of public enlightenment. There is at least one defence against the atom bomb. It lies in the mastery of this science of human relationships all over the world. It is the defence of tolerance, or understanding, of intelligence and thoughtfulness... There must be a rebirth of education if this new and urgent task is to be met. All ... our educational resources - all, note you - must be pledged to this end.' To that high purpose we in our profession must dedicate ourselves, seeking and surely finding in that spirit of service a rich and abiding reward.'

There are deficiencies in our library service which are more apparent to the librarian than to the non-librarian, unless he be a research worker, and the remedy lies mainly in the hands of librarians. A

very considerable amount of local knowledge has been recorded in Jamaica, and much more in the West Indies as a whole, in books, pamphlets, periodicals, official documents, newspapers, magazines, family papers, and so on. Cumulatively it is the record of cultural progress. Parts of the record have been lost, by fire, decay, or carelessness of people. Parts of it have doubtless still to be brought to public light. Generally speaking, some of what is known is indifferently indexed and therefore difficult to use or difficult to find from the point of view of the research student. We need two kinds of index: an author index - a check list - and a series of subject indexes.

The organisation, as well as the preservation of our printed records is a direct concern of a library Association. The International Federation of Library Associations, which has its headquarters at Geneva, strongly advocates that each country pay its contribution to international bibliography and the better dissemination of knowledge by completing the catalogues of its own national publications, that



is, by perfecting its national bibliography; and as a result of this appeal a number of countries have set up national committees for documentation whose purpose is to assess what is needed and to devise methods of getting it done. Perhaps we too should appoint a committee to consider undertaking such bibliographical enterprises as have been advocated by the I.F.L.A. and as are being undertaken in member countries, for instance by the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux in England. They will be long undertakings, and our personnel is small, and busy; but perhaps we can start on something. It is not easy to keep track of everything that is published in Jamaica, let alone the British West Indies as a whole. Pamphlet material in particular easily escapes notice. A librarian would like to see appear at frequent and regular intervals a list of all new publications, whatever their nature; but there is no such list. One could best be compiled if there were one library to which, by law, everything printed must be sent, but no library has been designated as a copyright library. Given close co-operation between

librarians, printers, publishers and booksellers it should not be impossible or even difficult to produce such a current bibliography. The Government Printing Office, our largest publisher, occasionally prints a list of publications in stock at the time of going to press, but does not issue regular, current and complete lists, and of course omits entirely from its sales lists those official reports which have been laid upon the table of the House but which have not been printed for public sale.

A common approach to printed material is by subject - what material is there on such and such a subject? Our two most important categories of publications, official reports and periodicals, including newspapers have no accompanying subject indexes. In countries which publish voluminously it is customary to index these categories separately. The United States, for instance, has an official subject index to its official documents; and there are many cumulative subject indexes to articles in periodicals, each index dealing with a number of periodicals treating one subject or allied subjects. Similarly the

English Library Association publishes annually a 'Subject index to periodicals'. We might well issue or sponsor a general subject index not only to our current learned journals, but also to government publications, and, since they are so few, important books and pamphlets - of Jamaican origin, of course.

Newspapers are a source of trouble simply when they have no indexes. Local information of importance can be unearthed only after prolonged searching. It is a problem with which library personnel alone can not hope to deal, although the Institute of Jamaica's West Indian Reference Library has valiently begun a card index to the 'Gleaner'. International events are, of course, adequately covered by the printed indexes to the London 'Times' and the 'New York Times'.

Another bibliographical project which many countries have undertaken is the compilation of a guide to library resources, which is a list of all the repositories of library material, both public and private, within a country or a region, indicating the size and nature of each collection. The British

Aslib Directory is an example of such a guide. In South Africa a private investigator, Miss Una Long, made a valuable contribution to a South African national directory of resources when she produced a catalogue, published by Lund, Humphries in 1947, of private collections of books and manuscripts in the Union, which revealed rich resources of so-called Africana, until then unrecorded and unknown. I do not know if there is much material left in private hands in Jamaica, but an investigation might yield profitable results. A directory of this sort ought obviously to cover the entire British West Indies. Subsequent steps in our bibliographical progress would be detailed inventories of the private collections, and a combined author catalogue of at least the items of West Indian interest in the various repositories, i.e., in library parlance, a Union Catalogue of West Indiana.

By such listing of our cultural resources we provide our own students with the minimum requirements for their work, and at the same time benefit the world by offering it our peculiar contribution

to knowledge; and this now promises to be considerable, in botany, zoology, geology, medicine, and in sociological contributions to the study of race relations. Much of this work ought to be done under the auspices of this Association.

Our primary concern is the development of libraries in Jamaica. They will develop mainly by our efforts, and I hope, in spite of a permanent shortage of public funds. But I should like to mention other means by which possibly our library resources might be enriched. One might say that in the library world the technical revolution is on. Of the incursions by technology the greatest is that of photography. The photographic reproduction of printed works has made available again rare and out-of-print items (I doubt if we shall ever have to talk of out-of-film items) at reasonable prices, thus allowing our collections to be enriched with works which some years ago would have been beyond our wildest dreams. It will reduce far beyond what is now considered normal the possible space required for large collections, a fact of importance to us who have

little money for library buildings. So far micro-films have not proved to<sup>be</sup> much cheaper than the printed page, though they have performed the invaluable service of making available works hitherto unobtainable. The microcard, however, promises great things. It is a card, 5 inches by 3 inches, like a catalogue card, on one side of which is produced photographically, and almost microscopically, several pages, often as many as 40, of a book, each of which can be thrown up to its original size, or even further enlarged, on a microcard reading machine. The cost per page is less than one-third of a penny, and a book of 500 pages can be reproduced on cards for about 14 shillings. When this happens to be a rare book, the price is exceedingly low; and the possibility of publishing directly on to cards in the future must not be ruled out. As microcards become more popular and sales increase the cost to the consumer can be expected to become lower. At the moment, to give an example, the Readex Microprint Corporation is working on a three years project to reproduce on cards 6 inches by 9



inches, with 100 pages on each card, the sessional papers of the British House of Commons for the years 1820 - 1900. Microcards might be a partial answer to our problems, and enable us to build up stocks which hitherto would have seemed quite fantastic; and more especially to complete our collections of West Indian items to libraries overseas, particularly our unique archive material.

An inter-library loan service between countries has long been in operation, but it is not likely that our libraries will resort frequently to inter-library loan, as film copies are sure to be preferred. Nevertheless I should mention that the Jamaica Library Service has been designated by the National Central Library as the channel through which requests from Jamaica for works in England must go.

I have mentioned international co-operation, and I think that as an Association we must do what we can to further the free flow of information between countries and assist international movements by throwing in our weight at our own end. The United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which was established after the war, with headquarters in Paris, to reduce barriers to the spread of culture, and which devotes a good deal of time to promoting the exchange of publications and of duplicate library material on an international scale, through the medium of the its 'Bulletin for libraries', approved at its 5th General Conference in Florence in 1950, at which 59 member states were represented, a convention for the duty free entry into any country ratifying the convention of books, newspapers, magazines, manuscripts, music scores, maps, government publications, recordings, etc., of an educational nature. Government ratifying the agreement would grant licences and foreign currency exchange for the importation of publications for public libraries and libraries of educational and cultural institutions. The United Kingdom has agreed to ratify. This is simply illustrative of a case in which organisations such as ours in member states of Unesco would be expected to exert influence upon their government.

International co-operation goes on between libraries almost as a matter of routine, the three most common forms of co-operation being exchange and donation of duplicate material, literary exchanges, and depository collections. The Institute of Jamaica, the Secretariat itself, the Department of Agriculture and the University College of the West Indies Library exchanges their own publications for those of other institutions, increasing their stocks and making valuable contacts. Exchanges are indeed considered an important factor in international understanding, and Governments might be said nowadays to regard books as an instrument of foreign policy, for they exchange official and other publications on a colossal scale. The Buenos Aires Conference for the Maintenance of Peace in the Americas in 1936 provided for the exchange of official and non-official publications among the American Republics in the belief that foreign policy might be built up on the basis of peoples speaking to peoples. The operations of the United States Book Exchange, the American Medical Library Association Exchange, and the National Book

Centre, London, are very extensive, and extend to Jamaica. They concern themselves chiefly with the exchange of library duplicates. The idea behind exchange is not that the poor shall plunder the rich, though the poor naturally tend to be the chief beneficiaries, but that surplus books shall be sent to the places where they are needed.

It is customary for many governments and for learned and endowed institutions which sponsor publications to designate libraries abroad as depository libraries for their publications, and it is, of course, a great asset for the regions whose libraries are so designated. There are already depository collections of this kind in Jamaica, and one can hope that as our libraries grow they will attract more. Often the great strength of a library lies in these less widely advertised but substantial and learned reports, papers and monographs.

Primarily, I hope, through our own purchases, but also through gifts, exchanges and depository collections, our collections will grow. We, as an Association must see that they grow free from political

and other taboos. We must see that the body of persons who are to look after them continues to grow both in number and in professional competence. And, so that we might form a united front in dealing with the public about library matters, we must pool our knowledge, and arrange, if possible series of professional talks as well as general meetings, which will benefit librarian and non-librarian alike, for after all, libraries and library work are now the business of of all of us.

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#### Notes and Comments

Our notes in this edition concern members of the Association and contributors. First, in December last, three members of the staff of J.L.S. were successful in passing the Entrance Exam of the L.A. of Great Britain. Congratulations to Miss Joyce Lawson, Miss Norma Segre and Mr. Lensworth Small.

Miss Gunter, who passed this exam in June last year, is going to England to undertake one year of full-time study.

Miss Lowe, Librarian of Linstead Branch Library, is leaving shortly for the United States.

Mr. R. A. Flood, contributor in our last edition, has completed his L.A. studies successfully, and is now elected a Fellow of The Library Association.

Your editor has the good fortune to announce the same success himself.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES  
Text of a broadcast by Mr. A.S.A. Bryant, F.L.A.

Although the first Public Library Act was passed in 1850, there had been public libraries before then. The first of which we know was established over 2,500 years ago in Nineveh. Somewhere about 640 years before the birth of Christ a collection of over 10,000 different works and documents had been assembled for public use. They were inscribed in cuneiform characters on clay tablets and, like the books in modern libraries, they were systematically arranged and catalogued.

In England itself Sir Richard Whittington the Lord Mayor of nursery rhyme fame, founded in 1421 what he termed a 'common' library at the Guildhall, but this was 'borrowed' in 1549 by the Duke of Somerset and never returned. In the 17th century several cities founded public libraries, but these soon decayed through lack of funds. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries a new interest in education led to the formation of Mechanics Institutes, which, with their libraries, were the true fore--



runners of modern public libraries.

Without an assured income all of these were doomed to failure; the need for the communal possession of storehouses of knowledge was gradually being driven home to the people, but the need for the allocation of funds from the public purse was more slowly appreciated.

The general picture painted at this time of a country containing eight million illiterates and vast numbers of people who had learnt to read and had since lost the ability through lack of books is strangely like Jamaica today.

It was against this background that three men: Edward Edwards, William Ewart and Joseph Brotherton worked to secure public libraries paid for from public funds. Edwards, an assistant in the British Museum, conducted a vigorous campaign which led to the appointment in 1849 of a 'Select Committee on Public Libraries' over which William Ewart presided. The report of this Committee led to the introduction in the House of Commons by Ewart and Brotherton of a Public Library Bill.

Although the Bill was modest in scope ---- it provided only for the levying of a rate of a halfpenny in the £ for expenditure on library premises and staff, and made no provision for the purchase of books --- it met with vigorous opposition. Despite this the Bill received the Royal assent in August, 1850. Although its provisions were so meagre that 5 years later the rate limit had to be amended to a penny, it merits study as it has determined the general pattern of the English Public Library system to this day.

Firstly, it depended entirely on the rate-payers of a particular area whether they should have a library service, how much it should cost, and what its standard should be; and having provided it they must pay for it.

Secondly, there was no attempt at a nationwide service. The library unit was the area of urban local government. Not until 1919 was it possible for county councils serving rural areas to levy a library rate. Organised co-operation between libraries came still later.

Thirdly, the service was free to all.

For good or ill those decisions have moulded Public Library development ever since.

Progress under the Act was slow. Nineteen years later only 44 authorities had adopted its provisions and in some areas there had been active opposition.

In 1877 the Library Association was formed uniting librarians, members of local authorities and friends of libraries throughout the country. Its main tasks were to foster the establishment of libraries - a task now practically complete - and, by raising the standard of education and training of librarians, to improve the service offered. This latter is of course an unending job. The efforts of this body and more particularly Thomas Greenwood, one of its members, greatly accelerated progress.

The introduction in 1892 by James Duff Brown of the 'open access' system which allows readers to choose books direct from the shelves changed the whole aspect of libraries.

Libraries were now receiving much assistance from private benefactors. J. Passmore Edwards, news-

paper proprietor gave a number of library buildings, and Andrew Carnegie, the steel magnate, gave nearly two million pounds for building and furnishing some 380 libraries.

Not until 1919 were the two main obstacles to progress removed. In that year the penny rate limit was abolished and county councils were first empowered to adopt the Act. From this time the number of Libraries and the extent of their work increased rapidly.

Libraries were, however, still responsible only to their own local people, their standards were their own and a person resident in<sup>a</sup> poorly served area had no opportunity of using the service of a neighbouring authority.

Largely as the result of the generosity of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust the National Central Library was founded to act as an agent through which libraries could borrow books from one another. Working through Regional Bureaux co-operatively maintained by public libraries the National Central Library now makes it possible for almost any

book in a public collection in England to be borrowed by a reader anywhere in the country and by its link with similar organisations in other parts of the world, enables books to be borrowed from abroad. In Jamaica we often make use of this.

From its unspectacular origin in 1850 the Public Library movement has thus grown into a network of libraries covering the whole country. To-day nearly 600 Library authorities working through 23,000 service points issue 300,000,000 books each year. Between them they possess 42,000,000 volumes.

It is difficult to realise the full significance of these figures, but what a story they reveal of service to the community. Behind every social, cultural and educational organisation lies this great reservoir of 42,000,000 books freely available to all and with a service point close to every home. The annual cost is less than 3% of that on education. What a tremendous saving it represents! How much more would progress in education and in the social services have cost if it had not been for this pooling of resources, this communal purchase and com-

munal use of books. How much slower would have been our progress if the limited means of the individual had been allowed to determine what books he should consult.

Libraries are continuing to expand their provisions. Special children's libraries, service to schools, and school libraries have long been accepted facts. General reference libraries are now supplemented by specialist commercial and technical libraries which are having their effect on Great Britain's recovery drive. Hospital libraries are becoming more widespread. Dwellers in remote districts are being increasingly well served by book vans. The scope of libraries is widening. Collections of gramophone records, musical scores, illustrations and sets of plays for drama groups now form part of the stock of libraries.

But all of this is taking place 4,000 miles away in a country that many of us will never see. How does it affect Jamaica? What is being done here?

In 1948 the position in Jamaica was similar to that in Britain in 1848. We had here a number of



voluntary libraries which were struggling to maintain a service, though harassed by lack of funds and the need for trained personnel. We had our national library in the West India Reference Library, a government subsidised subscription library in the Institute's General Library and in addition we had the 2 Junior Centres of the Institute. Like Britain in those early days we had and we still have a large number of illiterates and people who through lack of opportunity to read are relapsing into illiteracy.

Now the first step has been taken to remedy the position. A Public Library Law was passed in November, 1949; Government has agreed to make an annual subvention towards the cost of Public Libraries and the British Council is making a contribution each year until 1958. With the new law and a regular, though very limited, support from public funds it has been possible to make a start on a real library service.

Looking at Britain's history we have avoided making each local government area a separate unit. True each Parish has its Library Committee, but the ser-

vice starts as a unified whole with inter-library loans a feature from the beginning, and the rural areas are receiving as much attention as the urban districts.

10 Parish Libraries, 2 Branch Libraries and 16 Book Centres are now in operation and a book stock of 50,000 volumes has been accumulated. But what are 50,000 books amongst one million and a third people and what are 30 service points in an island as large as Jamaica? So far no attempt has been made to serve the Corporate area. Kingston needs at least 6 libraries for its quarter of a million people. It needs also a scientific and technical library to serve the new industries we are seeking to encourage, a commercial library to assist our traders and the people who serve them. The Junior Centres need help so that they can open their doors to all instead of limiting them to the small proportion of the city's children which they now serve. When, in 1944, Miss Bateson reported on the library needs of Jamaica she envisaged an annual expenditure of £30,000 a year - and money was worth

more in those days than it is today. We cannot expect to emulate Britain's expenditure but, if we are to avoid wastage of educational expenditure, the ratio between libraries and education should be similar in each country. In Britain library expenditure is 3% of that on education. In Jamaica it is only 1.3%. If Jamaica is to attract new industries, if her people are to play their part in the world today we must afford more for libraries.

There is still much to do but little money with which to do it. The annual contribution from Jamaica Government has been limited, quite arbitrarily and with no reference to the Island's needs, to £10,000 per annum. With this and the British Council's £7,000 and what Parochial Boards can contribute towards local running costs we have not only to operate a service but to build both the basic stocks of books and the premises necessary to house them. Our income is rather less than one-tenth of that spent by an English County on maintaining a developed service covering a much smaller area and less than

half our population. Where England spends 2/10 per head of population, Jamaica spends only 3d.

Despite this the Library Service is working hard to catch up on the 100 years start that other countries have. Already books are being issued at the rate of a quarter of a million a year.

One library building has been constructed and opened at St. Ann's Bay, and plans are being prepared for four other parishes that are in urgent need. But we cannot run an efficient service without trained staff and informed public opinion. Besides bringing people in from the country for a period of training at headquarters, we have held a first training course at the University and intend to hold more in future. A Jamaica Library Association, with a membership embracing all who are interested in libraries whether as committee members, staff, or users of libraries, has been formed. It holds regular meetings and publishes a bulletin.

In order to cope with our numerous repairs the University and the Library Service have jointly established a Central bindery which is now rebinding

and repairing several thousand books a year.

Quietly, but effectively parish libraries are organizing lectures, children's story hours and art festivals, and all of them are seeking means to ensure that their service covers the whole parish.

Much still remains to be done. More libraries and better libraries are wanted; readers need expert guidance on books; more specialised work with children is wanted; an adequate system of school libraries is a vital necessity, and a good book supply to hospitals, institutions and prisons is still to come.

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#### Textbooks on Librarianship

Members of the Association are reminded that a small library on Librarianship is maintained at the headquarters of the Jamaica Library Service, 81<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Brentford Road, Cross Roads P.O. This contains sets of the majority of the standard works required for study for the Library Association examinations. Any member of the Association or of a library staff in Jamaica is entitled to make use of the Library.