

of expression, not fully resolved upon later rereading with added understanding of the author's mental pattern. There is some needlessly sensational titling. The peculiar genesis of the book as the script for a series of pictorial documents developed by Marie Newrath, director of the Isotype Institute, has also caused some confusion. The picture captions are either needless repetitions of statements already contained in the text, or they are elaborations and sometimes excursions which can detract from the reading of the text. The choice of sources is not always a wise one. Thomas Francis Carter's brilliant work on far eastern printing was apparently unknown to Hogben, which accounts for his neglect of the story of far eastern seals in his discussion of early property identification and authorization. On the other hand, too much weight is given McMurtrie's *The Book*, in particular his account of Gutenberg, which results in a slightly distorted view of his relationship to Fust and Schoeffer. Incidentally, McMurtrie appears as "Francis," instead of Douglas C. in the index, page 284. The caption on page 35 might have explained the relationship of the zodiac to bloodletting, clearly the purpose of the picture on page 34. The picture of the paper mill on page 129 is not, as the caption claims, a woodcut, but a copper plate. One could go on with such a list and specialists would probably find similar instances of defect from their own fields. The important thing, however, is

that they do not have any serious effect on the very real contribution which this book makes. It would be absurd to overlook, because of such details, the magnificent contribution which Hogben has made to our understanding of writing and picture making, of printing and the other forms of communication. The importance of this contribution lies to a large extent in the manner in which this book was conceived. The resolution to connect, upon the discovery of their inner coherence, the many seemingly disconnected elements in the basic story of the growth of man's ability to record events and live with and through pictures and letters, was a most felicitous approach. It resulted in a book of a highly original order of creativeness. To those who have long suspected these connections and have groped, in one way or another, for the means of making them apparent to those who have sensed the importance of these causal connections with many of the urgent problems of modern society, Hogben's work is mental stimulus and nourishment of great importance. Many corrections of details and of some more basic elements in his structure are possible and many things in the book are capable of prolonged and thorough discussion. It is a book which is likely to be read for a long time and by many. That its important message will reach the scholarly librarian in spite of superficially irritating appearances is a desirability which this review hopes to accomplish.—*Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt.*

## Descriptive Cataloging

*Rules for Descriptive Cataloging in the Library of Congress.* U.S. Library of Congress. Descriptive Cataloging Division. (Adopted by the American Library Association.) Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1949.

This title is an important milestone along the road to simplification in cataloging, the goal toward which many catalogers and administrators have been striving for the past several years. The rules are well stated and well organized, and a good index facilitates their use. Every day we have cause to be grateful for the cooperative work which resulted in such a satisfactory code.

Mr. Swank's excellent review of the preliminary edition (*College and Research*

*Libraries*, 9:90-4 January 1948) was presented largely as a study of underlying principles. This review represents the point of view of a cataloger who is applying the rules in her daily work and who is alert for the possibilities of further simplification and economy.

As the proof of the pudding is in the eating, so the test of the rules is in their application. Recent Library of Congress proof sheets demonstrate the book descriptions resulting from the use of the rules by the Library of Congress itself. Let us examine briefly some of the items noted.

The current cards are brief. The information they contain is clearly and concisely stated, and I believe they can be consulted and under-

stood more easily than cards with greater detail. The last vestiges of "bibliographical cataloging" can be seen in imprints, collations and notes. For consideration in this review, I shall limit my examples to a few of the more common card notes.

In two shipments of proof sheets, bibliography notes in 64 forms were counted. Of these, 50 notes appeared only once, two notes were used 17 times, and one appeared 72 times. It would seem that this is extravagant elaboration, especially since more and more librarians are coming to consider indiscriminate bibliography notes as useless. Why not use form notes in English, except when an *important characterization* of the bibliography is contained in the wording used in the book being described?<sup>1</sup>

Cover title notes still tend to be overdone. For example, *Reed's Concise Maori Dictionary* has a title main entry and the following note: "Cover title: Concise Maori dictionary." An added title tracing is given for: "Concise Maori dictionary." Since the cover title note adds nothing new and only repeats the title entry information, it is superfluous.

Errata notes appear frequently, and again in varying forms. Could they not be handled adequately by the use of simple form notes in English? On a recent card, the note appeared as: "'Errata': slip inserted."

<sup>1</sup> It was gratifying to note that in the June issue of the *Library of Congress Processing Department Cataloging Service*, p. 2, a revision of the L.C. policy in regard to mention of bibliographies.

## New Venture in Subject Cataloging

*The Library of Congress Subject Catalog; a Cumulative List of Works Represented by Library of Congress Printed Cards.* January-March 1950. Washington, 1950, 394p. Subscription price: \$100 per year.

Since the appearance of the monumental *Library of Congress Catalog* and its supplement between 1942 and 1948, many scholars and librarians alike have voiced regret that there is no subject index to this major bibliographical aid. A number of proposals for such an index have been discussed and considered but as yet, none have borne fruit. Perhaps cooperative efforts may make such an index available one day, in spite of the magnitude and expense of the task of producing it.

The question of when to add an explanatory note and whether as a note or as an integrated part of the title remains a matter of individual choice. On recent cards for four novels with the titles: *My Old Man's Badge*; *Bitter Wine*; *Guns Wanted*; and *The Pink House*, the first two had notes: "A novel." Four cards for volumes of poetry show slightly different treatment, for two cards had "Poems" integrated into the title, and the other two used the term as a drop note.

These examples indicate one thing quite clearly: the interpretation and application of the rules depends upon the individual cataloger. This independent exercise of judgment is inherent in simplified cataloging. Therefore, any code of rules should be used as a guide and not as law. That is the reason, also, that some of the exceptions and qualifications found in the rules might better have been omitted. Every cataloger knows that there is a time to disregard or go beyond the rules. Would it not have been preferable to let it go at that, and not have tried to codify the exceptions?

Let the user be aware, then, that the rules, in all their ramifications, need not be applied too literally. The Library of Congress has achieved a considerable degree of simplification in its cards. Other libraries may do the same if, instead of trying to follow L. C. exactly (a not uncommon failing) they will apply their own good judgment and common sense in the interpretation of the code.—*Winifred A. Johnson, Army Medical Library.*

In the meantime, however, the Library of Congress, ever mindful of its great responsibilities as the national library of the United States and one of the major libraries of the world, has undertaken the production of a subject index to its current *Author Catalog*. The resulting *Subject Catalog*, now appearing for the first time, is another notable example of the library's continuing efforts to improve and enlarge the bibliographical access to its collections.

Issued quarterly and cumulated annually, with larger cumulations projected for the future, the *Subject Catalog* corresponds to similar issues of the *Author Catalog*. It is not a true index, however, for there are dif-