

SPECIAL LIBRARY SERVICE

ALTHOUGH, by definition, a special library is a special collection of books serving a special clientèle and using special methods for the purpose, it may assume an importance not less than that of general libraries which in size may be much bigger.

In recognition of its importance, the Indian Library Conference, at its session held in 1946 at Baroda, passed a resolution favouring the establishment of a special libraries section as an indispensable wing of the Indian Library Association, with a view to meet the increasing demand on the libraries in India, following the move for the rapid industrialisation of the country.

It is gratifying to record that a special library service has already been started at the Library of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, which has been building up special sub-libraries devoted to particular subjects like Aeronautics, Metallurgy, Internal Combustion Engineering, High Voltage Engineering, Chemical Engineering, the Social Sciences, and Economics. The sub-library being the nucleus round which the special library has to evolve, there is every reason to hope that before long there will be special libraries relating to all important subjects in pure and applied sciences, at this centre.

It is a hopeful sign that the Indian Library Association has already appointed an *ad hoc* committee to go into the question of special libraries. Most of the members in question are themselves in charge of libraries devoted to specialised fields such as agriculture, irrigation, science and technology. An annotated guide-list of special libraries in this country was first published in the Oct.-Dec. 1941 issue of the *Modern Librarian*. It shows that there are already in this country libraries attached to special fields

such as public health and hygiene, chemical technology, industries, railways, forestry, geology, medicine, serology, dairying, veterinary sciences, architecture, commerce, meteorology, statistics, banking, botany, zoology, tropical medicine, indology and Indian culture. Libraries devoted to textiles and food technology have recently been started at Ahmedabad and Mysore. More libraries are coming into existence at all research centres like Poona, Bombay, Calcutta, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Delhi, Madras, Roorkee and Karaikudi. Besides these there are at least three information bureaux functioning now at Kanpur, Delhi and Bangalore, while there are indications that more will be started in the near future.

With these developments coming into being, more librarians with experience in special and technical fields will be called upon to organise and man them. Naturally, this brings to the foreground the question of special library training, which is indispensable, and which can be most profitably achieved by the system of taking in scientifically qualified students for library training, and then as apprentices in special libraries for a period of intensive training in special fields under expert guidance.

In conclusion we may observe that while a beginning has been made to realise the importance of special libraries, needed for the industrial and scientific advancement of our country, there are problems connected with it which can only be solved if they are tackled with a sense of urgency by an organisation exclusively devoted to the promotion of the special library movement in India.

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TRIALS, DUTIES AND REWARDS

STANDING on the threshold of a new era, India faces today great trials, great duties and great rewards. The precious gains towards which we may hope to progress is in the development of our industries, agriculture, scientific research, transport, defence, public health, education and other creative endeavours, which contribute to the strength and well-being of the country. In the trials and in the duties essential to that progress, we the scientists

and technologists of the country, in our infinitely varied types, have to play our rightful part and bear our full share. Indeed, ours is a responsibility unequalled by that of any other section of the people. To enable us to discharge this responsibility, it behoves the State to create the necessary conditions in the coming years.

—SIR S. S. BHATNAGAR,