

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE JAMES FORSYTH LIBRARIAN 1958

### 1. GENERAL.

During 1958 the Library responded to the quickening tempo of the University arising from the Murray Report. With considerably more money to spend on purchasing books and periodicals it achieved record figures in all sections of its operations.

27.7% more bound volumes were taken into the Library than in any previous year and no less than 12,685 were fully catalogued as opposed to 8,836 in the previous year. More items were ordered than ever before and a higher proportion than ever before was accounted for in the same year.

To cope with this considerable increase in central processing the staff was increased, though only from July, by 2 junior appointments; an increase of 12% in the Main Library staff, which seems not unduly extravagant in the circumstances.

The Librarian feels that the staff are to be congratulated on having achieved such results especially as there has never been a year in which continuity and hence output has been so threatened by staff changes. A 60% turn-over of staff in any one year is clearly a considerable hindrance to sustained performance.

Pleasure at the year's operations, however, does no more than whet the Librarian's desire, stimulated by his experiences on study leave, to secure for the University of Queensland a Library of the vastly increased size and calibre that it requires to discharge its responsibilities to the State.

### 2. STAFF

It is customary to record in this section the actual changes in staff which occurred during the year. Since, however, these were so considerable in 1958, it has been thought less confusing to include them as an appendix (Appendix A) to the Report.

The Library has never suffered such disturbance due to resignations and transfers. In a staff of 32 a total of 20 alterations were affected during the year and no less than 10 of the 29 female officers became either engaged or married. Under the circumstances the Librarian's congratulations to these young ladies though certainly sincere became also increasingly rueful as the year went on.

It was doubly appreciated, accordingly, when the Senate approved a recommendation submitted by the Librarian on his return from study leave for two further junior appointments and for the employment of student assistants at casual rates. This latter development was recommended to ease the burden of routine duties in the Main Library, so releasing staff to cope with the considerable increase in central processing. It was extremely successful.

The Librarian also recommended moderate increases in the salaries and grading of professional and sub-professional appointments. These were designed partly to bring salaries more in line with those paid in other Australian University libraries, partly and more immediately to meet considerable increases included in a new award for the staff of the Public Library of Queensland.

That some upgrading was not only just but also vital to secure trained staff in competition with other institutions may be illustrated best by reference to the salaries paid to the Head Cataloguer of the Public Library of Queensland and the University Library. At the time when the request for increases was made, the University salary for this position was 40% lower than that paid in the Public Library despite the fact that the Cataloguing Department's output in the University Library was almost 4 times that of the Public Library.

The Senate resolved to defer this request for favourable consideration in the Estimates for 1959.

A similar decision was made on a request approved by the Committee for the appointment of an additional Senior assistant in the Main Library to institute reader guidance and to improve the reference service.

During the year the following academic and professional qualifications were gained by members of staff:-

Mr. S. Spearritt, B.A., graduated M.A. in Philosophy.  
 Mr. D.B. Scott, B.A., completed the requirements for the Registration Certificate of the Library Association of Australia  
 Miss M. Coward, Mrs. E. Hallister, B.A., and Miss M. McCabe, obtained the Preliminary Certificate of the Library Association of Australia.

The Deputy Librarian (Mr. D.B. Scott, B.A.) continued as Acting Librarian until the return of the Librarian from study leave. The Library Committee was pleased to record its appreciation of Mr. Scott's services in this capacity.

### 3. ACQUISITIONS

A very heavy burden was borne in 1958 by the Acquisitions Department. An increase of almost 40% in the Library Vote was handled with no real accretion of staff. Table I demonstrates the swelling volume of work over the years.

The Table also indicates a most satisfactory increase in the percentage of items accounted for during the year of ordering. It may be remembered that attention was drawn in the Annual Report for 1957 to an alarming drop in this figure during that year.

TABLE A

#### ITEMS RECEIVING FULL PRE-CATALOGUE PROCESSING DURING THE YEAR.

YEAR	ITEMS ORDERED	ITEMS ACCOUNTED FOR WITHIN THE YEAR OF ORDERING.
1954	7061	5373
1955	7507	5310
1956	7967	5625
1957	7470	4990
1958	9124	6837

After considerable discussion it was decided by the Committee in July to discontinue placing virtually all orders for books through the University Bookshop. The alternative agents employed have proved satisfactory and the Bookshop, relieved by the burden of library orders, has been able to concentrate on service to students and staff.

Despite the considerable increase in output of the Acquisitions Department a serious lag was occasioned in the placing of orders late in 1958. This was largely due, as always, to the tendency of Departments to order heavily towards the end of the year. New order forms and improvements in procedure have been introduced for 1959, but it may prove impossible to reduce the order lag sufficiently without asking for further staff, especially if, as is hoped, the Library Vote is increased at a rate commensurate with the University's increased responsibilities and resources. One reason for deferring such a request which, by standards set in other libraries, is already long overdue, is simply that the Main Library Building is so overcrowded as to render impossible any physical extension of the Acquisitions Section. In the room it occupies at present there would hardly be space for a third member of staff to stand, let alone sit.

Book prices have risen considerably since the last accurate estimate was made in 1953. Over the last five years the average price of books purchased for the Library has increased from £1.16. - to £2.13. - per item. This factor has reduced greatly the benefit gained from regular increases to the Library Vote. Thus, while the money available for books has almost doubled since 1953 the increase in purchasing power that this represents has been only about 35%.

4. CATALOGUING

For the first time for many years it was possible actually to catalogue in 1958 more books than were purchased for the Library during the year

Despite the fact that the Cataloguing Department suffered at least as much as any other section of the Library from staff changes, no less than 10,084 purchased volumes were catalogued, thus reducing considerably the lag carried forward from 1957. In addition 2,601 donated items were also processed fully.

This performance reflects considerable credit on the cataloguers. The Department now comprises 4 graduate cataloguers, two full-time junior cataloguers and one part-time junior cataloguer. All members of the Department are called upon to undertake regular shifts of duty in the Main Library Reading Rooms, as well as coping with the time-consuming operation of filing cards (55,000 in 1958) in the Main Library catalogues.

The system of appointing junior cataloguers to bear the burden of routine work in the Department, introduced in 1956, has proved extremely satisfactory. Table B shows the staffing and output of the Cataloguing Department, treating the Junior cataloguers as half units the staff now numbers 5.25 as opposed to 3 in 1950. Yet, despite the fact that the introduction of subject cataloguing in 1951 considerably increased the cataloguing burden, the output per unit has risen by more than 26% over the period. It was almost twice as high in 1958 as in 1951 the first year in which full cataloguing was carried out.

TABLE B  
CENTRAL CATALOGUING

YEAR	CATALOGUING STAFF		OUTPUT IN VOLUMES	UNIT OUTPUT
	GRADUATE	JUNIOR		
1950	3	-	5735	1911
1951	4	-	4991	1273
1952	4	-	4738	1934
1953	4	-	6682	1953
1954	4	-	7366	1841
1955	4	-	7180	1797
1956	4	1	9916	2203
1957	3.5	1	8836	2209
1958	4	2.5	12685	2414

It is worth noting that 1953, which clearly marks the commencement of a sudden rise in output, was the year in which full pre-catalogue checking was introduced into the Acquisition programme. It also saw the initiation of the card duplication scheme to reduce the typing lag.

It is still impossible, of course, to catalogue books for Department libraries the same day, the same week or even sometimes the same month that they arrive. To do this would require, either say a doubling in size of the cataloguing staff, or a neater distribution over the year of the arrival of books. As this latter depends, at least in part, on a parallel regularizing of the flow of orders into the Library from Departments, it seems unlikely to eventuate. As to the former, even if the University were to countenance such a financial blossoming, the sad truth is that there would be nowhere in the present Main Library building, least of all in the Cataloguing Department, where the additional 7 persons could work, standing.

5. SERIALS

Periodical publications comprise an increasingly important part of the Library's stock. Proportionately, the Library spends twice as much on periodicals in relation to books as do British University libraries on the average and some estimate of the work involved in serials processing is given by the fact that this Library now receives regularly four times as many periodical titles as a University Library of the same size in Great

Britain

Approval was given during the year for the publication of a Jubilee list of titles regularly received by the Library, or of which a file of some substance was held.

Preliminary work for this publication yielded "first figures" of holdings which may prove of interest to the Committee.

TABLE C  
PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

TITLES RECEIVED CURRENTLY			TITLES NO LONGER RECEIVED			
BY SUBSCRIPTION		BY GIFT OR EXCHANGE				
1st copy	titles duplicated	extra copies involved	1st copy	titles dupl.	extra copies involved	
1765	284	399	2499	253	372	1056
TOTAL SEPARATE CURRENT TITLES				4,264		
NO. OF TITLES DUPLICATED				537		
TOTAL NO. OF COPIES OF TITLES REGULARLY RECEIVED				5,035		

Returns for Department libraries indicate that these figures will be considerably increased in the final edition.

It is worth noting that all the problems included in the regular receipt of these 5,000+ copies and in their binding as each volume is completed are handled by a staff of 3 persons. In 1950 when the intake was estimated at 1,090 regularly received copies, the staff comprised 2 officers; only four years ago the total intake was only 2,113 copies.

#### 6. MAIN LIBRARY

Very considerable attention was paid during the year to the problem of accommodating the central reading rooms and the main collections of the library.

As was pointed out in the report for 1957, the portion only of the planned building which has been occupied for ten years is now considerably overtaxed. All three elements of the building's use; reading, storage and service have now more than outgrown the premises.

As was prognosticated in the 1957 report, readers had to be turned away in Third Term and would-be patrons of the Library were forced to use unoccupied lecture rooms and other unsuitable substitute premises. Moreover, overcrowding of the reading rooms inevitably results in a higher noise level which is emphasized by continuing reader traffic and the operation within the Central Reading Room itself of the central charging and reference desk.

There is no need to re-iterate the desperate situation with regard to book storage. Inefficient and aggravating compact shelving, even of open access material, had to be resorted to towards the end of the year and the Librarian had to refuse to receive any further material from Department libraries for central storage. Each day, at the accession rate for 1958, the main collections alone add enough bound material to fill a complete shelf.

Finally, reference has already been made to the effect on efficiency of overcrowding in service and processing areas. The six full-time members of the cataloguing staff, plus the official copy of the catalogue, are now jammed into a room with a floor area of 300 square feet. When the latest addition was made to this staff it was necessary to remove the door from the room to provide floor space for her (sub-standard sized) table.

The Library Committee, aware of the effect on the whole library of this threat to the operation of the central point in the system, drew the attention of the Senate to the gravity of the situation. It suggested that the provision of the three upper floors included in the original design be included at the earliest stage in the construction programme. As interim measures it recommended the constructing of a mezzanine level in the lower floor to meet the storage problem and the use, when available, of the Large Gymnasium to house the overflow of readers.

Fortunately, as noted below, the visit of Dr. Keyes Metcalf enabled a modification of these proposals. On the suggestion of Dr. Metcalf, replanning the seating in the existing reading rooms and introducing seats into the bookstack will enable the reader problem to be met for some time. This removes the need to ask for accommodation for this purpose outside the Library building.

Construction of the mezzanine level at the same time will meet the storage problem for some years.

Neither of these expedients, however, provides for the increase in staff working space which is required to improve efficiency at the present intake rate and which will be essential to cope with any increase in operations. The only solution to this problem is the provision, at an early date, of the extra upper floors which can be planned more flexibly than those at present occupied.

Approval for the modification of the reading rooms and the construction of the mezzanine given just as the year closed comprised the most pleasing and relieving news the Librarian had had in ten years of office.

It only remains now for the Committee to ensure that these essentially emergency measures do not conceal from the Senate the urgent need to proceed with the completion of the building as originally projected.

#### 7. DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARIES

Accommodation problems continue to be urgent in many Department Libraries.

During 1958 the re-organization of the Veterinary School Library referred to in the report for 1957 was carried out and relief was afforded to the Engineering Library by the installation of units of compact-storage shelving.

The problem of the Thatcher Library is to be met by transferring it to temporary accommodation on the projected mezzanine floor in the Main Library. As, however, this can be no more than a short-term expedient, added weight is lent thereby to the need to proceed as soon as possible with the additional floors to the Library. On one of these more appropriate accommodations can be made for this special collection.

Considerable difficulty is foreseen in the decision to move Departments to St. Lucia apart from their Library facilities. This will apply in particular to Agriculture and possibly to Biochemistry. It is to be hoped that care will be taken to avoid this disruption in future planning.

One of the most important developments during the year was the establishment in six country centres of the Ringrose Memorial libraries. These collections of reference books primarily for the use of external students but available freely for consultation by members of the public were provided by donations in memory of the late Director of External Studies. The Senate generously subsidized the monies collected.

This significant contribution to improving facilities for External students is especially welcome to the Librarian as a reaching out of the University Library to the citizens of the State, to whom he has always felt the Library had a considerable direct obligation.

#### 8. LIBRARIAN'S STUDY LEAVE

The Librarian was absent on study leave from July 1957 to April 1958. While overseas he studied problems of University library

administration, visiting for this purpose every University library in Great Britain. He also investigated the use of demonstration printing presses as aids to the study and teaching of bibliography as a basis for textual criticism. At the instruction of the Committee he discussed with British librarians the basis of allocation of book votes.

By the generosity of a member of the Senate the Librarian was able to make a brief but most stimulating visit to the United States.

On his return the Librarian submitted a report on his leave which was received and approved by the Committee.

It was something of a disappointment to him to find it impossible immediately to put into practice a number of specific proposals which his investigations led him to believe would be of considerable advantage to the Library.

As the year ended, however, it did seem as if ultimately there was some chance of at least the less expensive of his suggestions being implemented.

#### 9. VISIT OF DR. KEYES D. METCALF

Dr. Keyes D. Metcalf, Librarian Emeritus of Harvard University, visited Australia during 1958 as a Fulbright scholar to advise on problems of library development. During his visit he was able to come to Brisbane for a short period.

Dr. Metcalf conducted two seminars in Brisbane, one, at St. Lucia, on the Place of the Library in the University, and one on Library Co-operation. The Senate and members of the teaching staff were invited to hear and meet Dr. Metcalf. It is much to be regretted that so few found it possible to avail themselves of this opportunity, since Dr. Metcalf is certainly one of the outstanding librarians of our time and probably the leading expert today on library provision in Universities. Those who did attend will endorse the opinion of the Librarian and his staff that Dr. Metcalf was a visitor of considerable distinction.

While in Brisbane Dr. Metcalf spent considerable time discussing with the Librarian the future development of the Main Library building and his recommendations both in general and in detail will be of great value to the University.

In November the Deputy Librarian and the Librarian were privileged to participate, in Canberra, in an advanced Library Seminar conducted by Dr. Metcalf.

#### 10. THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

One of the strongest impressions gained by the Librarian from his overseas visit was the enormous contribution which an adequate Library makes not only to the prestige but to the efficient functioning of a University.

No one would dispute the benefit derived by their Universities from possessing great libraries such as the Bodleian, or the Cambridge University Library, not to mention mammoths like Harvard. The knowledge that it is reasonably certain that practically any piece of extant printed matter of value can be made available to him is a potent attraction to the scholar to become associated with such a University and the great libraries have certainly played a considerable part in this way in maintaining and raising the quality of teaching and research staff in their mother institutions.

But without proceeding to such extremes as these, one soon discovers the difference in Great Britain between Universities served by libraries of a size and quality comparable with that of the University of Queensland and those whose libraries are of the calibre of, for instance, one of the established provincial Universities, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham or Liverpool, or of the Scottish Universities or of University College, London.

It seems to the Librarian to be vital that the University of Queensland Library, if it is to be adequate to cope with the ever-widening commitments of the University in teaching and research, should

attain as a matter of urgency a level of adequacy of this nature. Mere stock size is no more than an indication of adequacy but as the briefest indication of our present limitations, the Librarian's considered opinion is that the Library should have now half a million volumes or about three times its present stock.

To attain this immediately would require, at a rough estimate, £A500,000. Even if this money were available immense difficulties of staff and accommodation would frustrate its application, but more than a token start could be made with considerably less.

For this reason the Librarian recommends earnestly to the Committee that it ask the Senate to provide substantial sums specifically for this purpose of building up the research potential of the Library; that it make it clear that this should be provided quite apart from the current annual vote to meet new and continuing publications and that it do this now.

It is no mere personal idiosyncrasy of the Librarian's that he should insist that any adequate University is impossible without an adequate Library, nor is it prompted by considerations of constructing an academic empire. It is an inescapable fact to which the Universities of the world stand in testimony. To make plain the Committee's views of the present failings of its Library and to present without delay to the Senate a reasoned plan to reduce progressively these inadequacies seems to be to do no more than to keep faith with the confidence in Australia's University development expressed by the report of the Murray Committee.

## 11. STATISTICS

### 1. Summary of expenditure on library vote.

<u>1957</u>			<u>1958</u>	
£	£	Payments for the year were:	£	£
12,255		Books.	17,709	
9,299		Periodicals	12,115	
3,383		Binding	5,604	
2,024		Sundries	2,574	
	26,961	<u>Total payments</u>		38,002
		Against which receipts were:		
	26,905	Library vote		34,919
		Resulting in a balance of:		
<u>Dr.</u>	56		<u>Dr.</u>	3,083

### 2. Accessions (includes only items fully processed during the year.)

<u>1957</u>			<u>1958</u>	
7,656		<u>Books.</u>		
1,180		Purchased	10,084	
	8,836	Donated	2,601	
		Total		12,685
		<u>Periodicals. (Bound vols. only)</u>		
4,163		Purchased	4,059	
438		Donated	426	
	4,601	Total		4,485
	<u>13,437</u>	<u>Total (all items)</u>		<u>17,170</u>
	131	less, withdrawn.		60
	<u>13,306</u>	Net increase		<u>17,110</u>

APPENDIX A.

STAFF CHANGES 1958

Head Cataloguer

Miss B. Shearer resigned on marriage and was temporarily re-appointed as Mrs. J. Zeller.

Acquisitions Librarian

Mr. S. Spearritt, B.A. transferred from Serials Librarian to replace Mr. C.E. Roberts, M.A. who resigned during 1957 to return to America. Mr. Spearritt later resigned to go abroad and was replaced by Miss H.F. Paterson, B.Ec.

Serials Librarian

Miss E. Lumb, B.A. was appointed in place of Mr. S. Spearritt, B.A. (v. sup.) and, resigning on marriage was herself replaced by Miss B. MacDougall, B.A.

Senior Library Assistants

Miss E. Carroll transferred from Geology Librarian to Engineering Librarian in place of Miss B. MacDougall. (v. sup.)

Miss M. Roberts, B.A. replaced Miss M. Donald, B.A. as Agriculture/Botany Librarian.

On the Cataloguing staff Mrs. E. Hallister, B.A. replaced Miss R.M.T. Quinn deceased and Miss N.M. Mills replaced Miss H.F. Paterson (v. sup.)

Library Assistants

Miss C. Morrison transferred from Main Library to become Geology Librarian in place of Miss E. Carroll. (v. sup.)

Miss C. Gunnis replaced Miss M. Hooper as Physics Librarian

Miss B. Brennan replaced Miss B. Mellor as Dentistry Librarian.

Miss B. Bygott, Physiology Librarian resigned on marriage and was temporarily re-appointed as Mrs. C. Kermondy.

Mrs. G. Kirwan replaced Miss A. Beale as Zoology Librarian.

Miss L. Weeks became full-time Chemistry Librarian, (formerly part-time Main Library) later resigned on marriage and was replaced by Miss E. Marks, Dip. Phys. Ed.

Miss J. Liddell replaced Miss J. Quinn on the Thatcher Library staff.

In the Main Library Miss J. Quinn was appointed to the vacancy caused by creating a full-time librarianship in Chemistry (v. sup.).

Miss P. Armstrong resigned to go abroad.

Junior Library Assistants

Miss S. Gunn replaced Miss P. Armstrong. (v. sup.)

Miss M. Rutherford replaced Miss C. King (resigned)

Miss W. O'Leary replaced Miss C. Morrison (v. sup.)

Miss B. Battersby and Miss K. O'Donoghue were appointed to two additional positions approved by the Senate.