Library Co-operation is a wide term stretching from the high fields of policy to those of simple routines. It is a subject, too, that may be but should not be divided into separate compartments such as special library co-operation, or co-operation in University Libraries except that as these libraries have the same objective in view, it is often the tendency to look for common media for mutual aid and co-operation.

The financing of libraries in Ghana, and for most developing countries in Africa, is very different from the countries in which most of us have been trained or have had the opportunity to visit. There are no private institutions with incomes of their own right, such as the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, London, whose library is financed entirely from members subscriptions and contributions or like the Reference Department of the New York Public Library which draws its finance from the profits on endowments. In Ghana all libraries, special, university or public depend almost exclusively on direct or indirect allocations from the Central Government, and it is important that this subject is considered not only as a means of furthering our ends, by making readily available the resources of the country, but also to reduce the financial burden of the Central Government.

There is very little so far practised in this field as far as the public libraries are concerned. This should not come as a surprise to many of us. Up to now each of us has been concentrating on building up resources and developing a service for our own reading public and though we are still in the process of doing this, it seems high time we stopped to evaluate.

Library Co-operation covers a wide area of library practice and as I said earlier, the situation in Ghana does not offer grounds for the practice of some aspects of co-operation as is done in England or in a sister country like Nigeria. Familiar topics like the inter-lending of books and the inter-change of tickets and co-operative purchasing of books are the popular fields of co-operation within public libraries. In Ghana all public libraries are run by the one agency, the Library Board and what one would term co-operation are matters of routine. But looking outward of the Board’s activities, a certain degree of co-operation can be carried out within these fields. The Balme Library has lent us books and on many occasions we have had to refer readers to Legon. Universities and Public Libraries cannot inter-lend or exchange tickets too freely and from this point of view the occasional borrowing and references for specific information has been adequate. This kind of borrowing needs to be tidied up and a clear policy laid down. There is need also to define the type of books that can be made available and the regulations that should govern such borrowing. Personally, I feel we should follow almost entirely the practice in Scandinavian countries where all the resources of libraries...
public, special, or University are made accessible to the general reading public. This includes borrowing facilities. This is a socialist country, with as I have said, no private institutions with incomes of their own. Every library is financed directly or indirectly from Central Government funds, and on this basis alone it is quite wrong for a particular library to restrict access only to staff of his employing authority or to the public for whom the collection was primarily intended to serve.

What is required, and this is very essential, is for us to know who has what. In other words, there is need to compile a union catalogue of holdings and a directory of the resources in the country. Fortunately, some start has been made in this direction.

There are, however, some fields in which co-operation can be practised more effectively. Subject specialisation is one and the Library Board's contribution in this respect is Padmore Library which Mr. Samuel Kotei will be talking about. Our other services at the moment are too general or the collection too rudimentary to offer any effective basis of specialisation. We have plans for the development of comprehensive Commercial and Technical Library Services and before any of these plans are put into operation we shall take stock of services already established so as to avoid duplication and waste.

Staff exchange is a field in which we have never practised at all. This is because there has been a dearth of trained personnel and there is probably nobody to exchange. Our services are growing in area and depth and this is a thing for the future. So far students of the Library School have, during their vacation periods, been attached to institutions other than their employing authorities to gain some practical experience. The periods of attachment are too limited and in any case the general idea is to enable the student to have an insight into the work of the library so that it cannot be considered library co-operation in the strict sense of the word. What I would like to see is my Lending Librarian, for example, exchange place with the Librarian in charge of Circulation in Legon or Kumasi or Cape Coast, for a period of six to twelve months or for someone in a responsible post such as administration to exchange place with his opposite member in another institution. The advantages are obvious and I need not explain. This will need to be worked out in greater detail.

None of us at the moment is yet certain of the future of the Library School. If it is transferred to the University, which is all our wish, the Library Board has plans to create the post of a Training Officer who will be responsible for the training of the middle-level semiprofessional staff. Details of the training have not been worked out but it will be geared essentially to routines and practical knowledge with a good deal of academic exercises to bring candidates to reasonable academic standard. An examination will be conducted and perhaps certification introduced. All this is to fill a need within the Board's services; a need that is pressing and which may deepen with the anticipated expansion of the services. No large Library system can be run effectively unless it adopts a good system of in-service training. Even highly trained personnel need to go to school occasionally to bring their knowledge more up-to-date on prac-
ties and developments outside their field. But whereas we may in the foreseeable future be overstaffed with too highly trained personnel, the need at the middle level may be our concern as long as we continue to run libraries. The Board’s scheme will be directed to internal requirements only but there will be need to plan a broader training to satisfy the needs of other Government libraries. I should explain this a little further: There are several government and other institutional libraries which are so small that it would be unnecessary, and uneconomic to employ a highly trained person from the Library School at Legon. Even if they do the establishment may require the services of an assistant who has some knowledge of the basic principles of cataloguing and library organisation and who, with little direction, can be moulded into the general routines of the employing authority. Such a person can acquire this basic knowledge from our training scheme, staffed by an officer who we anticipate would be a person who has had experience in different types of libraries. This to my mind is a practical field of co-operation.

The field in which there has been least co-operation is book binding. Each of the Universities has established binderies all of which are flourishing very well, though I am not sure whether the University of Cape Coast has also established her own. Any one who has seen the work of these binderies cannot deny that they are excellent in craftsmanship. The Library Board has a bindery which can best be described as a Book-mending department. The two excellent craftsmen we employed have both left—one is now a diplomat in the Ghana Foreign Service, the other died a few months ago after he had been on retirement for three months. The Ghana National Archives has one of the best binderies in the country. The need for a bigger bindery to cater for the needs of all other libraries has exercised the minds of persons in authority and I learnt that when I was away in America last year, an expert did a survey on the possibilities of establishing a commercial bindery under the United Kingdom Technical Assistance Scheme. For various reasons, his recommendations cannot be implemented. At the moment the matter is left in abeyance perhaps to be taken up again when the plans for the National Library get firmly started.

I was told several years ago by the former Librarian of the University of Ghana that the estimated cost of a rebound book from the University bindery was 30/- per volume. This would have increased substantially by now. The Library Board keeps sending books to firms in England, and the cost per volume has risen from between 6/- and 8/- per volume to about 10/- and 15/- per volume.

Here is clearly a field in which several institutions have been working for their own end without any regard for the national need. Cannot all the libraries and perhaps the Archives Department come together to establish one large bindery to cater for the needs of all? What is the point in bringing in experts of this sort and that? Why should we waste foreign currency by sending books overseas for rebinding when such work can be properly done here provided we organise. The one great objection I have heard is that the Universities cannot afford to have materials moved out of the University campus for any length of time. I understand however, that the Kwame Nkrumah University...
Science and Technology does send periodicals to Dunn and Wilson in the United Kingdom, an operation which takes no less than three months at the earliest for the bound volumes to be received in Ghana. Why then not a bindery in Ghana? This is a matter which the Association can deliberate upon. It needs to be carefully thought out and at the highest level.

I mentioned in passing, the possibility of co-operative book purchasing. Members are aware that a majority of the bookshops in the country do not offer the services we need and we have consequently to depend on overseas market. We have each in our individual ways established the contacts overseas but the position in Ghana has changed so radically in recent months that it has become very difficult economically and otherwise to keep these connections. Our Senior Cataloguer can testify how difficult it is to get an import licence and how expensive it is to establish a letter of credit. My argument is that the Cataloguer has wasted several cataloguing hours on a thing that is clearly the field of the business man. If Government tightens these procedures and regulations any further, we shall have no course but to establish a Library Supply agency financed on contributions based on annual budget that will be solely responsible for the needs of our libraries. It is the centre that can supply books, and library stationery such as insecticides, catalogue cards, stylus etc. which several small libraries are unable to obtain locally. I had the opportunity of seeing such agency in operation in Missouri State in the United States and I feel it will be quite a useful organisation to establish here.

There has been much talk about the establishment of a National Library and as members are aware, its scope and function have been clearly laid down. There are several fields in which co-operation is possible but not developed because there is not the need for them now and my feeling is that the National Library is the agency to co-ordinate all that is so far left undone. This National Library is to be discussed tomorrow and I don't think I shall be right to have unnecessary incursions into a subject which I have not been assigned. I do want to remind members that our conception of the National Library is one of co-ordinating existing services rather than an institution in its own right and for that reason it should be the nerve centre of Library Co-operation in Ghana. It should be responsible for compiling and publishing National Bibliography, Union Catalogues, Union list of serials; it should build up collections in any fields which are not covered by any library, it should be the centre of inter-lending of books and it should become a deposit library and hold publications for exchange. There are a lot of other functions that can be assigned to it as we shall hear from our panel tomorrow.

I have raised only a few points on this important subject and I must make room for contribution from my learned friends.

DISCUSSION: led by Mr. De Heer.

The group considered that staff training should not be the responsibility of the Ghana Library Board alone and that the Ghana Library Association should investigate the matter; an Education Committee was recommended. It was recommended also that a Committee should be set up to examine the binding situation and that the Ministry of Trade should be informed. The idea of a
Supply Centre for libraries was generally approved and it was suggested that the Ghana National Trading Corporation should be approached. Such a centre would be particularly useful for small libraries. In the general discussion the need for a list of firms who could supply local library materials was emphasised. It was also recommended that a Directory of Library Resources should be compiled and published by the Ghana Library Association.

THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARIAN IN GHANA

by R. C. BENGE.

Ghana Library School.

*Now that the year 1964 and another term are approaching their end, I should like to ignore our usual syllabus preoccupations and discuss your professional situation in Ghana.

I propose to talk not about the organised pattern of library service or about administrative problems but about you and your future as individuals. I shall be speaking as an outsider because however much some of us may wish to identify ourselves with Ghana — if we are honest we know in our hearts—in our bones that our attitudes are alien. I am talking then as a European who has experienced what most Europeans have experienced in the middle part of this exciting and terrible century. Inevitably the Africa — the Ghana that we know is different from the country which you know and so when we peer through our expatriate spectacles what we see should be of interest to you whose spectacles show another picture.

First let me deal with certain simple professional matters. Let me compare your situation with the professional landscape elsewhere — in Britain, say because you know about libraries there. What would strike any visitor immediately is that —as individuals your opportunities are so much greater. As Mr. Gardner reminded some of you the other day most of the people in this room will be—in five years' time or less in key positions of responsibility. In Britain that figure would not be five — may be not even ten years and in fact the main hope of the ambitions is to reach the top before they are forty. After that it is too late. I hope you appreciate that although you are fortunate in these greater opportunities—they also represent a very sobering challenge. It is not easy—for example to go into some shambles; some not very special collection of bits and pieces whose potential function has never been recognised and to transform it into a library which will meet with due support. What you have learnt in this School might help a little but far more important will be the faith, hope and charity needed to move mountains. Over your beds you will need to place — that great moral poem — so symptomatic of the Imperialists in their heyday — I refer to “If” by Rudyard Kipling.

*Note: An end of term lecture to students. December 1964.