

International Institute of Documentation

COPENHAGEN CONGRESS

MICROPHOTOGRAPHY, as a means of distribution of data, rivalled such veteran subjects as decimal classification and cataloguing in discussions at the Copenhagen Congress of the International Institute of Documentation, on September 10-14. Marking the fortieth anniversary of the world bibliographic or documentation movement that arose out of the 1895 International Congress of Bibliography, this thirteenth Congress in a part of its programme provided, in effect, a 'clearing house' for current progress upon microphotographic duplication as visualised or practised in many lands.

Nearly fifty reports were presented to the Congress, and the advance volume of the Congress is an important addition to the literature of finding, classifying, preserving and distributing written information.

Held under favourable weather conditions of Copenhagen's waning summer and arranged with Danish hospitality by the local committee, of which Oscar Thyregod was the leader, the Congress brought together representatives from about a dozen countries to discuss problems of mutual interest in a medley of German, English and French.

The president of the Congress, Dr. J. Alingh Prins, president of the Dutch Patent Office, said in an opening address that documentation has three stages: (1) investigation as to what has been written about a subject or put into the form of a document; (2) filing the material so that the place of each subject may be determined instantly; (3) placing the material at the disposal of those who need it.

With regard to filing and classifying material, Dr. Prins said: "Collected material, which is not filed, is of little importance. What system of classification should be adopted? In theory this does not matter; the main thing is, that *one and the same* system is used nationally and internationally. We are convinced that the most serviceable system is the decimal system, invented by Melvil Dewey, and considerably improved in Brussels by Lafontaine and Otlet and since then brought to a high stage of development by the international classification committee of our Institute under Donker Duyvis, with the co-operation of a large number of prominent persons from different countries."

Decimal classification, and the sessions of the committee charged with keeping the system in step with advancing knowledge, bulked large on the programme, with reports on its use in Germany, Switzerland, England, America, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and other countries.

Of fundamental importance was the paper presented by Dr. S. C. Bradford, keeper of the Science Library, London, which analysed the situation surrounding library service in the general field of science, including societies, research institutions, business and industrial organisations, etc., and came to the conclusion that a central library of science and technology would alleviate many of the disabilities under which scientific and technical work is carried out at the present time. A communicated paper by E. Lancaster Jones explained the classified bibliography operated by the Science Library. A paper by Watson Davis,

director of Science Service, Washington, told of suggested applications of microphotographic duplication in making available existing literature in libraries and publishing scientific papers and monographs that cannot at present be issued promptly or in full.

Television was foreseen as a future tool in library service by Dr. Walther Schürmeyer, director of the Library of Art and Technology at Frankfurt, whose paper stressed primarily the possibility of applying photographic methods to the distribution of information from libraries.

How photographing of library cards upon motion picture film, and making enlargements from these convenient and inexpensive negatives, is done was the subject of a paper presented by Paul Vanderbilt, librarian of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, who used this technique experimentally in connexion with a union catalogue of Philadelphia libraries. Experience with use of film copies and microphotoprints at the Huntington library in America was reported in a communication from Dr. L. Bendickson, and there was also a communicated report on photographic methods in connexion with documents and libraries by Dr. H. Joachim, director of the Zeiss Ikon concern at Dresden.

The question of the photocopying of books and literature in view of the copyright laws and rights of authors was the subject of one session. The standardisation of the format for film copies so as to simplify the exchange of film copies between different countries was urged in resolutions, with a recommendation for the use of 35 mm. film, perforated both sides, with width of image of 24 mm. and a reduction of approximately 12 to 1.

The International Institute of Documentation reaffirmed at the Congress its desire to "work with every international organisation which pursues related aims, for example, in the field of publication and of the working organisation of special publication such as film".

Several related efforts in the field of documentation were made known and explained by documents distributed at the congress. The International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations reported the progress in its endeavour to co-ordinate world efforts in the field of documentation, and the International Office of Chemistry, Paris, made available a report, "L'Utilisation du Film comme Support de la Documentation", giving proceedings of its April conference.

The prevailing spirit of the meeting was the hope that there would be co-operation effected through the International Institute of Documentation with both international organisations dealing with particular fields of knowledge and national organisations that bring together the documentation activities in various geographical areas.

Mingled with the meetings there were visits to libraries, publishing firms, schools and places of historical interest. These events and lunches arranged in famous Copenhagen restaurants allowed informal discussions of mutual problems in many languages, a function of any Congress that is often even more important than the set and formal proceedings.