

Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Reader in Library Administration. Ed. by Paul Wasserman and Mary Lee Bundy. (*Reader Series in Library and Information Science*). Washington, D.C.: Microcard Editions, 1968. xii, 403 pp. \$10.95 (68-28324).

This is the first volume to be published in a new series entitled *Reader Series in Library and Information Science*. The general editor is Paul Wasserman, Dean, School of Library and Information Services, University of Maryland. The subject of the second volume will be research methods, and other volumes will cover various areas of library and information science. Each will be edited by an expert and will collect pertinent literature from library science and other subject disciplines. According to Mr. Wasserman "the objectives of the series will be to bring together in convenient form the key elements required for a current and comprehensive view of subject matter. In this way it is hoped that the core of knowledge, essential as the intellectual basis for study and understanding, will be drawn into focus and thereby contribute to the furtherance of professional education and professional practice in the field."

Reader in Library Administration is a collection of thirty-nine readings, articles, and essays taken from books and periodicals. Most authors are represented only once, but some authors are represented two or more times. Several are librarians; the rest are businessmen and faculty members who are well known in the social sciences, particularly administration, management, and organization. Each article is introduced by a short summary of its contents. Footnotes are collected at the end, and there is also a short biography of the author.

The book as a whole is divided into six categories: I. Introduction to the Study of Administration, II. Understanding Organizational Behavior, III. The Search for Rationality, IV. Management of Resources,

V. The Struggle for Existence, and VI. Key Issues. All categories except the first have two to four subdivisions. For example, under IV. Management of Resources, there are four subdivisions: authority, personnel, finance and budgetary controls, and communication. Under authority there are three readings: "The Theory of Authority," by Chester Barnard, former President of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company; "Authority Structure and Organizational Effectiveness," by Amitar Etzioni, who is on the faculty at Columbia University; and "A Purchase of Mechanical Dictation Equipment," by Kenneth Shaffer, Director of the School of Library Science at Simmons College.

The introduction to *Reader in Library Administration* indicates that the purpose of the book is "to influence the teaching of administration in library schools and to redirect the concern of the library administrator to those issues most central to his requirements." As this type of book and series show, the literature of library science has changed considerably in the past few decades. In library administration it has gradually evolved from how-to-do-it books to principles, to case studies, to management techniques, to philosophy. It is only in recent years that various parts and areas of library science have been more closely related to other disciplines and subjects. This applies both to the practice and teaching of librarianship.

There are now essentially two types of library administration courses: the general course usually required of all degree students and the more specialized courses on the administration of special types of libraries. The material in this book will make good supplementary reading for both types of courses but it should be noted that it is not a how-to-do-it approach. The readings will also be beneficial to library administrators, particularly as they relate library administration to other disciplines.

This one volume is a good beginning for the *Reader Series in Library and Informa-*

tion Science. It is hoped that the others will be equally as impressive. The general objectives are excellent.—Donald E. Thompson, *Wabash College*.

The Maturity of Librarianship as a Profession. By Dale Eugene Shaffer. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1968. 166p. \$5. (68-2631).

Although he contends that "the future appears very bright for librarianship," Shaffer paints a dark picture of its status as a profession in this compact almanac of professionalism. "Librarians like to think of their occupation as a profession and do not want it thought of as a job or trade. However, it is still considerably below the requirements set up by the recognized professions of law and medicine." (pp. 131-132)

This dismal conclusion is based on an extended summary and analysis of what many authors have said over many years about the true professional and his role in society. Shaffer measures librarianship against his restatement of the criteria for professional status and finds it wanting. He then offers a sort of catalog of recommended means of salvation from this wretched state. If long, numbered lists of verbal propositions supplemented by even longer lists of professional and educational institutions, associations, and accrediting bodies can win an argument, Shaffer is a winner. He even lists the thirty-nine accredited librarianship schools (as of 1967) and the eighty-three national, state, and local library associations.

However, there is a certain verbal scholasticism to the whole procedure. This is not Shaffer's fault. It is inherent in the question, "Is librarianship a profession?" Reduced to absurdity, the syllogism goes this way:

The only ancient and true professions are law, theology and medicine; librarianship is not law, theology or medicine; therefore, librarianship is not a profession.

Although Shaffer's argument is some 166 pages more complicated than this, it is still circular.

Librarianship should not strive to emulate other occupations, just because they

are called "professions," at the expense of "doing its own thing" (as the current jargon has it). This is not to say that there is no value in Shaffer's carefully worded indictments and his corresponding catalog of remedies. However, their value should be judged according to their potential for making the occupation a better servant of society rather than in meeting the terms of some arbitrary definition derived from the Oath of Hippocrates.

Just as the study of Saint Thomas is excellent discipline for the seminarian; so is the reading of Shaffer an excellent way to introduce the neophyte into the prof . . . er . . . occupation of librarianship. All the materials for his hair shirt are here. Should such standard lamentations as "full membership in the American Library Association is open to anyone having an interest in librarianship" or "no specialized body of theory presently exists which requires communication" (p. 132) fail to evoke appropriate feelings of inferiority, then try the Curse of Eve:

Eighty-five per cent of those in librarianship are females. Consequently, the public views librarianship as a woman's work, in contrast to the recognized professions, which are predominantly male. (p. 133)

(At this point your reviewer prefers to join the ladies in opting out of Shaffer's Company of the Elect.)

Shaffer does not burden his arguments with a plethora of footnotes. Sources of major points and direct quotations only are given. So thoroughly has he reworked and synthesized a very large body of literature that a footnote for every sentence or so would be required to document it completely. Detailed bibliographic access to the literature is readily available elsewhere, notably in Gilda Nimer's recent "Professions and Professionalism: A Bibliographic Overview" in the University of Maryland School of Library and Information Service's *Manpower Research Project Newsletter*, no. 2, July 1966.

Speaking of the Maryland and Manpower Project, Shaffer's work seems to have been completed before the advent of that massive assault on the problems of librarianship as a profession. At any rate, he