

**ACQUISITION AND RETENTION POLICIES AMONG NATIONAL
LIBRARIES: THE BRITISH LIBRARY AND BIBLIOTHEQUE
NATIONALE**

A study submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Librarianship

at

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

by

DARKO BALAZIC



September 1993

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ABSTRACT

This report sets out to provide a short description of a national library's functions. An outline of two national libraries, The British Library (BL) and Bibliothèque nationale (BN) is given and their holdings described. National libraries have found themselves in a turmoil: current pressures in terms of publishing output, accommodation, decay and funding are important factors that are taken into account. Collection management policies of the two libraries are brought into consideration and legal deposit is defined in relation to the services that it feeds. There exist considerable differences between the French and British legal deposit law. The current state of British legal deposit legislation requires an immediate review, if the BL wants to substantially improve the capture of new media and enhance bibliographic control. As far as foreign acquisitions are concerned, the BL will continue to develop its almost universal concept. Acquisition priorities of the BN are going to change: a strictly humanities and social sciences oriented library will also try to collect more universally. National libraries do not have sufficient resources to maintain all their accumulated collections in a condition suitable for use, therefore a need for acquisition and retention policies has arisen to be more closely related to each other. The BL will practise increasing selectivity in the legal deposit intake, which will also be applied in retrospect. Disposal has now become a vital part of the Library's collection management policy. The BN has no immediate plans to alter its policies with regard to legal deposit, as yet not considering retention of library materials in terms of pre-selection or weeding, at least not in the way the BL is. Conservation is another important area of concern. Both libraries pay attention to the materials, chosen for permanent retention, developing new techniques for conservation purposes. National and, to a lesser extent, international co-operation is now commonly viewed as essential for survival, especially in the areas of acquisition and retention of library materials.

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| | ABSTRACT | 2 |
| | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 5 |
| 1 | INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY | 7 |
| 2 | NATIONAL LIBRARIES: DEFINITION & FUNCTIONS | 10 |
| 2.1 | The British Library | 15 |
| 2.2 | Bibliothèque nationale | 16 |
| 3 | CURRENT PRESSURES | 18 |
| 3.1 | Publishing output | 18 |
| 3.2 | Accommodation | 19 |
| 3.3 | Decay | 23 |
| 3.4 | Funding & acquisition budgets | 24 |
| 4 | COLLECTION MANAGEMENT | 30 |
| 4.1 | Legal deposit | 30 |
| 4.1.1 | Coverage | 31 |
| 4.1.2 | Depositors | 34 |
| 4.1.3 | Number of copies & distribution | 34 |
| 4.1.4 | Timeliness & efficiency | 36 |
| 4.1.5 | Review of legal deposit legislation in the UK and France | 38 |
| 4.2 | Acquisitions other than legal deposit | 41 |
| 4.2.1 | The British Library | 42 |
| 4.2.2 | Bibliothèque nationale | 47 |
| 5 | RETENTION POLICIES | 51 |
| 5.1 | Legal deposit: comprehensiveness or not ? | 51 |
| 5.2 | Disposal | 59 |
| 5.3 | Conservation | 62 |
| 6 | NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION | 68 |
| 7 | CONCLUSION | 75 |
| | APPENDIX 1: List of acronyms | 78 |
| | APPENDIX 2: Interview with Dr D W G Clements | 79 |
| | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 95 |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to everyone who has contributed to this dissertation. First and foremost I should like to thank Mr F B Loughridge for his guidance and stimulating support, and for being so generous with his time and comments, as well as for establishing contacts with institutions subject to research.

Second, I wish to thank all those who have made it possible for me to enter their libraries, for their generous hospitality, giving their time, and for providing useful information as well as sound documentation:

Dr D W G Clements, The British Library, who answered my detailed enquiries, at the same time kindly permitting the recording and publishing of the interview as an appendix;

members of the BN staff: Mrs Annick Bernard, Mr Michel Popoff, Mrs Marsol, Mrs Nicole Simon, and Mrs Astrid Brandt, whose interest and assistance are very greatly appreciated and acknowledged;

Ms Frances Lill, The British Library, for a tour of the new library building at St Pancras.

Thanks to the National & University Library Ljubljana staff, R & D Department, who helped steer so much helpful material, not available at the Sheffield University Library, my way promptly on my request.

I am grateful to Miss Stephanie Reeves, who assisted with proof-reading to alleviate inadequacies in English grammar.

I should also like to thank the Ministry of Science & Technology and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as my employer, the National & University Library Ljubljana (Slovenia) for their financial provisions, and my employer in particular for having generously assigned a year for my postgraduate studies.

Last but by no means least, I would like to thank my wife Darja for her vital support during the writing, for her patience and tolerance, which have been remarkable considering her already heavy workload; and in times of financial constraints for me, for providing all the information technology facilities this July in Paris. This dissertation is as much hers as it is mine.

Sheffield, August 1993

1 INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

The decision to undertake research in acquisition and retention policies amongst national libraries has arisen from consideration of their traditional role (keeping the country's book production for the benefit of future generations; provision of current and past research materials), matched against the challenges of the nineties (explosion of the publishing output, storage problems, conservation and preservation, insufficient funding). The research examines and compares the experiences of two major national libraries in the West, The British Library (London) and Bibliothèque nationale (Paris). It is felt that an investigation of only one library, as a case study, would not provide enough viable data for analysis, especially when a more in-depth look, which could be later applied to the library I work for (National & University Library, Ljubljana), is required. The two libraries are to move to new locations, as is the National & University Library. Under these circumstances, there is every likelihood that an insight into acquisition and retention policies would lead to some common solutions, useful to my library in the future.

National libraries are considered to be national printed archives, storing current and past publishing output of the nation. In most cases collection development policy relies on inertial, passive acquisition (legal deposit), and building of research collections (accent on foreign materials). The unprecedented amount of publishing output is a major area of concern in the automatic acceptance of all items which are sent by publishers and printers as legal deposit, owing to limited space. With the advent of new media, new problems have arisen related to deterioration and preservation. On the one hand, there are national responsibilities, e.g. keeping everything for ever, on the other hand, there are space limitations, increasing costs of stock management and preservation. Are the national libraries, unfamiliar with weeding principles, to redefine priorities in

collection development, in terms of a more selective approach to legal deposit ? Are research collections threatened by decreasing funding ? These were the main issues to be investigated, which were highlighted also in terms of life-cycle costing mechanism.

Concepts underlying the proposed methods were the following:

- 1) examination of the current situation of the libraries in question: collection development priorities, statement of acquisition/retention policy, principles of the acceptance of legal deposit materials;
- 2) arising from the current situation: is there a need for revision, taking into account future requirements and circumstances, which are going to affect either library;
- 3) if so, what are the means to lead to a more controlled collection development.

Data collection included:

- 1) background reading (published work about the BL/BN, and national libraries in general). An extremely useful starting point proved to be the published report *Selection for survival: a review of acquisition and retention policies*, by B. Enright et al., London, The British Library, 1989, suggested by Mr F B Loughridge, which deals with acquisition and retention policies at the BL. Another important written source happened to be an all-inclusive and concise article *The world's great libraries: arks from the deluge*, published in *The Economist* in the same year;
- 2) design of an interview to be carried out at either library;
- 3) visits/interviews to be carried out at either library. These included Dr D W G Clements at the BL, and the following members of the BN staff: Mrs Annick Bernard, Mr Michel Popoff, Mrs Marsol, Mrs Nicole Simon, and Mrs Astrid

Brandt. Visits were paid to both libraries as well as to the building sites, St Pancras in London and Tolbiac in Paris;

4) desk research: analysis of data, obtained through several sources, outlined above.

2 NATIONAL LIBRARIES: DEFINITION & FUNCTIONS

The role of libraries, and national libraries in particular, in promoting learning and education, has long been acknowledged, as has the revolutionary effect of print upon the world. The characteristics of national libraries are so various as almost to defeat generalisation: any generalisation about national libraries must be qualified by the diversity that exists between them. Thus no two national libraries are the same and the functions are dependent upon the circumstances peculiar to each country. The history of a country, its cultural patterns and economic development as well as the current and past political situation will probably affect the role and the functions of a national library in a significant manner. This is to say that there is a wide range of national libraries, fulfilling the most sophisticated tasks in a country's library and information system. On the other hand, there exist countries where there has been no such a library established.

National libraries may be described as 'state-supported libraries, usually possessing the most outstanding collections of national and foreign literature in the country, exercising several of the key functions of a national library and seeking to serve the whole population of that country' (Wilson:1987). The shape will vary and may be 'anywhere between a library whose primary focus is the collection of the national imprint and a national agency whose focus is planning and promoting library development' (Scott & Phillips: 1991).

In parallel with on-going developments in the library and information field, there has been much debate about the fundamental nature of national libraries and, arising from this, about the role and key functions they are supposed to carry out, and this debate has been going on for thirty years. A paper by

Humphreys (published in 1966), based on discussion in the IFLA Section of National and University Libraries in 1964 (Line:1980), represents the first major international and authoritative breakthrough. Basically, he divided the functions of a national library and categorised them as fundamental, desirable, or inessential, as follows:

- a) fundamental functions of a national library: the outstanding and central collection of a nation's literature; legal deposit; coverage of foreign literature; publication of the national bibliography; national bibliographical information centre; publication of catalogues; exhibitions
- b) desirable functions of a national library: interlibrary lending; manuscripts; research on library techniques
- c) functions of the national library service which are not necessary functions of the national library: international exchange service; distribution of duplicates; books for the blind; professional training; assistance in library techniques.

Over the following years a fairly general consensus on the role of the national library developed, to the point where the 16th General Conference of UNESCO (held in 1970) could adopt the following definition (Sylvestre:1987):

'Libraries which, irrespective of their title, are responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all significant publications published in the country and functioning as a 'deposit' library, whether by law or under other arrangements. They will also normally perform some of the following functions: produce a national bibliography; hold and keep up to date a large and representative collection of foreign literature, including books about the country; act as a national bibliographical information centre; compile union catalogues; publish the retrospective national bibliography. Libraries which may be called 'national' but whose functions do not correspond to the above definition should not be placed in the 'National Libraries' category.'

Since then, major progress has been made, causing a remarkable metamorphosis in the landscape of the information world. Information technology has brought about tremendous changes in collection, storage and organisation of library materials, and national libraries are by no means an exception. National libraries and their functions are no longer considered in isolation, but in close relationship with other related national and international institutions. In a time of change, the role and functions of national libraries are being constantly reviewed. Many authors have come up with a concept of a national library and information system rather than adhering to the idea of a national library alone. In this way, Line (1980) claims 'a radically revised categorisation of functions', expressing the need for identification of a country's library and information needs, which are to be met at the national level, but not necessarily within the national library itself (Line:1988a). In one of his most recent articles (1989) he categorises those needs into 11 types, at the same time explaining why the national solution is appropriate in each case:

1. collection and preservation of documents of national interest and importance: the nation's publications; unpublished documents
2. bibliographic needs: creation of and access to records of publications: creation of records; access to records
3. document provision: the national resource
4. access to publications: access for reference and consultation; remote supply
5. exchange of publications
6. access to information: primary information; processed information; preparation of information guides
7. services to libraries and information units: cataloguing; other services
8. leadership and advice to libraries and information units: leadership; advice
9. planning and co-ordination
10. education and training
11. research and development

On the other hand, Wilson (1987) compiles another list in defining a national library. The key functions are those of:

- a) the national printed archive with the aid of legal deposit;
- b) producing the national bibliography;
- c) major research collections of foreign literature;
- d) official exchange and deposit of publications;
- e) participation in bibliographic standardisation and other international programmes.

Distinct but related are functions of national library planning, co-ordination and the provision of services to the library community within the country or state. Such functions may or may not be the responsibility of the national library.

The UNESCO review *Guidelines for national libraries*, undertaken by Sylvestre (1987) seems to cover all the functions on which there exists a very large measure of agreement:

1. the national library collections: the collection of national literature, legal deposit, collections of foreign literature, manuscripts
2. national bibliographic agency: the national bibliography, other bibliographic activities
3. readers' services: reference and circulation, referral services, interlending, locating tools, repositories, services to the handicapped, exhibitions
4. conservation
5. domestic relations: training and research, networking, library associations
6. international relations: international exchanges, international organisations and programmes

There is, therefore, wide-spread agreement on the so-called traditional national library activities, and functions such as collection, preservation and availability of national imprint, legal deposit, national bibliography, the most complete collections of foreign works, recur as constant elements. The expression

'national printed archive' has been now largely rendered obsolete, since a considerable part of publishing output comes on new media. Line identified the problem as early as 1980, recommending the use of the term the central collection of a nation's information media, which includes information other than in the printed word.

Furthermore, the accent has obviously been shifting to the system responsibilities of national libraries and - with improved information technology facilities - to access to information and document supply. National libraries 'must be a central element in a nation's information network' (Sylvestre:1987) or at least they should assume the leading part in identifying a country's national library and information needs, which may sometimes be fulfilled by other institutions distributed throughout the network. Yet the division between the national library's functions and the functions of the national library and information system remain unclear. It seems that individual countries may select solutions best suited to their particular circumstances.

It would also appear that functions have not changed as dramatically as one might expect; what has changed is 'more *how* libraries do things than *what* they do' (Sylvestre:1987), owing to enhanced technological tools. A major switch is probably to be identified in the attitude towards preservation of library materials. In the sixties and perhaps seventies, conservation was not even a concept of concern. National libraries have only recently become aware of the scale and the rate of deterioration of the collections accumulated over a long period of time. And it is becoming increasingly evident that the principles of availability and preservation will continue to clash.

The functions of national libraries - however universally agreed and accepted - have recently undergone another review which is still going on. Functions are

still being examined and clarified in the light of current financial restraints; even the most traditional of these, legal deposit and the collecting policies, can in many cases no longer be assumed to continue unchanged. National libraries have found themselves in a turmoil, squeezed between the pressures from government to justify themselves in terms of cost-effectiveness, and the user demands which are set to rise significantly. It is very likely that priorities in functions and the *content* of the latter are going to change to a very great extent. It would, therefore, seem appropriate to examine how the two national libraries, subject to examination, have set out to cope with some of the most sensitive areas, especially acquisition and retention of library materials.

2.1 THE BRITISH LIBRARY (BL)

The BL is one of the greatest libraries of the Western world, with collections which cover all branches of knowledge, all languages and all time. It was established by the British Library Act 1972 (Enright:1989) as a national centre for reference, study and bibliographical and other information services to support, in particular, institutions of education and learning and information centres in industry. It was created from a number of existing institutions of considerable age, stature and tradition: previously independent libraries with specialised or general collections were unified into a single national library, 'a rather extraordinary achievement' (Sylvestre:1987), when one considers that it resulted from the amalgamation of such independent institutions as the British Museum Library, the National Central Library, the National Lending Library for Science and Technology, together with the British National Bibliography Ltd. and the Office for Scientific and Technical Information, all reorganised as a single library under a single authority. More recently, the separate National Sound Archive and the India Office Library were also transferred to the BL.

The BL, through its incomparable collections, is the world's leading national research library. Its total collections comprise over 18 million volumes of printed books and serials (including 130,000 current serial titles), 33 million patent specifications (the only national library that has the national collection of patents), some 2 million cartographic items, 8 million philatelic items, 600,000 volumes of newspapers, some 900,000 sound discs, and many millions of manuscripts and papers of international importance (*For scholarship, research and innovation*: The BL's Strategic Plan, 1993-2000).

2.2 BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE (BN)

The BN is one of the five largest libraries in the Western world, which has more than 12 million volumes in its collections. Four of those are Anglo-Saxon, and only one French. Thus, '*posséder la BN est une chance, mais c'est aussi une responsabilité* (Revue de la BN:1988, No 28). Its origins go back to Charles V (1364-1380). The most important task of the Library is the collection, cataloguing, conservation and access to documents, submitted under legal deposit. France was the first country in the world to introduce legal deposit ('*dépôt légal*'): François I in 1537 made the decision that a copy of every printed work should be deposited with the BN (Lethčve:1987). Begun in 1811, *Bibliographie de la France* (*Bibliographie nationale française* since 1990) is the oldest current national bibliography. Legal deposit covers all branches of human knowledge, whereas the Library's acquisition policies have been focused on humanities and social sciences for a long time.

By their sheer size and many-faceted qualities the BN's collections have a unique place among the foremost libraries in the world. The collections are

often unparalleled in their richness, antiquity, variety and depth. They comprise some 12 million volumes of printed books and periodicals (37,000 current titles of periodicals), 1 million cartographic items, several thousand modern and ancient manuscripts, some 6 million prints and photographs; coins, medals and all kinds of audio-visual material are at the disposal of researchers.

Both the BN and the BL have their institutional responsibilities as major public reference and research libraries for a world-wide community of scholars.

3 CURRENT PRESSURES

3.1 PUBLISHING OUTPUT

Contrary to rumour, the printed word is far from dead. In the UK, the 13,231 published titles of 1950 had reached 42,041 by 1980. By 1987 the number rose to 62,000, a 50 % increase over the previous ten years, and an annual total of 90,000 and 100,000 books a year is expected by the mid-nineties and 2000, respectively (Ratcliffe:1989, Enright:1989). The number of items published is growing at a rate which has already outpaced the means of recording them. The same trends have been identified in Germany (63,724 titles in 1987) and France (from 30,424 new titles in 1987 to 45,000 in 1992; (The Economist:1989 and Chiffres du dépôt légal, BN:1993)). Besides, one must bear in mind that those numbers relate only to titles, recorded in respective national bibliographies, but we all know that everything from pamphlets and Mills & Boon type fiction to railway time-tables pour into the national library.

Not only is the number of publications issued per year still growing, but also the range of published material is expanding (grey literature, non-book material, desktop published material, etc.). Computerised information technology, incidentally and paradoxically, has not led to the so-called 'paperless society', but it has made it very much easier and cheaper than it was to publish by conventional means. Ratcliffe (1989) says: 'That the traditional book format has a future has never realistically been in doubt: suggestions of its being wholly superseded by electronic media are entirely misplaced. Both libraries and the trade have a vested interest in ensuring a stable future for the printed book.'

Space in national libraries is now at a premium. The pace of publishing output has a paramount impact on acquisitions other than legal deposit, for national libraries have to assign the bulk of their meagerly allocated budgets to processing the legal deposit intake, and eventually to preservation of the latter. So there is not much money left to purchase foreign publications. To make matters worse, problems of preservation will increase by leaps and bounds.

3.2 ACCOMODATION

There are two constant objectives in national libraries' collecting policies: to provide historical and current research materials, and to document the current printed output of the nation acquired through legal deposit, and preserve it as the 'national printed archive'. In this way, national libraries happen to be archives of a nation's wisdom of all times and the only library type with archival responsibilities. Due to the principle of comprehensiveness - so popular in the 19th century - they have amassed enormous collections of books and periodicals. National libraries have traditionally been expected not only to aim at comprehensiveness, but also to keep all acquisitions indefinitely. The concept of 'national printed archive' has been, slowly but firmly, extended and applied to all kinds of library materials, however ephemeral and meaningless.

The need for storage space among national libraries seems to have never been entirely satisfied, as a result of past acquisition policies, let alone with the current trends in publishing output. Given the finite resources in terms of both money and space it is hardly believable that so little attention and control has been given to the legal deposit intake. Enright (1989) argues: 'Eternal, unrestricted and even exponential expansion has been, and in some quarters still is, accepted as essential, inevitable and desirable. The assumption that a national library is not only to go on growing indefinitely, but that the larger it is the

better it becomes, places it as an activity not considered as being related to the nation's economic condition or political standing...'

New purpose-built buildings are being constructed to host the collections of both the BL and BN. The St Pancras building in London is going to bring together the majority of the scientific, technical and humanities reference services, now split across London in many different sites. Will the new building solve all storage problems ? According to Dr Clements,

'space, although always a problem, has not been seen as a prime mover in terms of deciding what the Library has or has not got. It currently has a new building under construction which will hold 330 km of shelving, and we know that when we move into that in about two-year's time, we will actually fill that building up completely and we will need some additional outstores, some remote stores in London and possibly in Yorkshire. And we are already planning to continue some of our existing buildings to provide a period of back-up. So, we don't, I think, in that sense regard space as a prime limitation. We obviously can have problems, but we don't basically control our accessions on the basis of space.'

Delayed for thirty years, the new £ 450 million building will provide 316 km of closed access shelving and 24 km of open access shelving (5 km H&SS reading room, 19 km S&T reading room) will be installed. The building will offer optimal conditions for storage under one roof. However, the original design on the St Pancras site was intended for a building which would house the London operations of the Library and which postulated construction in five stages. The Government decided not to give the money for the following phases, an integral part of the original plan, and the Treasury indeed wishes to sell the land that the Library might occupy (Coman:1991). So there will be no further expansion on this site.

Storage space now being provided (equivalent of 25 million volumes) will be fully utilised shortly after the Library is completed in 1996. With 18 million books in the old library already (The SRIS Newsletter speaks about 'the largest move in library history'), and with 100,000 books a year expected by 2000, the Library will indeed be full a few years after its scheduled opening, facing new storage problems, coupled with the same situation in Boston Spa. The concept of one London library has been eroded; to make best use of their resources the BL plans to use low cost storage elsewhere, to become more selective in the retention of material and to take into account relevant developments in information technology. And, according to the *BL News*, No 159, the National Sound Archive near the Royal Albert Hall and the Newspaper Library at Colindale will remain in their present locations.

For the time being, the BN is experiencing hard times, marked by an unprecedented deficiency of storage. There is not anywhere to put books and periodicals in the old building rue Richelieu, which holds 10-11 million volumes already. I visited the stacks in the *Département des livres imprimés* and it is very much doubtful whether the storage place available will last them until the moves. The BN is already using some remote stores outside Paris, e.g. in Versailles (periodicals of secondary interest, duplicates) and Provins (newspapers from the provinces). In 1988, President François Mitterrand announced the construction of 'one of the largest and technically advanced libraries in the world' (Gabel:1990) and indeed the new (however controversial) building is growing before our eyes with amazing speed. The new library, which is being built in the Tolbiac district of Paris, will consist of a vast public square, the corners of which are marked by four 80 m glass and steel towers, positioned like open books. The towers and sub-basements will hold up to 15 million books, with additional space of 30 per cent for expansion.

The BN - at least its major departments - is to be moved into the new library. All books will be transferred to *Bibliothèque de France (BDF)*, leaving the BN solely in possession of its manuscripts, engravings, coins and medals. The FF 5 billion building will receive books at the rate of about 100,000 volumes a year, and there are already 10-11 million volumes in the old library. So the library will inevitably soon become full. In all likelihood it has 25-40 years of 'shelving life' (estimates vary; Bernard & Popoff, BN), depending on whether one counts the 30 per cent for expansion or not. It appears that they will retain all buildings and remote stores, currently belonging to the Library.

In conclusion, it is evident that the prospects of the BN are somewhat better than those of the BL as far as space is concerned. Compared to the BL, the size of collections to be transferred into the new building, is smaller by one third at least. Their annual intake has been modest, limited to legal deposit plus a number of foreign works in humanities and social sciences. BDF can expand on the site, whereas the BL cannot because the land to the North will probably be sold off. Promptness of action on the French side is exemplary indeed; there is no point in delaying construction for decades - let alone reducing it to a half of what was initially intended - for by then you may well be overcome by the vast complexity of the task, just to mention the ever increasing size and variety of collections. Finally, the BL will have to vacate many of its existing buildings whereas the BN will carry on with what it already has. Furthermore, the BN does not operate a lending division as huge as the British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC); in fact, there exists *Centre national de prêt* in Troyes (Aube), which is part of the Library, but its document supply performance cannot be compared with that of the BLDSC.

3.3 DECAY

Conservation of the nation's publications is a traditional and accepted function of the national library. Books however have been found to be 'perishable goods' (Enright:1989) and are falling apart. National libraries have only recently set out to come to terms with the size of the conservation problem. Books printed before 1850 on rag paper stay flexible and tough, whereas books published since the mid-nineteenth century on wood pulp paper are being steadily eaten away by a high acid content which turns them yellow and eventually very fragile.

Being national printed archives, national libraries have to take into account a legal obligation to maintain it, which forms some 40 per cent of the collections in the BL (Clements:1988), therefore representing a major library responsibility. The Economist (1989) writes that nearly 40 per cent of the books stored in the Library of Congress will soon become too fragile to handle, and some 77,000 books enter the endangered category every year. The BL Humanities & Social Sciences collections total 11 million volumes, of which 1.6 million are in urgent need of treatment, and 60,000 volumes are being added to that backlog every year (Clements:1988). The BN carried out a survey of its collections as early as 1978 and eventually found out that out of 2 million books from the period 1875-1960 in the Department of Printed Books, 670,000 had reached a state of self-destruction that no longer permitted their use, and that another 600,000 were also wearing out. The situation was even worse with periodicals and newspapers in particular (Lethčve:1987). Additionally, modern books collections are as threatened as those from the previous century: equally disturbing are the figures for books published this century, even for those issued in the fifties (King:1990).

Yet with every passing year the task of conserving library materials gets harder, as collections grow and get older. Victims of their own good intentions, national libraries have to deal with the fact that in the past they have failed to relate their acquisition policies to retention and preservation of library materials. They now have to face much higher costs in terms of retention and preservation. Enright (1989) argues that 'there is disturbing evidence that the mismatch of resources for acquisition and retention will become more acute and lead to a progressive deterioration in the Library's collections and services'. Also, 'all over the world library authorities and chief librarians are giving priority to the maintenance of services at the expense of cuts in acquisitions and conservation and if the national library does not reverse the priority there will be an irredeemable loss to posterity' (Wilson:1987).

3.4 FUNDING & ACQUISITION BUDGETS

National libraries in most developed Western countries have not been having an easy time. In times of economic recession and sharp cuts in public sector expenditure they must share poverty together with the rest of the cultural institutions, education , health services etc. Seen as exceedingly expensive institutions, they are no longer taken for granted, as a matter of national pride, worthy of one hundred per cent subsidy. So Government funding has tended to, and still does , decline in real terms. Moreover, under the current pressures from the Government, national libraries are increasingly pushed to generate more money in order to earn at least a part of their own keep. In this way, they are advised to focus attention on income-generating activities, especially 'value-added' services. According to Dr Clements,

'the Library currently spends about a £ 100 million a year budget, earns about £ 30 million. And we reckoned that the things we wanted to do over the next decade will probably need an investment of between £ 30-50 million. And we already are quite aware that we won't get any more money from our Government. We will be lucky to maintain level funding and though being pushed by the Government to earn more money, we will never earn that much more money to be able to pay for such things. Therefore, we were asked to undertake a review of all the Library's operations and services, the lot, without any limitations..., coming up and trying to identify areas where cash could be saved or where things which we did, were felt to be of lower priority and therefore could be considered to be stopped or reduced to the size where resources redirected to those areas we wanted to take part in'.

Thus, national libraries are more often than not forced to alter their strategic plan objectives and mission statements. Priorities in terms of services, collection management, preservation, computing facilities, and staff development are submitted to severe reviews. One of the most obvious and sensitive areas is without doubt represented in collection management with acquisitions of library materials.

Dr Clements: 'Finance... has been probably the largest single factor which has limited the extent of our acquisitions over the last ten years. ... And we can go back on our statistics, we can see that over the past ten years, the amount of money we have had for acquisitions, taking into account inflation and exchange rate variations, has been reduced by about half what it was ten years ago. So that's a 50 per cent cut in what we can afford to buy. ... And we have just this year seen some slight improvement, and in terms of our strategic objectives we certainly do want to substantially increase the amount of money we spend on acquisitions and incidentally on conservation, the two run in parallel to some extent. But having that as a strategic objective and actually achieving that is another matter.'

Between 1985/86 and 1989/90, the BL acquisitions budget declined in real terms by 16 % to £ 8,821,000, 'its lowest level since the establishment of the BL in 1973/74' (Stephens:1992), notwithstanding book and serial price rises running ahead of general inflation, exchange rate changes and increased publishing output. In the same period, acquisitions of books for the H&SS division dropped by 20 %, and SRIS suspended several hundred subscriptions to high-use periodicals. In 1992/93 Dr Clements estimates the value of the total acquisitions at £ 11 million, of which £ 3 million is represented by the equivalent value of the legal deposit material, 'which actually you don't have to pay cash for', so the working budget dropped again to about £ 8 million for purchase. Expenditure on preservation between 1986/87 and 1989/90 had declined in real terms by over 30 % as well (Stephens:1992). And we have already discussed in some depth attitudes of the Government towards St Pancras building, where the original plan would have allowed storage until the year 2030, and the BL now has to make do with severely diminished capacities. Day (1992) contrasts the finances of the new BN in Paris, where the French Government was allocating £ 200 million for development, of which £ 50 million was specifically for automation projects, while the BL 'had not received a penny.' It is therefore likely that computing facilities will be at some risk, for the number of terminals may have to be reduced.

The BL admits that substantial funds had to be diverted from the acquisition and preservation budgets to support programmes of its transition to St Pancras, which had been given high priority. It now plans to fully restore budgets for the core programmes of acquisitions, preservation and research grants (For scholarship, research and innovation:1992), but we are more inclined to rely on comments provided by Dr Clements, who addresses plainly the conflict between limited resources and the demand for them, underlining the existing gap in between, which is anything but easy to overcome.

Influence of financial restraints is heavily felt and collection policies are being critically reassessed elsewhere, too. The National Library of Australia (NLA) and Canada (NLC) are almost in line with the BL as to their acquisition budgets. They have to struggle between requirements dictated by the funding body and the user community. Barnes (1989) reports how seriously the NLA's effective purchasing power has been eroded: it was able to spend 90 % of its present acquisitions budget of \$ 5 million (out of a total NLA budget of about \$ 27 million) on overseas monographs and serials, but it would have to spend \$ 14 million to collect overseas material as comprehensively as it did in 1970. Even the \$ 5 million would need to be increased by at least \$ 1 million a year, to keep up the present rate of acquisitions. The NLC has decided, as a result of the declining purchasing power of its book budget, and the necessity of maintaining and enriching the Canadiana collections, to reduce its foreign acquisitions and to develop in-depth research support services around a relatively limited number of areas. The Library aims to achieve an acceptable level of availability of the world's publications: this means further dependence on resource sharing, nationally and internationally (Scott & Phillips:1991).

Having said this, it is all the more surprising to see projects for *Bibliothèque de France* (BDF) going on so smoothly, as if France had been untouched by the recession. Since President Mitterrand has been in office (1981), Paris has seen a proliferation of monumental buildings mainly in the cultural area (*Grande Arche*, The Louvre Pyramid, *Opéra Bastille*) and BDF is probably going to be his last and most impressive achievement. In contrast to many other countries, in France the task has obviously been 'to articulate political will' (Scott & Phillips:1991) over any other.

Only a decade ago however we could witness another, totally different situation in the old BN. An article by Lethčve (1987), originally published at the beginning of 1984 when the idea of expansion had yet to be conceived, pointed alarmingly at the budget: 'unquestionably low if it is compared to that of other great libraries', and furthermore, 'in the present situation, which is aggravated by the paucity of its funds, the BN is constrained to make austere choices', so, 'improvements in this area are hoped for'. For example, matching the amount of money spent on acquisitions other than legal deposit in 1988/89, the budget of the BN comes only to about a half of what the BL H&SS division spent, FF 7,75 million (24,324 monographs) and £ 2.5 million (49,998 monographs), respectively (Simon:1993). As soon as the FF 5 billion construction had been announced, the State was ready to invest heavily and the BN acquisitions rate took a sharp turn upwards.

In 1989, simultaneous to the beginning of work, the *Etablissement public de la Bibliothèque de France* (EPBF) was established to run everything in connection with the new building. Fed by extra funds from the Government, it operates independently as well as in co-operation with the BN, as the need arises. One of the areas requiring close co-operation is foreign acquisitions: EPBF has the money and the BN has the necessary expertise, so the BN carries out the acquisitions programme on behalf of the BDF. EPBF has released FF 50 million to the BN in order to fill in the gaps as well as to start collections from scratch in areas not covered under current selection criteria. Thus the BN operates two different acquisitions budgets: one continues to build upon the areas of traditional strength, whereas the other is intended to cover the needs of BDF.

It is the goal of BDF to open with a strong initial collection, therefore purchase of monographs and periodicals which are to be shelved in open access (400,000 volumes by 1995, 900,000 when completed), are given high priority. The

programme anticipates 400,000 acquisitions in four years, '*c'est sans précédent*' indeed (La lettre d'information No 10, BDF:1993), and 103,000 volumes have already been bought. All things considered, the acquisition rate in the BN has doubled between 1988/89 and 1992 (FF 12.9 million, 43,400 monographs; Simon:1993), and it seems that it will continue to grow.

The date for the BDF's inauguration was set a long time ago: spring 1995, as at that time Mitterrand's second seven-years term of office comes to a close (Gabel:1990). In the meantime, the Library has to take advantage of the auspicious circumstances, because it is uncertain how fortunes might change under the succeeding Government.

4 COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

4.1 LEGAL DEPOSIT

There is wide-spread consensus that 'the most fundamental task of a national library is to acquire, preserve and make accessible the publications of the country' (Sylvestre:1987), thus making available the whole of the intellectual and cultural heritage of the country for the present and the future. Ideally, the national library collections of national literature should be as comprehensive as possible; they should include publications in all subjects, forms and languages. Publications collected by national libraries usually include books, journals, official publications, newspapers, printed music, ephemera, manuscripts of national interest. Often they take foreign materials relating to the country, but seldom non-book materials in a systematic way.

Building collections of such national importance and size cannot rely on purchases or even gifts alone. To ensure a comprehensive collection and preservation of the nation's information products in the form of a permanent record national Governments require via legal means that all publications are received by the national library. Such an arrangement is known as 'legal deposit', and it forms the basis of national collection development and library services (national bibliographic service, statistical control of publishing, bibliographic information centre, exchange of records with other similar institutions).

In the UNESCO *Guidelines for national libraries* (1987), Sylvestre uses Lunn's definition of legal deposit as 'the requirement, enforceable by law, to deposit with one or more specified agencies copies of publications of all kinds reproduced in any medium by any process for public distribution, lease, or sale'.

Details of the deposit law may vary greatly from one country to another, owing to the great variety of social, economic and political systems, as well as to the different historical and cultural background. There are countries with a more than 400-year long history of legal deposit (France), and on the other hand, many countries do not have legally prescribed deposit of publications (Switzerland). The act usually defines (Crews:1988) :

1. what materials are subject to the requirement,
2. who deposits the materials,
3. when are deposits required,
4. how many copies of each publication must be deposited,
5. where are deposits made,
6. how are they enforced,
7. what is the relation of legal deposit to copyright protection.

The national libraries investigated in this study are the BN and BL, so legal deposit legislation in France and United Kingdom will be examined. Both laws will be scrutinised in terms of coverage, depositors, number of copies (centralisation or decentralisation), timeliness and efficiency. Deposit of new media, as a special area of interest, will be looked into, as there is no obligation to deposit non-book material in the UK.

4.1.1 Coverage

France is the oldest legal deposit institution in the world. It was established by François I in 1537. Originally it covered only printed books, but was later extended to include newspapers, prints, posters, photographs, musical scores,

maps and charts, etc. Legal deposit needs to be comprehensive, aiming to apply to all identifiable publications.

At present, the law of 21 June 1943 (Garretta:1990), supplemented by several recent amendments, makes it obligatory for publishers and printers to deposit with the BN a total of seven copies of every publication from their firm or their printing company that is to be sold or distributed. The only exception is *les travaux de ville* (Memento des règles du dépôt légal, BN:1992), that is, printed material ordered by a private individual for his or her own use. On the other hand, the obligation includes *all* printed material, whatever form it is in, and as a result includes leaflets, posters, postcards, stamps, as well as bulletins of organisations or department store catalogues. Moreover, even coins and medals get deposited in France.

As to new media, the law has been amended several times so far (Garretta:1990): in 1963 sound recordings were added; naturally, tapes and more recently compact discs were submitted to the same amendment as had been previously added for records. In 1975-77 the law was extended to all moving pictures (films, videos, multimedia); however, radio and TV broadcasts are still excluded. In 1992, another law was passed, dealing with computer software, databases, CD-ROMs, *didacticiels* (educational software). Though not applicable yet, it postulates deposit of those materials on a selective basis - *dépôt sélectif* (Bernard & Popoff, BN). Members of the BN staff pointed at the delicacy of deposit which is inextricably bound up with the complexity of ownership and intellectual property issues. Several expert committees have been established in order to define suitable criteria for deposit in this tricky area.

Legal deposit in the UK dates in essence from the late 18th century but actual law under which it takes place was last amended in 1911 (Cornish:1990). The

Copyright Act 1911, Section 15, which covers legal deposit, excludes anything which is not printed on paper. The seven articles indeed deal with expressions like 'book, newspaper, review, magazine, pamphlet, maps', etc. Not surprisingly, not having been updated since 1911, the concept of legal deposit was then linked to printed material as there was no other media around, and only recently we have seen some attempts to bring into consideration all the new information carriers. The British Library Act 1972 gave the Library responsibility for the collection of materials 'whether printed or not' (Stephens:1992), still there is no legal ground to get hold of a copy of non-traditional formats. While waiting for changes, the BL encourages voluntary deposit and donations, and finance permitting, it also purchases a part of the production.

Major concern over the fact that the BL does not collect systematically publications in non-traditional formats, has gone as far as accusing the Library of direct and serious neglect (Croghan:1986). The BL is aware of increasing inadequacies of legal deposit provisions in UK for retention of a comprehensive national archive of recorded thought as new media emerge. According to Dr Clements, the Library will continue to urge the Government to extend legal deposit provisions to cover electronic documents and audio-visual and multimedia materials.

For the time being, archival collections of audio-visual materials are fragmented in their organisation and funding. In many areas such as computer software, mixed media and electronic publishing, there are no organised archives to receive deposited material. The situation is somewhat better with recorded sound, broadcasts, film and video, but these arrangements also rely on voluntary agreements and limited budgets for purchasing (Cornish:1990).

4.1.2 Depositors

In the UK, the law places the duty to deposit directly on the publisher. In this way, all materials published in the country get deposited. By contrast, the French law requires printers to make deposits as well. By the combination of *dépôt légal éditeurs* and *dépôt légal imprimeurs* the Library obtains not only publications for distribution in France, but those printed in the country and intended for distribution elsewhere as well (300-400 titles per year; Popoff, BN). In addition, publishers are required to deposit copies of publications printed abroad, which will eventually be distributed in France, too.

The scope of collections, received through legal deposit, is obviously defined on a wider basis: the BN wishes to obtain all French publications issued, for example, in Belgium or Switzerland, that appear in the French market. That kind of exercise would hardly be feasible with the BL because in the case of English publications the task would seem endless.

4.1.3 Number of copies & distribution

The BL is the national library for the UK and, in accordance with legal deposit regulations, it should receive one copy of every national imprint published in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. However strange it may appear, when Eire became an independent republic in 1921, the right of Dublin's Trinity College to claim copies of British books was maintained; in return, the UK copyright libraries receive Irish publications (Sylvestre:1987). One copy of the publication *must* be deposited with the Copyright Receipt Office (Enright:1989), which forwards it to the BL. Most of the legal deposit material finds its way to H&SS, except for items selected by SRIS. There are five other copyright (or indeed

legal deposit) libraries in the UK and the Republic of Ireland: the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the University Library, Cambridge; the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; the National Library of Wales, Cardiff; and the Library of Trinity College in Dublin. They have the authority to request deposit of most works, making them thus *selective* depository libraries (Crews:1988).

There are the six major research libraries in the UK and Ireland. On the one hand, there exists one centralised, 'main' national library that receives everything, and on the other hand, there are five more substantial legal deposit collections, shaped on a selective basis, underpinning a decentralised concept of legal deposit. The aim of this combination is to support one strong centralised and comprehensive collection and, at the same time, five other research collections scattered all over the country in order to ease availability of information. Apart from that, Dr Clements argues that 'by having a large part of materials stored in five or six other libraries does provide you some security against user use, some security in preservation. So it has advantages which happen to be historical quirks rather than any logical reasons starting it off'.

It is believed that France has the most sophisticated legal deposit legislation. A total of seven copies of every publication is required to be deposited (works with a press run of less than 300 copies - generally *de luxe* editions - are deposited in a reduced number, usually one copy from each source; the same for reprinted editions without any alterations). Publishers are requested to deposit one copy directly to the *Ministère de l'Intérieur, Régie du dépôt légal* (a Governmental agency), and four to the BN. Printers deposit two copies of each work to the local provincial library which forwards one copy to the BN, and may keep the other. There is a network of 20 provincial libraries (*'bibliothèques municipales'*) involved in the exercise.

The BN keeps only one copy. *Centre national de prêt* also receives one copy of legal deposit. Two copies go to the *Service des échanges internationaux*, department at the BN: multiple copies strengthen the Library's exchange resources and improve means for obtaining foreign works (Bernard & Popoff, BN; also *Memento des règles du dépôt légal*, BN:1992).

Legal deposit in France is highly centralised: it aims to develop one strong national research collection. Of course, provincial libraries do get a copy of publications printed in their geographic area. This can be extremely useful in the coverage of local publications which tend to be out of control for a library situated in the capital. It appears that provincial libraries tend to assume the function of outstanding research centres for local studies, without however any ambition to become a major research library at the national level. Anyway, the system is designed in order to make sure that at least one copy of every publication reaches Paris. Additionally, with the aid of *contrôle croisé* between *dépôt légal éditeurs* and *dépôt légal imprimeurs* the BN is in a convenient position to discover legal evasion of printers or publishers or both.

4.1.4 Timeliness & efficiency

Timeliness of legal deposit is of utmost importance: if publications are not acquired quickly, it may be impossible to acquire them at all, which might happen with low press runs and the like. In the UK publishers are required to deposit copies within a month after publication (Enright:1989). By contrast, the French law demands deposits be made:

- 48 hours before distribution for books deposited directly, and three days before distribution for books deposited by mail; immediately before distribution for periodicals (*dépôt légal éditeurs*);

- immediately after the printing has been completed, both for books and periodicals (*dépôt légal imprimeurs*; Memento des règles du dépôt légal, BN:1992).

Even when legal deposit is effective, no national library contains *every* book or journal published in the country. Furthermore, deposit systems for library materials, whether compulsory or not, are often proved to be slow and this leads to delay in creating bibliographic records and national bibliographies which are supposed to be current, keeping pace with the on-going publishing output. Sometimes deposits arrive after a considerable delay, and usually after the library has made a claim, sometimes they do not arrive at all. The library finds itself in an awkward position where it must purchase a given title (if it has not yet gone out of print): fines on violators are so small and 'legal action far exceeds the cost of simply buying the book' (Crews:1988).

The BN claims to receive 95-100 % of all publications. According to Mr Popoff, the BN obtains 50 % within ten days of the publication date, 30 % within a month, 10 % within a quarter and another 10 % within a year. A considerable amount of material which should be deposited with the BL, is not received either: estimates vary from 10-30 % (Enright:1989; also Clements, BL). National libraries therefore have to dedicate valuable staff time and experience to the task of discovering newly published and not (yet) deposited publications. The nearly 100 % success of the BN is unquestionably due to more staff time in this effort (Enright:1989). On the other hand, a great deal of

materials is received which the Copyright Act does not require to be deposited (trade literature, unaltered second editions). The BL does not pursue ephemera, nor does the BN. Flexibility is essential with publications of lesser value and interest, as well as with unwanted publications, therefore they may be simply and consciously never obtained.

Collecting must also be done locally (local magazines, local government publications, newspapers, etc.). France has developed a highly successful network of provincial libraries, in charge of the regional *dépôt légal imprimeurs*. Yet the BL misses a good deal of local and ephemeral material. In addition, it does not acquire systematically non-book material (with the exception perhaps of sound recordings). Thus bibliographic control cannot be substantially improved without a more comprehensive legal deposit law.

4.1.5 Review of legal deposit legislation in the UK and France

There exists a significant difference between legal deposit laws in the UK and France; firstly, as far as coverage of library materials is concerned. The BL collects printed material, whether copyrighted or not, indeed carrying on the tradition of '*national printed archive*', but there is no organised deposit of any non-book media (microforms, computer software, motion pictures, etc.). The BN covers imprints of every nature, regardless of copyright. It makes efforts to include also works, printed in France and intended for distribution abroad as well as material, printed abroad and distributed in the country. France is far more advanced in acquiring deposit of audio-visual media, having updated legal obligations as new media have come out. As a matter of fact, the BN can claim to hold a totally comprehensive collection of audio-visual materials published in

the country, and to be one of the few countries to have succeeded in enforcing deposit of those items.

Indeed, 'it is difficult to see why the desirability of collecting audio-visual materials should be in any more doubt than the desirability of collecting printed materials' (Pinion: 1989). Today, when information is communicated by a variety of formats (and technology is constantly changing), it would therefore seem logical to extend the policy of deposit to include non-print materials as well. Another question is whether national libraries, often without relevant expertise and technique, are best placed to collect new media. But it goes without saying that they should take the initiative in changing current attitudes towards this kind of library material.

Concerns over levels of comprehensiveness in terms of materials covered by legal deposit, have been expressed not only in the UK, but also elsewhere, and new information carriers appear to be one of the predominant collection issues. As a result of an arduous campaign a new legal deposit act was passed in Norway in 1989 (Rugaas:1990), the most interesting aspect being the provision for deposit of published material in all forms: printed material (including report literature) in up to seven copies, audio-visual media and electronic publications in up to two copies, and broadcasts (sound and vision) in one copy. With the new building, the BL is now acquiring appropriate storage conditions for audio-visual media, therefore it should urgently seek solutions that address the problems associated with a multimedia approach to legal deposit, thus improving substantially bibliographic control and availability of the current publishing output.

In terms of variety and percentage of material collected, the BN is again more advanced. Legal requirements are tougher and it has also developed a more

efficient system for claiming. *Contrôl croisé* enables the Library to detect legal fraud, at the same time enhancing the coverage of local publications. Articles in the legal deposit act are all centred around the BN in order to provide it with as many copies as possible. *Centre national de prêt* gets one copy 'free', whereas the BL has to buy an extra copy for the BLDSC. In addition, the international exchange programme is endowed with two 'free' copies, while the BL has to assign special funds to support its giant exchange system.

All in all, both legal deposit systems tend somewhat to decentralise, especially with regard to materials of local interest. In the UK, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales have already taken on some responsibilities in collecting local imprints (Clements, BL), while in France provincial libraries co-operate in an improved coverage, but are as yet not assuming any other responsibilities in acquisition and retention.

In conclusion, a combination of centralised and decentralised deposit exists in the UK and France. Because of the way both systems have been put forward, one would be tempted to add that France has always been a strongly centralised state, which is reflected also in the legal deposit law. Paris equals France is still the governing and recognised maxim of the French. Contrarily to France and in accordance with the historic background, British legislation undeniably bears traces of the country's diverse origins: despite the fact that Stuarts came down in 1603, and England and Scotland officially unified in 1707, they are still felt as two different countries. Only Wales - though another country - has been regarded as a sort of annexe to England. In fact, the Copyright Act 1911 does not put its library quite at the same level as the other copyright libraries. Obviously the idea of a single country still has not been internalised among people and it is doubtful whether it is ever going to be. Therefore we have National Library of Scotland and National Library of Wales, though in the light

of UNESCO Guidelines (1987) national libraries 'serving one region or linguistic group' should not be considered as 'proper' national libraries.

4.2 ACQUISITIONS OTHER THAN LEGAL DEPOSIT

Many national libraries possess the most outstanding research collections of foreign literature in the country, which is recognised as one of their basic functions. These collections, however, may vary greatly in scope and depth. The collections of a national library may be sometimes restricted to the national imprint, to foreign publications on the country, including translations of books by national authors, and books published abroad by national authors. For example, the National Library of Switzerland in Berne limits itself only to what has just been specified (Sylvestre:1987). Those libraries indeed carry out a policy of comprehensiveness in covering imprints in close relation to what represents the nation they serve. Some national libraries go well beyond this and, by tradition, aim at a wide general collection of material published throughout the world - the universal library concept - thus providing encyclopaedic reference and lending services to the nation's researchers and readers. Conspicuous examples are the Library of Congress, and, to a lesser extent, the BL. Alone among the world's great libraries, the Library of Congress still attempts to be a universal library, collecting printed materials and almost all media, according to the belief that all subjects are important to the library of the American legislature and therefore to the American people (Sylvestre:1987).

On the other hand, in many countries there exist strong collections in other libraries and dedicated specialised information centres, which supplement existing research collections in the national library. For instance, in the United

States there are two huge libraries of national and international importance, dealing with medicine and agriculture. It appears that most national libraries are involved in science and technology, but less actively, at least so far as services and use are concerned, than in humanities and social sciences. In fact, national libraries tend 'to have a strong bias towards the humanities and social sciences' (Line:1988a), based on the assumption that 'humanities literature represents the national culture in a way that science does not'. Thus national libraries tend to develop in-depth research collections in these areas of knowledge, but only basic, reference collections in science and technology, if any at all.

It has already been stated that national libraries can no longer aspire to being comprehensive in their coverage of the world's literature. National and international acquisition and retention strategies have been put forward in order to 'maximise the use of human, financial and physical resources available by ensuring that most research libraries complement one another as much as possible' (Sylvestre:1987). National library collection policies are being reassessed in the light of the role of the library and the realities of funding levels. Limited budgets alone may be responsible for consideration of what and how much the library can afford to collect, preserve and make available.

4.2.1 The British Library

The BL receives a grant to purchase foreign and older books, manuscripts, publications of many international bodies and foreign governments. As a national library, the BL is unique in dividing its resources equally between humanities and social sciences on the one hand, and science and technology on the other. This is reflected in elaborate acquisition policies for each of its major branches. The BL's Strategic Plan, 1993-2000, determines the priorities

underlying the Library's collection development policies. In humanities and social sciences these priorities 'will be centred upon our function as library of last resort, recognising the important roles that academic and public libraries play as libraries of first instance'. The priorities set out in *For scholarship, research and innovation* for acquisition of research materials at H&SS are:

1. English language material, including material published overseas, where the Library will seek to be as comprehensive as possible;
2. European language material, with emphasis upon works of historical and cultural importance, but with recognition of the importance of ease of access to major research collections of national imprints in Western Europe, especially France, Germany and Holland where collaboration might influence and modify policy; and
3. building on the specific excellences of the Oriental collections, in co-ordination with other centres of excellence in the United Kingdom and Western Europe, to ensure maximum access and availability of materials in a range of languages and from major centres of cultural importance. Where the Library has important collections for the teaching of a language and its literature, including its cultural literature, these will be maintained and developed as last/first resort collections to provide a permanent resource even where teaching and research may be limited for a period in the universities.

In science, technology and medicine, the Library will continue to be a library of first and last resort; last resort for those readers whose primary resource should remain their university, company or public library; first resort for those who have no good, readily-available local access or where the Library is the only convenient source for certain material such as patents. The main principles of acquisitions in science, technology and medicine are as follows:

1. significant coverage of serials of research level, wherever published;
2. significant coverage of English language books of research level, wherever published;
3. significant coverage of the world's patent literature;
4. significant coverage of the world's conference literature of research level in English;
5. selected coverage of other grey literature of research interest.

Some national libraries see it as their role to provide what is essentially a lending collection to support a document supply system. In the UK, this system relies on a significant proportion being satisfied from a central collection (BLDSC), combined with a network of co-operative schemes operated by other libraries. The BLDSC, with its not only national, but supranational impact as well, is the largest library in the world devoted to document delivery. In 1991/92 it received 3.4 million requests, of which some 800,000 were from overseas (24 %), and 88 % of requests were provided from its own stock (Facts & Figures, BL:1992). The BLDSC collections are intended exclusively for interlibrary lending; they are not based on legal deposit collections, so BLDSC have no archival responsibilities whatsoever. The BL must buy all materials acquired under current selection criteria and more often than not the BLDSC collections duplicate those in London. Line (1984) claims that 'a truly effective national document supply system must include provision as well as supply, it must ensure that documents likely to be wanted are acquired'. The BLDSC therefore collects in anticipation of demand:

1. items in heavy demand, which are likely to be present in other libraries: mainstream serials and English language books, wherever published; and
2. material that is not acquired, or cannot be assumed to be acquired, by other libraries but for which some demand exists: report literature, conference proceedings, official publications, theses, microform

research collections, translations, local government material, and music scores (Horne:1989).

Apart from English language collections, its major strength is its grey literature collection, i.e. non-conventional literature, in fact semi-published material which cannot readily be obtained through normal book selling channels. Recreational material is not collected.

The BL recognises that its own resources are severely limited and that it must practise increasing selectivity in its approach to collection development. An area, which clearly demonstrates attempts to rationalise stock and services, is that of duplicating library materials within the Library and its divisions. Several years ago it was accepted that a determined corporate approach to collection management had to take place to avoid wasteful duplication of low-use materials, and that rigid departmental autonomy, the heritage of a multisite development, would have to be modified or disappear altogether. Therefore, the Library began to apply the principle of 'common stock', whereby a single copy of a publication was to support both reference use in London and document supply to remote users from Boston Spa. This policy began to be implemented during 1985/86 and it is seen as 'a real step towards reviewing the BL's collections as a single collection and towards greater exploitation of little-used material within its holdings' (Stephens:1992). Nevertheless a level of duplication was still required for the very reason that service performance in many cases simply could not be downgraded. Besides, the common stock approach does not include items published in the UK already received by legal deposit.

Controversial views are held on duplicates. Wilson (1987) argues that 'there is a familiar illusion amongst laymen, especially those responsible for allocating resources to libraries, that the duplication of books is wasteful, but librarians

know that the cost of acquisitions is a small part of the total investment'. Indeed recent developments, especially the discovery and implementation of life-cycle costing in library matters as well (this will be discussed more at length in the retention section), have shown that major costs for libraries are hidden elsewhere.

In 1992/93 the BL had a general budget of about £ 8 million for purchases. According to Dr Clements,

'there was a total amount of about £ 2.5 million spent on buying duplicates and material we got by other means. The large part of this was obviously because of duplicates for lending purposes. That is a lot of money. And if you look at the funds, we reckon that probably something like about £ 400,000 were being spent on non-English duplicates. In another words, that excluded all copyright duplicates. And £ 400,000 a year is a lot of money. Therefore one of the things we've been doing is looking to see how far we could reduce the level of acquisitions... From that point of view we would, I think, accept that duplication is only valid in those areas where it is absolutely essential, and that is... to support the service. And in many cases we may only want to spend that money for a short period of time, while there is a peak in demand and to get rid of it afterwards; if we could find some ways of avoiding spending that money for a short period of time, we also save quite a bit of cash. Now the theory is you could cut down the level of duplication, but probably you reduce service performance standards and will that be acceptable. If you try to get other people to help you out, which is difficult because they only have one copy anyway, and they get overloaded, or you could look for greater production of material in digitised format which is where the future will come, but that is going to be quite a number of years'.

Arising from that, the BLDSC apparently seems to be the one to 'blame' for a high level of duplication in copyright materials. Anyway one would be almost tempted to say that at the moment duplication, though being a very expensive venture, obviously and paradoxically pays off, which can easily be spotted in the

amount of income SRIS and BLDSC in particular generate (the Library currently earns 30 % of its operating expenditure from the provision of priced services).

Line (1986) sees the development of the BL's collections as a 'tripartite system': there is a dedicated reference collection, consisting of items on which restrictions have to be placed and works in common demand; to a great extent it is based on legal deposit. Then we have a dedicated loan/photocopy collection, consisting of items receiving medium to heavy demand; it is based on purchase with an extensive portion of duplicates in common with the reference collection. And a common stock of less-used but not intrinsically valuable materials, available for both consultation and remote supply.

4.2.2 Bibliothèque nationale

Like a great many other national libraries, the BN acquires works outside the legal deposit area through purchase, exchange and gifts. These kind of acquisitions are carried out by the *Département des entrées étrangères* which I visited on June 11, 1993 and had a very useful conversation with Mrs Simon, Head of the Department.

Contrary to the BL and Library of Congress in particular, acquisition priorities of the BN have been much more narrowly defined not only in terms of size but also in scope and coverage of numerous fields of human knowledge, at least insofar as the 20th century is concerned. Because nearly all the books published in France come into the BN through legal deposit, purchases are concerned with very limited categories. For French works it is usually a matter of extra or of replacement copies, sometimes very old titles that eluded legal deposit.

Restrictions have been set on the BN's acquisition programmes for foreign works, thus limiting its policies to the field of humanities and social sciences with priority for books concerning the history of France or of the French people, or those written in the French language. An exception is made for some of the essential books in pure sciences. Second, restrictions are made to the most widely spoken languages, but this now includes Russian, Arabic, or Japanese.

However, the BN used to collect much more universally, during the 18th and 19th centuries, and '*une volonté d'encyclopédisme*' (Simon:1993) had always been appreciated and implemented. Readers could consult there the best of world production, which was limited, it is true, to the most important works from neighbouring European countries. Chronically underfunded, the BN's programme had of necessity changed towards the end of the 19th century, having been shaped in its definite form by 1950. The universal library concept was eventually abandoned and the collection of publications in science and technology left to university and special libraries. The BN continued to build in-depth research collections in the following areas: philosophy, theology, sociology, ethnology, linguistics, philology, arts, literature, history, geography and psychology. It nevertheless maintained comprehensiveness in providing reference collections for consultation *in situ* (Simon:1993). One of the traditional and major strengths of the Library has always been the provision of research collections in humanities and social sciences in foreign languages from all over the world, as Simon (1993) puts it: '*Les acquisitions dans les 'langues moins courantes' sont une tradition ancienne à la BN*', calling for the necessity to build upon what the Library already has accumulated in its collections.

Current selection criteria of the BN are going to change in a significant manner, thanks to the projects for BDF. A strictly humanities and social sciences oriented library will, given special acquisition budgets to support future extended services, fill in the gaps retrospectively and try to collect more universally, in this way compensating for its delay when compared to the BL and Library of Congress. In fact, this means a general movement away from humanities and social sciences, and return to and renaissance of the '*idéal encyclopédique*' thus starting off a policy of opening to all fields of human knowledge.

In close collaboration with the BN, the EPBF is actually busy developing a massive acquisitions plan which will continue up to 1995, when the opening of BDF at Tolbiac site is scheduled. Emphasis is put on foreign publishing output, which has had to be neglected as far back as the beginning of this century for lack of finance. Publications covered are naturally interpreted in the broadest sense and include non-book material as well as electronic media. In 1992, the EPBF funds made it possible to acquire 77,930 books, 24,000 microfiches, 5,202 microfilms, 2,700 periodical titles, and 20 CD-ROMs (Le livre d'heures de la BDF:1992) just for the needs of BDF. The rate of acquisitions has doubled and the number of newly subscribed periodicals and CD-ROMs is progressively rising.

The essential task of the EPBF is to provide nearly 900,000 volumes intended to be shelved in an open access, of which some 440,000 research level and the rest for the public level, which everybody will be granted access to. About one third open access will offer literature in French, and the other two thirds in other languages. Since a switch to organisation by subject is envisaged - with the aim to cover every single subject - this inevitably means a sort of '*menace de monopole anglo-saxon*' (Simon, BN), at the expense of research collections

notably in less frequent languages, so carefully built under current selection criteria, for English literature now dominates almost all fields of knowledge outside humanities and social sciences. Mrs Simon expressed major concern about that (*c'est travailler comme une bibliothèque universitaire*'), calling for the need to continue and even extend and deepen those areas of traditional strength and richness. It would therefore appear that there exists a wide-spread reluctance and scepticism at the BN towards the new acquisition policy, encompassed within the EPBF guidelines, which has recently found its most eloquent and ardent verbalisation in an article, published by Simon (1993) herself.

Obviously it is not the BN that pulls the strings, but the EPBF which also demands a sharp reorganisation of the selection process. So far this has been performed through specialists in particular linguistic groups. A switch is now foreseen to the concept of subject specialists. Interestingly enough, the same problem has been encountered at the BL, where 'there has traditionally been a reluctance to accept the idea of subject specialists because of a concern that they would cut across the current responsibilities of staff in the language groups' (Enright:1989).

5 RETENTION POLICIES

5.1 LEGAL DEPOSIT: COMPREHENSIVENESS OR NOT ?

It has been stated early on that national libraries, by their nature which has been shaped and moulded through a long period of their existence, like to be all-inclusive. They have been assigned the archival function of a comprehensive treasury of a nation's past and current printed documents. To be able to collect as comprehensively as possible, they urged their Governments to ensure legal ground for publishers and printers to deposit a copy of each of their titles with a central collecting library. The national libraries' guiding principle in acquisition and retention policies has been subsumed in an endless mission to keep everything for-ever. However, these good intentions have lapsed in the midst of present excruciatingly difficult constraints they are confronted with.

Legal deposit is 'the first culprit' (The Economist:1989). Namely national libraries have no control whatsoever over the current flood of publishing output. In most developed Western countries this is set to rise at a rate of 10 per cent *a year*. A major area for concern has become the automatic acceptance of all legal deposit items, without any filter: 'Intake on this scale, if unselected and uncontrolled, is likely to create imbalance, to absorb an ever-increasing proportion of finite resources far in excess of the value of the legal deposit privilege, while threatening the acquisition of foreign research materials and the maintenance of existing collections' (Enright:1989). Voices expressing concern in terms of materials, pouring in which should be eventually excluded, are getting louder. Does everything have to be kept, anyway ? In some places, flexibility and selectivity seem to be recognised as the leading solutions.

Not surprisingly, one would be puzzled enough to ask why, all of a sudden, there is such a blast against legal deposit. After all, we have been talking about major efforts to take in as big a portion of legal deposit material as possible. We can nevertheless discern quite a reasonable justification underlying this phenomenon. On the one hand there is valuable, usually copyrighted publishing output, representing probably the largest number of all works which tend to elude the deposit regulations. The national library, of course, would like to score the highest possible percentage in the intake of those 'worthwhile' books, periodicals, etc., whatever form publications are in. It is therefore all the more amazing that, for example, in the States attempts have been put forward to alter the conditions of deposit. This means a radical shift from obligatory deposit of copyrighted material to a sort of voluntary deposit (Library of Congress:1993). Library officials surely oppose the new copyright legislation, which has come before the Senate already. On the other hand there are a great many publications which should not be deposited under current criteria, either because of modest intellectual content and ephemeral value, or in some cases it may be a matter of totally unchanged editions. That is 'the' area where some national libraries wish to limit their intake and certainly do not exert any energy in trying to get hold of these items.

Issues on national libraries' comprehensiveness seem to provoke controversial judgements. While many would like to reduce their intake, others 'see no reason why the national printed archives should not be as comprehensive as possible', with an exception perhaps for 'ephemera and local publications which escape the laws of deposit' (Wilson:1987). Both space and money being at premium, the BL has decided that not everything that is published can be kept or is worth keeping. It appointed Brian Enright, Librarian of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to carry out with the assistance of two BL staff a review of its acquisition and retention policies and practices. The review was initiated in

1987, and eventually published (1989) under the title: *Selection for survival*. The object of the review was to make a strategic assessment of the implications of the BL's current collecting policies both for meeting the future needs of researchers and for providing adequate storage beyond the year 2000. The study considered the principles underlying collection development in relation to practices throughout the library world; the physical volume of acquisitions and how technological progress may reduce the need for storage space; and how interlibrary lending and the concept of common stock can be used to support the nation's information needs.

The report noted that the Library's acquisition and retention policies tended not to be related, and that there was a conflict between maintaining existing holdings, and, given finite resources, securing the new acquisitions. Firstly, it was suggested the Library should give up unselected, mechanistic acquisitions as far as legal deposit - 'inertial acquisition' (Enright:1989) - is concerned. Namely the Copyright Receipt Office (CRO) , chronically understaffed, was receiving anything pouring in without paying any attention to material that should not have been deposited under the Copyright Act 1911 regulations. The amount of materials taken in clearly outpaced the BL's means to access, catalogue and store them. So the Library used to resort to the clustering of large quantities of material, hoping to handle it some time in the future. According to what has just been described, the CRO for many years ignored the Copyright Act's exclusion of unaltered reprint editions plus trade literature and some categories of ephemera. The Enright report of 1989 recommended the pre-selection and exclusion of these from the collection, stressing the costs ensuing from the decision to keep a book: those of processing and cataloguing, storage and preservation.

The report put forward a life-cycle costing technique to demonstrate and highlight the general principle of financial commitment involved in the retention of material and recommended both stricter control of duplication and greater application of selectivity and judgement in controlling unselected intake. Consequently, 'the cost of library materials can be compared to the visible tip of the iceberg seen from the sea, where, hidden beneath the surface, are a host of underlying costs contingent upon the acquisition of an item for the collection. These include the costs of selection, accessioning, cataloguing, preservation and storage' (Enright:1989).

Life-cycle costing is a concept which takes account of all the significant net expenditures arising during the ownership of an asset. It came originally from the defence areas, where the cost of purchasing a rocket or an aircraft was large, but the costs to maintain them were three or four times as much as the initial purchase (Clements, BL). The BL undertook some studies with the aid of life-cycle costing technique, showing very clearly that the storage cost for an item is actually a tiny part of the whole expenditure, amounting to about £ 1 a year. All the costs taken into consideration, from selection until disposal, it is the acquisition and cataloguing costs in particular where the large money comes - £ 50 per item. Dr Clements maintains that 'if you look at it properly, you have to think in terms of not just the one-off cost of selecting or buying, or the one-off cost disposing it, all the costs you put into them [books], cataloguing is usually a very expensive part of it. So we've certainly taken the view that we should take into account all of the costs associated with the total processing of a book. Because, particularly before they come in, we are saving substantial funds'. Basically, the life-cycle costing principle wants to draw attention to the scale of expenditure involved particularly with regard to deposited and donated material, commonly viewed as free acquisitions. But as we may have realised, they are anything but that.

The BL has taken on the responsibility for elimination of reprints and duplicates received through legal deposit. It will select material on life-cycle costing principles, with clear decisions being taken to acquire material either to meet an immediate and short-term demand (especially for duplicated material), or to meet the longer term objectives of the research collections and the national printed archive. Dr Clements says that

'we've been trying to reduce marginally what we take in by legal deposit. But this is really not a question of reducing the range of titles which we take, but trying to cut out those duplicate editions, of which there are many, which don't represent new editions. The simple examples which are easy to quote is where you get classical authors, reprinted again and again and again, where you get fiction authors coming out in two or three copies and I don't think it is generally considered worthwhile to duplicate the same title. That is an area where we've been trying to reduce. It is not an easy area to work with, it's quite a bit of staff effort'.

Lack of clear guidelines for selection or even rejection of some legal deposit materials has always been felt as a *great* problem. The Library is now looking at its ad hoc exclusion policy to formally say what it should not take, preparing strict guidelines for legal deposit material and its treatment, and stressing the need to apply them consistently. This is quite a tricky area to work with indeed and a time-consuming exercise because an efficient way of matching 'suspected' reprints/duplicates with originals has to be devised to find out whether the edition in hand is just the same as the previous one. Other copyright libraries in the UK have obviously come up with similar arrangements. In addition, there is no legal obligation for them to take everything as is the case of the BL, because they are free to pick up only what suits best their current selection criteria and other constraints. They may ask for a copy of every deposited material on a selective basis, so they have always been in a somewhat easier position. For

instance, The Economist (1989) reports that the Bodleian Library in Oxford 'now refuses to take comics, motor-cycle magazines, knitting patterns and pornographic weeklies, all of which it is offered as a matter of course'. It nevertheless dares not go much further.

In the light of the Enright recommendations, life-cycle costing calculations and the common stock principle, the BL has incorporated its altered attitudes towards retention into Strategic Plan 1993-2000, which reads:

'The Library's collection of material relating to British publishing output will be comprehensive for material of research interest, but will be increasingly selective for ephemeral material and for popular low-use reprints, as sampling replaces blanket acquisitions. We shall apply the principles of life-cycle costing in respect of retention of fringe material, and our acquisitions policies will be influenced by preservation policies rather than dictating them. In this area the Library will seek to co-ordinate its policies with those of the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales and the three other legal deposit libraries'.

Improved co-ordination with other copyright libraries has been set as one of the major objectives to achieve a national sharing of responsibilities. A sort of shared responsibility for archiving and lending already exists with regard to Scottish, Welsh, and Irish materials, for which the two national libraries and Trinity College in Dublin assume the primary responsibility. In co-operation with the UK copyright libraries the BL will seek to ensure comprehensive coverage, recording and preservation of all UK and Eire publications, agreeing where material of an ephemeral nature is best kept. Apart from co-operative retention of minor local English publications this means also an improved capture of local publications, which has always been a significant Library's area of difficulty. And a scheme has been initiated whereby the responsibility for national collection retention tends to decentralise still more. Thus each new non-core periodical is assigned to one or more, but not all, of the libraries.

However, this is easier said than done. Dr Clements comments that 'obviously there is to some extent a practical pragmatic sharing of responsibilities, so that all Welsh material is kept by the National Library of Wales and all Scottish material by the National Library of Scotland. But beyond that the amount of sharing is relatively small... because at the minute, we all get a copy free'.

The necessity of operating a form of selection, as opposed to accepting all material as it is offered, has been recognised in other national libraries with responsibilities for legal deposit. Rugaas (1990), national librarian of Norway, claims 'that a national library in the conventional form is no longer a self evident truth', calling for the need that more staff time should be designated to controlling legal deposit intake by implementation of clear guidelines for acceptance of material. The Enright report (1989) quotes two major Western libraries: the Deutsche Bibliothek (Frankfurt am Main) and the BN, pointing at the fact that both national libraries achieve a much higher rate of deposit than any in the UK. They are also far more advanced in the capture of audio-visual materials. Presumably both institutions work within strict formal guidelines and operate strict exclusion policies, coming up with formal grounds for exclusion. The Economist (1989) also writes about the BN having reached the same conclusion as the BL. It may well be so at the Deutsche Bibliothek, but during my visit to the BN in Paris, trying as hard as I could, I could not get any information to back up those published statements. In spite of my insistence both Mrs Bernard (who is the *Head* of Département des entrées françaises) and Mr Popoff (in charge of legal deposit) stressed in two separate conversations that this kind of practice had never been implemented at the BN, nor were they considering something like that. Even unchanged reprinted editions are required to be deposited, though in reduced numbers. They are eventually excluded

from the *Bibliographie nationale française*, and passed on to the *Service des échanges internationaux*.

According to Mr Popoff, '*tout entre dans les collections puisqu'on est obligé par la loi de tout garder*'. The only exception is ephemera, which are liable, to some extent, to careful deselection. As far as foreign acquisitions are concerned, most material is selected on the assumption that it will be retained in perpetuity, and this assumption is taken into account in the selection criteria. Apparently the traditional approach in building the Library's collections, with disregard for the costs incurred by having additional copies of the same book, is gradually gaining less support, for unchanged reprinted editions are no longer readily welcomed and accepted to enter the collections.

Retention of legal deposit material is regarded as a shared responsibility insofar as provincial libraries largely participate in the demanding task of the enhanced capture of local publications (one must bear in mind that although the population does not outnumber that of the UK, France's area is at least twice that of the UK), which are anyway all sent for permanent storage to the central collecting library in Paris. A decentralised concept, conceived in the way the UK has implemented with five back-up libraries, does not seem to have much support. Having said this, disaster planning springs into mind as a problem in terms of permanent national collection retention. As there is no legal obligation for provincial libraries to store materials received through *dépôt légal imprimeurs* 'for ever', nor does another major back-up library exist, national retention responsibilities lie entirely with the BN, which anyway holds only one copy of every publication. And if this copy, for one reason or another, perishes there may well be no replacement. Advantages offered by the decentralised legal deposit concept in the UK have already been discussed under the legal deposit section.

5.2 DISPOSAL

Filtering legal deposit accessions has not been very popular with national libraries, nor have other deselection procedures. We have seen that acquisition and retention of deposit material can no longer be an absolute unchallenged policy. As a result of selection before acceptance of legal deposit material a considerable quantity of material will in future be rejected at least in national libraries, which have made this 'historic' decision. Disposal however has been viewed as an almost heretic word. In the UK, a great many university libraries have already become familiar with periodical weeding exercises. Faced with inadequate finance for new buildings, they were presented with the idea of a 'self-renewing' university library, outlined in the Atkinson report 1976. In this way, university libraries would maintain their equilibrium by discarding less used materials systematically for local store and after a few years to the BLDSC. On the other hand, copyright libraries together with the BL have never been liable to recommendations from this report. Besides, weeding is regarded as a time-consuming and expensive exercise, so it is cheaper to leave the book on the shelf. When it does take place, it is usually a matter of moving large stocks of library materials, for example, to a new wing or a new building. It seldom takes place on a day-to-day basis.

Current pressures will probably bring about the necessity for a clear disposal policy for national libraries not only before the material comes in, but in retrospect as well. According to Dr Clements, 'in principle, deselection or selection and disposal of copyright material, of legal deposit material, has been avoided to a very large degree. But in conjunction with the principles of the Enright report we have been looking at some areas to see how far we could

deselect, but this has tended to be in the non-copyright areas rather than copyright areas. The concept of disposal has been accepted *in principle...*' He also stressed the need for a severe review of 'dumped' materials, e.g. cataloguing backlogs. This tends to be quite a staff-intensive and painstaking exercise in terms of deciding what the Library should keep and what it should dispose of, 'it's a slow job, staff generally are not that willing. But it can be done...'

Types of materials, liable to disposal, are varied. These include romantic fiction, trashy novels in the style of Mills & Boon, which will probably go, although a sampling will be kept for 'study' purposes; pamphlets not of lasting importance, obscure reports, produced at home on word processors, parish magazines, and railway time-tables will be weeded out. Trade literature, wall charts, war salvage material, uncatalogued school books will also be disposed of. Books of purely regional interest will be hived off to other copyright libraries. Permanent retention of duplicate material should be significantly reduced by the extension of the common stock principle and systematic weeding of duplicated serials and monographs. Reprints of published books and duplicates as well as gifts of duplicate copies will go. There are other fringe or borderline categories, where decisions will be harder. The BL plans to weed, sort and arrange collections of ephemera. Official publications, especially those from overseas, received by international exchange and donations, will be submitted to review. In order to ensure some desperately needed space savings and to ease the preservation programme, these materials will be disposed of for sale, to other libraries and organisations, BLDSC stock, BookNet service, or simply for pulping. Further sorting and checking of unprocessed and semi-processed material is envisaged in 1993/94 to improve control of the collections as a whole (Clements, BL).

Hopefully a great deal of material disposed of by the BL is going to find its way to other, more suitable libraries and institutions, of which there are many, through the BookNet service at the BLDSC, launched in 1989. The service helps libraries to dispose of surplus material and fill gaps in their stock. Surplus stock is sent to BookNet by participating libraries. After selection the BLDSC redistributes items not required for the Centre's stock. The BookNet scheme 'aims to create a national repository of what may be the last copies in the UK or the only interlending copies of British items' (Enright:1989). Because it has been accepted 'as a basic responsibility of each country that it must make its own publications available by loan or photocopy to remote users, including those in other countries... In practice this means that at least one extra copy of each item should be collected by the national library' (Line:1983). Thus BookNet makes sure that at least one copy is retained for future availability and this copy is readily available for consultation.

Closely related to what has been discussed earlier is a question of preservation by microfilming. But the question is after microfilming, should one dispose of the original items or not. Dr Clements says:

'... a good illustration would be at Colindale, where our Newspaper library is, where for preservation purposes we have been microfilming the newspapers. We have now microfilmed as of a couple of years ago all our foreign-language newspapers. So we have a quality microfilm to replace them, and obviously newspapers get acid and get brittle as time goes on. Three years ago we agreed to dispose of those and they are still playing around, and we have disposed of hardly anything. We wanted to follow the IFLA principles of offering it to another country. But again, the process is so long and involved, it is too costly to be worthwhile maintaining doing that'.

If the Library has met difficulties of that size with foreign newspapers, what can one possibly expect with British copyrighted newspapers, which are also getting

acid and brittle ? One would say that they have only delayed the inevitable decision, because national libraries will never *ever* be able to save everything from 'slow fires', because of lack of finance and an immense backlog of items needing preservation.

As to the BN, there is nothing noteworthy in particular in this area. The BN has no immediate plans to alter its policies for retention of library materials. It still aims to achieve a considerable level of comprehensiveness for the legal deposit intake, and foreign acquisitions are still sought to be retained in perpetuity. Duplication is not seen as a problem, at least not to the extent the BL feels it. Moreover, the rate of duplication tends to grow with the advent of two different acquisition budgets, one for the BN and another for BDF, especially in the case of periodicals (Simon:1993).

5.3 CONSERVATION

Conservation of materials , intended for permanent retention in national libraries, has now become taken for granted and since 1980 the level of conservation awareness has considerably increased 'to the point now reached when preservation has become 'fashionable' and even threatens the supremacy of new technology at certain levels of discussion' (Clements:1986). Earlier on conservation seems to have been a somewhat neglected concept in the national libraries' orientation, which used to be concentrated on provision of services. In addition, the elimination of taught courses in conservation of library materials from library schools and continuing professional development schemes also contributed in a significant manner to a lack of conservation awareness among librarians. This situation continued until the eleventh hour, when the first detailed investigations into the degree of decay were launched. Henceforth most

national libraries consider 'acquisition and conservation as the two basic interrelated aspects of their collections policy' (Sylvestre:1987).

The BL openly addresses the conflict between the need to satisfy the user on the one hand, and the need to maintain its collections for posterity on the other, stating: '... the BL serves two user constituencies; those we serve currently, and those who will be consulting our collections many centuries in the future. Current users may well judge us on our ability to deliver books, documents and information promptly; future generations are most likely to judge us on our collecting decisions and our preservation policies' (For scholarship, research and innovation, BL:1992). In order to preserve the national printed archive, restrictions must be placed on its use. Both national libraries, the BL and BN, are not open to the general public and do not lend. Only eligible readers (university professors/lecturers, students reading for higher degrees, full-time researchers, journalists, authors, etc.) are admitted to consult them *in situ*. Implications for preservation and conservation restrict the circulation of collections. BDF is vacillating between its initial intentions to become a library for all people without any limitations, and its preservation responsibilities. It seems now that the conditions for admission will continue almost unchanged: the annual admission fee will certainly not stimulate all potential users to consult the collections (Brandt, BN).

On the basis of information on the state of the collections national libraries have devised their preservation programmes, which usually confront questions like what should be kept in original form, what should be transferred to new media, the extent to which a library wishes to preserve its collections, etc. The BL's preservation policies, outlined in the Strategic Plan 1993-2000, will aim at preserving material in need of conservation in the following order of priority:

1. heritage material and unique or rare material including manuscripts, certain special collections, archives, rare printed material, material of bibliographical or structural importance, or material classed as artefacts;
2. material comprising the national collection of British publications;
3. material that is heavily used now and has become fragile, or that may be expected to receive heavy use in the future and has already or is likely to become fragile;
4. material not available elsewhere;
5. material belonging to the research archive;
6. low-use material which is too fragile to be consulted or copied.

The Library has developed its preservation priorities, basing them obviously on the intrinsic value and use of the collections. Basically library materials are split into four distinct categories, each of them requiring different treatment: valuable/heavily used, valuable/low-used, little value/heavily used, little value/low-used. With the scale of decay and a backlog of hundred years plus finance limitations taken into account, one cannot reasonably expect to save those at the bottom of the priority list. Dr Clements says quite bluntly: 'Some material of low value and of low use, we will do nothing about it. We do not have the resources to do anything about it, and in effect we are leaving it to the policy of *benign neglect*. In due course it will fall apart and there is nothing you can do. You can never keep everything, it is unrealistic to think you can keep everything, but you have to start from the positive and say you must do something about these, the rest will have to wait'.

In the context of present preservation needs '*benign neglect*', if not outright disposal, seems certain to be applied to some categories of library material. Therefore a decision by the Library to preserve an item 'should now be considered as a form of secondary (and selective) acquisition' (Enright:1989).

As to the format for retention, archival material relating to the British imprint will be retained in its original form, and will receive priority for paper strengthening and conservation treatment. The Library will also give priority to preserving in original form manuscript material as well as material from whatever origins which relates to the handprinted book, and unique copies of printed material.

As already stated, the aim of national libraries is not only to restore, but to limit the deterioration by using different substitutes, for example, microfilms or microfiches, for use by the readers. Substitutes have proved to be a cost-effective way to preserve the intellectual content with or without retention of the original, thus providing a means of saving storage space if originals are discarded. So far main options in making surrogate copies are microfilm and optical disc. However, nobody knows quite how long microfilm itself will last - hundred, two hundred years - whereas the duration of optical disc is estimated at about thirty years (Enright:1989). Conversion of existing printed material requires considerable resources of staff expertise, hardware, time and money. The BL therefore invests in new preservation techniques (paper strengthening and recorded sound restoration). A mass treatment technique is sought in terms of bulk chemical methods, such as deacidification and paper strengthening, none of which is as yet operating on a large scale. The BL wants to find a method that would cost about £ 5 a volume, compared with £ 40 for microfilming and £ 150 for treatment by hand (Clements, BL).

The BL is also the leading library in the UK in developing a national preservation strategy. The national approach to acquisition, substitution and retention has resulted in 1986 in co-operative microfilming (to avoid duplication) with other copyright libraries. The project called National Register

of Microform Masters, is very successful and also available on-line, ready to be consulted any time (Stephens:1992).

The BN recognises that it has to take up the challenge imposed by an unprecedented growth of the collections as well as by deterioration which has already reached a very advanced stage. 2.6 million volumes in the Department of Printed Books, dating 1875-1960, are seriously endangered (Vallas & Brandt: 1993), so the Library will have to establish clear priorities in terms of what it should preserve. The Library's retention and preservation policies will ensure the retention of books as artefacts where their physical nature is important to research, and the provision of surrogate texts where the text is the important element. Books intended for conservation treatment are chosen according to two criteria: frequency of consultation, and the state of deterioration. Before treatment, books are microfilmed and this surrogate copy is eventually made available to the user. According to Oddos (La lettre d'information, No 12, BDF:1993) the future BDF will have to spend 15 per cent of its working budget to be able to preserve major national and international documents. The Library currently spends FF 600-900 per volume for treatment by hand, and FF 300 for microfilming. At the moment, the Library also funds research into mass treatment solutions to ensure preservation of a great number of volumes at reasonable costs.

It would appear that France is very much advanced in deacidification: actually the National Libraries of Canada and France are unique in the world in possessing all the necessary technique for mass deacidification (Vallas & Brandt:1993). This goes on at the *Centre Joël Le Theule, Sablé sur Sarthe*, where 80,000 volumes have been treated since 1989, with an annual capacity of 30,000 volumes. At the moment, only books are treated, 150-200 at a time. The Library is also heavily engaged in developing a new method of treatment,

allowing both deacidification and paper strengthening to be carried out in one and the same operation, because the deacidification process stops the deterioration of paper without however restoring its initial toughness. Hopefully this method will be fully operational by 1995.

Mrs Brandt also expressed concern about the lack of national policy in preservation and conservation. The BN is the national leader, but it has no control whatsoever over the restoration works going on in provincial libraries, which tend to utilise the money '*comme bon leur semble*'. Obviously a sort of register, similar to the British one, is required in order to co-ordinate preservation policies at the national level.

Both the BL and BN are looking forward to the moves to new purpose-built buildings where decay should slow down, owing to optimal storage conditions.



6 NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

It is now said 'to be impossible for any single library, however well endowed, to seek to be self-sufficient. In a national context, selectivity programmes must imply co-operation, shared information on acquisition policies, preservation and disposal' (Enright:1989). As far as national co-operation in the UK is concerned, 'there is a developing, if not very advanced system of co-operation' (Clements, BL) among the BL and the other copyright libraries. We have already examined the way in which the copyright libraries share the responsibility for acquisition and retention of legal deposit materials with a special emphasis on dividing obligations for local publications. By the same token, copyright libraries together with other organisations in the library and information field assume the responsibility for national collection retention insofar as they deposit weeded material with the BLDSC and its BookNet service, thus ensuring that at least one copy is retained within the country for loan and photocopy services. Major attempts however to extend co-operation beyond this are represented in microfilming, shared cataloguing, and endeavouring to co-ordinate acquisition policies, embodied in the CONSPECTUS project.

In relation to preservation, the copyright libraries have set out to compile a National Register of Microform Masters, thus coming up with an up-to-date record of microfilmed material. In this way they save a considerable amount of money, being well informed about what other libraries have already transferred to microfilm.

It has already been stressed that the actual publishing output in the UK has been outstripping the BL's ability to keep current records. Therefore an agreement

has been signed earlier this year (Clements, BL), putting forward a shared cataloguing project. This is going to involve the six libraries in the UK and the Republic of Ireland that are entitled to receive British publications. In practice this means a sort of splitting of the legal deposit materials into several sections, each library assuming the responsibility to record its agreed portion. Hopefully the project will improve the coverage as well as reduce cataloguing costs so as to keep up-to-date with the increasing intake and to eliminate backlogs.

CONSPECTUS started in the United States where it is used as a means of distributing responsibilities by consensus within a group of research libraries. It is defined as 'a method for recording the relative strengths of libraries in discrete subjects areas together with a machine based facility for updating and interrogating the data' (Smethurst:1987). In other words, CONSPECTUS helps libraries to review their collection practices (which originated in financial pragmatism), allowing the collections to be described subject by subject instead of just item by item through the catalogue. According to Smethurst (1987) the BL adopted and implemented CONSPECTUS in 1985/86, covering the greater part of the collections including those in Boston Spa. A great many other libraries joined the database of CONSPECTUS results, adopting the method to analyse major strengths and weaknesses in their stocks, up to the point where the BL was seriously considering the results 'to explore whether and how far the BL can reduce or even opt out of collecting in specific areas' (Line:1988a). Highly praised, it was sought to extend the role of CONSPECTUS even into a European Conspectus (Scott & Phillips:1991). However, after the initial boom the project became stuck. Matheson (1989) reports that while in Scotland the project was going on smoothly among eleven university libraries, in England some university libraries were not all that willing to co-operate. Apparently some libraries were suspicious; because the action had been triggered by the National Library, it was largely understood as a threat to libraries' autonomy in

terms of encroachment upon their rights and of a centralised programme of co-ordinated collection development. In practice this means subject responsible libraries within the network and a division of acquisition with national duties. The 'rebellious' libraries obviously stand for the idea that 'an individual library's first priority is to respond to the needs of its own clientele, and its collections must reflect these needs' (Scott & Phillips:1991), which is quite understandable. In conclusion, Dr Clements considers CONSPECTUS almost as a dead issue: 'There were earlier discussions linked in with CONSPECTUS, but that has rather disappeared. I think it was a nice theoretical tool, it was more difficult to apply. And the use of it, both in the UK and the States seems to be very much disappearing out of the field totally'. Accordingly, it is interesting to see that CONSPECTUS does not appear in the BL's Strategic Plan 1993-2000 *For scholarship, research and innovation*.

In France, the co-operation appears to be not as advanced as in the UK; it is nevertheless developing very rapidly. Joint responsibility for acquisition and retention of legal deposit materials has already been described elsewhere, suffice to repeat that provincial libraries collaborate to a much lesser extent, especially with regard to the retention of national printed heritage. Additionally, there are no shared responsibilities in compiling *Bibliographie nationale française*. The BN is still alone in carrying out the demanding task of recording the current national publishing output (Bernard, BL). Obviously the Library has sufficient resources in terms of staff and money to adequately cope with it. The amount of publishing has to be taken into consideration, too: it is only at about two thirds of the UK level of printed output, and it has only recently taken a severe turn upwards.

So far there have been no attempts whatsoever by the BN to attempt to co-ordinate its acquisitions policies in a shared project with other, for example,

university libraries. In fact, there used to be a sort of co-operation in the thirties among the BN and some university libraries in the Paris region, but this rather disappeared with the beginning of the war (Simon, BN). The BN has been isolated in its acquisition achievements ever since, embarked on a rocking boat with scarce budget allocation and unaccomplished aspirations. The situation is nevertheless going to change by leaps and bounds with the advent of BDF, for *Catalogue collectif de France* (CCF), an on-line union catalogue, has been envisaged. Called '*une immense biblioth que sans murs*' (La lettre d'information, No 10, BDF:1993), it is going to bring together on-line catalogues of more than 50 provincial and 30 university libraries plus the one of BDF. CCF will be accessible from all those libraries as well as at home via Minitel, the French public on-line information system, which is without doubt unrivalled at the present moment. By the same token, CCF will offer the opportunity for librarians to consult it whenever in doubt about their acquisitions and loans even at the international level. Some documents (texts, images, sound) stored at BDF, will be delivered also remotely in their integrity. CCF is being implemented with a minimum of effort and the provincial libraries of Grenoble, Lyons, Nancy and Besan on joined it at the beginning of this year (La lettre d'information, No 10; BDF:1993).

If national co-operation swings between ups and downs (let us think of CONSPECTUS), international co-operation seems by and large an all the more sensitive area. An area, where national libraries have always been interested in co-operation, is undoubtedly the international exchange of publications among them. Libraries can receive on exchange many interesting out-of-print items, or otherwise important books and periodicals. At the same time, it is an elegant way to dispose of your own duplicates in order to receive new material. Libraries send around duplicate exchange lists from which they select. National libraries are often given special budgets to carry out their exchange policies. In

this case they can select even amongst titles that do not appear on exchange lists, which can be particularly useful when a library builds a special collection in, for example, Japanese or Slavonic Studies. National libraries can hardly get hold of those items via normal bookselling channels, whereas foreign libraries may provide them without difficulty. However, with the onset of the recession international exchange has been seriously affected, and many national libraries now wish to reduce the number of exchange partners within a single country, or, at least they would like to reduce the extent of exchange with given libraries in terms of titles, especially in exceedingly expensive periodicals. Besides, great libraries of the West have always felt that they are giving more than they are receiving. English and French books are anxiously expected in the Third World countries without hard currency, whereas publications from these countries sent to developed countries often represent just expensive processing costs, and they may well never be consulted. It is indeed difficult to maintain a level of equivalence between some countries.

As to the BL and international co-operation, Dr Clements thinks 'so far the Library has expressed interest in principle and talked about in principle, but I don't see any evidence of going beyond that as yet. I think it's an area where everybody agrees it's a good idea but if they can possibly avoid it, they do'. However, the *Strategic Plan* guidelines envisage an enhanced degree of co-operation in acquisition and retention of library materials with France, Germany and Holland 'where collaboration might influence and modify policy'. Similarly, the Enright report (1989) writes about an agreement with the BN to share acquisition of African material, the BL assuming the responsibility for the 'Anglo-Saxon' Africa, and the BN for the French-speaking countries. In the preservation area both national libraries expressed themselves in favour of continued contact in terms of information exchange to avoid wasteful duplication in microfilming. By far the most ambitious international project has

been the successful publication on CD-ROM in compatible forms of the national bibliographies of the UK, France, Germany, later joined by Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal and Italy. Discussions have also led to agreements with the Library of Congress and with agencies in Scandinavia (Line, J.:1991). Started as a joint project of only the BL and BN, this has clearly become a major achievement to produce and distribute uniform data within the European community.

The latter project quite apart, again, agreements are easy to sign but are more difficult to implement. The international exchange of bibliographic data, however sophisticated and welcomed, is just the first step: there is not much comfort in knowing that a given publication has just been published, if it is impossible for you to get hold of it via international channels. There we are coming to terms with what Dr Clements probably had in mind, when he said that national libraries tended to avoid international co-operation. Despite all good intentions and efforts international document supply still lays well behind the exchange of data, and national library and information systems are bound to rely on their own comprehensiveness. Line (1986) argues that 'it is hard to imagine such political stability and trust between nations all over the world that every country allows all other countries instant access to all its publications'. It is also interesting to hear such a fervent advocate of *universal* availability of publications saying the following: 'For the foreseeable future, each country will need to provide the bulk of its own requirements; it is uneconomic and inconvenient, as well as an affront to national pride, for a country to be too dependent on other countries for the satisfaction of its own information needs' (Line:1986).

On the one hand it would appear that international co-operation is somewhat eroding, but on the other hand, national library and information systems are

improving because they are *forced* to improve. Principles set out in IFLA's core programmes of Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) and Universal Availability of Publications (UAP) obviously still have a long way to go and it is very doubtful whether they are going to be ever fully implemented.

7 CONCLUSION

This report has provided a basic analysis of a national library's functions, based on an analysis of several distinguished authors, together with a look at UNESCO recommendations, bearing in mind that no two national libraries are the same, owing to different historical, cultural, economic and political background. National libraries will carry on gathering, preserving and making available the written and otherwise communicated heritage, thanks to legal deposit, conservation policies and reference and lending services. Current pressures and developments in information technology have a paramount impact on the way they set about the fulfilling those demanding tasks.

Impact of an ever-increasing publishing output, creating new challenges and problems, has been discussed. In the Western world, most national libraries are running out of space: the accomodation chapter has examined how the two libraries are coping with this problem, taking into account that they both have a new building under construction. Collecting and classifying knowledge has always been costly, therefore the success of a library's plans depends heavily on adequate financial support from government which, unfortunately, does not always share its vision. Over the last decade funding in most national libraries has decreased to about a half in real terms. The basic difference between the BL and BN could hardly be more evident: any hope of significant amelioration for the BL in the short term would appear to be entirely misplaced, whereas the BN does not have to struggle with financial provisions, at least not to the extent the BL has to. Owing to the project for the new *Bibliothèque de France*, the BN purchases more than ever before, whereas the BL has only recently seen some slight improvements.

Both legal deposit laws and every-day interpretation of this have been scrutinised and compared in terms of coverage, depositors, number of copies, timeliness and efficiency. Considerable differences between the BL and BN have been found in several areas of utmost importance. Deposit of new media, as a special area of interest, has also been investigated, as there is no obligation to deposit non-book material in the UK. This has been followed by an investigation of acquisitions other than legal deposit. Collection development policies of the BL have been discussed, according to the guidelines, given in *For scholarship, research and innovation: The BL's Strategic Plan, 1993-2000*. Many special areas have been described, covering problems and issues of several divisions. On the other hand, the BN is about to start with a more comprehensive coverage of human knowledge. It will also fill the gaps retrospectively, thus compensating its delay when compared to the BL.

The analysis of retention policies has set out to discuss the legal deposit intake, the goal of which is to ascertain whether these policies really need to be comprehensive. Controversial views are held on this matter. The BL, guided by the recommendations from the so-called Enright report (1989) has decided that not everything that is published is worth keeping. Areas of legal deposit which might undergo changes in acceptance, have been tackled and highlighted in terms of the life-cycle costing principle. Interestingly enough, the BN, though experiencing similar difficulties, has no plans to alter its retention policies. Furthermore, areas of library materials that might be disposed of, even in retrospect, have been discussed and the problem of preservation by microfilming dealt with. For example, conservation by microfilming raises the question of whether after microfilming one should dispose of the original copies or not.

Conservation of library materials has been emphasised: owing to the limited financial resources and a backlog of hundred years, national libraries now have

to prioritise what material will be given conservation treatment, if any at all. The most efficient solutions have been looked at, together with the on-going research in conservation procedures. Finally, national and international co-operation has been examined. Co-operation has been found to be a very sensitive area, although it is viewed as one of the corner-stones for survival. Fostering good relationships with other libraries is critical to success, especially in acquisition and retention of library materials.

A fundamental conclusion that must be drawn is that despite adverse circumstances national libraries do remain flexible, keeping pace with rapid changes in their environment. Their approach to collection management is undoubtedly one of the areas that should reflect their ability to face challenges of the nineties which have reached a critical point.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|---|
| BDF | Bibliothèque de France |
| BL | The British Library |
| BLDSC | The British Library Document Supply Centre |
| BN | Bibliothèque Nationale |
| CCF | Catalogue collectif de France |
| CRO | Copyright Receipt Office |
| EC | European Community |
| EPBF | Etablissement public de la Bibliothèque de France |
| H&SS | Humanities and Social Sciences |
| IFLA | International Federation of Library Associations |
| NLA | National Library of Australia |
| NLC | National Library of Canada |
| RARP | Review of Acquisition and Retention Policies |
| SRIS | Science Reference and Information Service |
| S&T | Science and Technology |
| UAP | Universal Availability of Publications |
| UBC | Universal Bibliographic Control |
| UK | United Kingdom |

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW WITH DR D W G

CLEMENTS, Director of Public Services & Project Director (St Pancras Planning for Operations and Services), THE BRITISH LIBRARY, carried out on 19/5 1993 at the BL

Question: a) Space constraints have forced many national libraries to sharpen their selection policies: collection development priorities are under review. What are the main problems and issues, currently addressed by the BL in this particular area ?

b) The diminishing financial support from the Government has a further negative impact on acquisition and retention, and national libraries often have to adjust strategic plan guidelines to the new circumstances. How do budget cuts affect the BL acquisition and retention policies ?

Reply: Well, perhaps I can try to pick up a couple of points from there, firstly space, although always a problem, has not been seen as a prime mover in terms of deciding what the Library has or has not got. It currently has a new building under construction which will hold 330 km of shelving, and we know that when we move into that in about two-years' time we will actually fill that building up completely, and we will need some additional outstores, some remote stores in London and possibly in Yorkshire. We are already planning to continue some of our existing buildings to provide a period of back-up. So we don't, I think, in that sense regard space as a prime limitation. We obviously can have problems, but we don't basically control our accessions on the basis of space. Finance obviously has been a problem and that has been probably the largest single factor which has limited the extent of our acquisitions over the last ten years.

And this has really been reflected in the general cutback of funding by central Government which has occurred over the whole of the publicly funded sector: what has happened in libraries has happened in the education field, it's happened within the health field, it happens in all the areas. And we can go back on our statistics, we can see that over the past ten years the amount of money we have had for acquisitions, taking into account inflation and exchange rate variations, has been reduced by about half of what it was ten years ago. So, that's a 50 per cent cut in what we can afford to buy. That's been things that's built up gradually over the ten-year period. And we have just this year seen some slight improvement, and in terms of our strategic objectives we certainly do want to substantially increase the amount of money we spend on acquisitions and incidentally on conservation, the two run in parallel to some extent. But having that as a strategic objective and actually achieving that is another matter. There has been a slight upturn, we hope to continue that, but it'll be a very slow improvement if we manage to maintain that. The other element you commented on is in terms of selection. Well, in that sense we have been sharpening our selection policy. I think one of your later questions is related to duplicates. I think we could refer that until we come on to the question of duplicates.

Question: Automatic acceptance of legal deposit materials has become a major area of concern. Should national libraries be more selective, and if so, what kind of materials should be refused ?

Reply: There are two ways of trying to tackle this. Firstly we at least have been concerned to maintain and, if possible, extend legal deposit. In this country printed material is under legal deposit, whereas materials produced on disc, on other non-print media, is generally not covered by legal deposit. That's an area that we'd like to try to extend into, things like, you know, records or cassettes,

as an illustration of an area where we don't have legal deposit, so we have voluntary deposit in that area. On the sort of printed material, books, periodicals, general range of traditional library material, we try to get in as much as we can. We have a reasonably good relationship with the publishers. There is also in this country not only legal deposit with the BL, there's legal deposit to five other libraries. We have for a number of years with them tried to compare material we get in, because we seem to get about 90 per cent or so, they seem to get 80-90 per cent. But there is some gaps between areas where we get materials they don't, and they get materials we don't, and it's that sort of area we are trying to also extend. We only get one copy, we have also in terms of looking at duplicates, looked at acquisitions and retention policies which I will come onto in terms of the duplicate area. And we've been trying to reduce marginally what we take in by legal deposit. But this is really not a question of reducing the range of titles which we take, but trying to cut out those duplicate editions, of which there are many, which don't represent new editions. I mean, the simple examples which are easy to quote, is where you get classical authors, reprinted again and again and again. Where you get fiction authors coming out in two or three copies and it's doubtful, you know, I don't think it is generally considered worthwhile to duplicate the same title. That is an area where we've been trying to reduce. It is not an easy area to work with, it's quite a bit of staff effort. In fact, one of things we did have in, was to have a team of about three people working in the Library, looking at this and reviewing it. And this ties up with this review which we undertook, called the Review of acquisitions and retention policies, a RARP study, which has been published. I think your school will probably have a copy in. It might be useful looking at that because that is quite a lot more detailed.

Is this the so-called Enright report ?

Yes, he chaired a group as an external chairman, which reviewed that, so that links up directly with that and gives a lot of information about the Library looking at its exclusion policy to say what it shouldn't take, and its policy of trying to avoid duplicate copies of titles which are exactly the same as earlier copies, the sort of things I've already illustrated. So that gives quite a nice way of trying to present that. It's interesting if you go to the United States, the Library of Congress; I was there about a week ago. The Library of Congress, as you know, has a much wider range of material acquired under copyright, because anything which has to be registered, which is not only books, but the inventions and objects, get deposited with the Library of Congress. And they've been more selective in terms of they pick mainly to get rid of the non-print material. There's also, I understand, a proposal before the Senate to alter the conditions of deposit in the States, so that is no longer obligatory. It is voluntary, but an office will exist which can ask for and insist on getting a copy. So, in that sense it gives you some idea of the legal deposit area. The other area just to parallel this, is where some duplication comes in, is that the legal deposit copies come to the Library for cataloguing and come for storage in the collections in London, and, the majority is coming to the Humanities collection, apart from a relatively small number which are picked up by the Science Library for going on their open access shelves and then, when they will become 50 years or more old, they return to our collections as old books. In actual fact, the Science collections have thrown out all the material which is, I think, pre-1850, as being rare books, they have taken them out and sent them back to us to keep them as rare books, well, as older science books. Now, the second area, of parallel interest which you probably know about, is at Boston Spa, where we have a document supply service and where they purchase copies of UK material for lending. So we downhere we take the decision not to lend copyright material outside the Library. That's been accepted and probably will be eased a bit in relation to what you call grey literature, which is generally material which

is little used, and we will consider lending some of that. But that is a fairly limited area of consideration.

Question: Filtering legal deposit accessions has not been very popular with national libraries, nor have other deselection procedures. Weeding is viewed as time-consuming and expensive, so it is cheaper to leave the book on the shelf. On the other hand, unassessed retention causes massive storage costs. What views do you hold on that ?

Reply: The Library has been taking a very clear view on this. I think, in principle, deselection or selection and disposal of copyright material, of legal deposit material, has been avoided to a very large degree. But, in conjunction with the principles of the Enright report, we have been looking at some areas to see how far we could deselect, but this has tended to be in the non-copyright areas rather than copyright areas. The concept of disposal has been accepted in principle. One of the things the Library looked at a couple of years ago was, I think, called life-cycle testing. Are you aware of the technique ? Where basically they say that what we should look at is not the initial purchase of the object, but the whole cost leading up from selection, purchase, storage, maintenance, until disposal. It came originally from the defence areas, where the costs of purchasing a rocket or a plane was large, but the cost to maintain three or four times the costs of the original. We did some studies, or, some colleagues did some studies in the Library on the life-cycle costing showing very clearly that the storage costs is actually a tiny part of the whole costs. If you look at selection costs, acquisition costs, cataloguing costs, it is the acquisition and cataloguing costs where the large money comes and the cost of storage is a matter of a couple of pence a year.

So if you look at it properly, you have to think in terms of not just the one-off cost of selecting or buying, or the one-off cost disposing it, all the costs you put into them, cataloguing is usually a very expensive part of it. So we've certainly taken the view that we should take into account of these life-cycle costs, the costs associated with the total processing of a book. Because, if we can say particularly before they come in, we are saving substantial funds, and we, like most other people, have large backlogs of cataloguing. While some cataloguing stuff is important to keep, there's cataloguing stuff which isn't very important. Again, it's not easy to make a distinction between what we should keep and what we shouldn't keep. Certainly, the non-copyright areas we have been undertaking reviews to try to dispose of stuff. It's a slow job, staff generally are not that willing. But it can be done, and a good illustration would be the Colindale, where our Newspaper library is, where for preservation purposes we have been microfilming the newspapers. We have now microfilmed as of a couple of years ago, all our foreign-language newspapers. So we have a quality microfilm to replace them, and obviously newspapers get acid and get brittle as time goes on. Three years ago we agreed to dispose of those and they are still playing around, and we have disposed of hardly anything. We wanted to follow the IFLA principles of offering it to another country. But again, the process is so long and involved, it is too costly to be worthwhile maintaining doing that.

Question: In some countries, the national library receives two copies as legal deposit; one is kept unused to perform the archival function, the other is intended for lending. In the light of British circumstances, how do you envisage retention responsibilities of the BL and other copyright libraries ?

Reply: There is a developing, if not very advanced, system of co-operation. Certainly the concept of co-operation with the other copyright libraries has been

a subject of discussion for many years, and over the last four, five years there has been considerably more discussion on co-operation. This has been looked at both in terms of developing some co-operation in relation to preservation and, for example, linked up with our development of a National Register of Microform Masters, which we are now getting input from most of the other copyright libraries, so that if they microfilm a document, we know of it, so we both don't do the same thing. That's a small step, that's a practical step. Secondly, there has been, there were earlier discussions linked in with CONSPECTUS, analysis of subject holdings, but that has rather disappeared. I think it was a nice theoretical tool. It was more difficult to apply. And the use of it, both in the UK and the States seems to be very much disappearing out of field totally, and I don't think we aren't doing it anymore, at least in this place. The other area where we've been looking at co-operation with the copyright libraries, which we have actually just signed an agreement, is in relation to shared cataloguing. Where they are, they will be agreeing, have agreed to have some division of what they catalogue and what we catalogue. I haven't got the exact divisions at this time, but they have just signed an agreement with a view to be able to get better co-operation in shared cataloguing. So that we can use their records and they can use ours. That has been done on a basis that if one particular library wants a shorter, simpler record than somebody else, they can retain it even if the database will have the top quality records on it as well. So we are not all forced to hold very long records if we don't wish to. That gives a bit of flexibility. Now that agreement was only signed earlier on this year, so there has been some area there. Obviously there is, to some extent, a practical pragmatic sharing of responsibilities, so that all Welsh material is kept by the National Library of Wales, and all Scottish material by the National Library of Scotland. But beyond that the amount of sharing is relatively small, rather concentrated on microfilming, and preservation purposes and record creation are the two ends of the spectrum. Because at the minute we all get a copy free. I

mean, the reason we couldn't get the publishers to give us two copies was, if we did we'd have to stop all other people getting it, and that's something they wouldn't want either, which is perhaps understandable. On the other hand, by having a large part of materials stored in five or six other libraries does provide you some security, some security against user use, some security in preservation. So, it has advantages which happens to be historical quirks rather than any logical reasons starting it off.

Question: Duplication of library materials is nowadays seen as a luxury, both in individual libraries and wider. How do the costs of duplication compare with benefits in the case of the BL ?

Reply: Let's try to think. Interestingly enough, we have been looking at duplication in the Library very much linked up with the strategic objectives of the Library, because we carried out a strategic review. I was one of several people involved in this, because the Library was, first of all, the Library decided to redraft its mission statement on its objectives and from that it tried to review what it felt to be its priorities in terms of services, collections, preservation, etc. to undertake another review of what it was and where it wanted to be in about 10-15 years' time. As part of that we therefore undertook a number of studies in different areas, services, collections and collection management, finance, leadership, computing and telecoms, and staff, and looked ahead where it would like to be. Then we tried to prepare some broad estimates, very crude broad estimates, of the cost implications of what we wanted to do. The Library currently spends about a £ 100 million a year budget, earns about £ 30 million. We reckoned that things we wanted to do over the next decade will probably need an investment of between £ 30-50 million. We already are quite aware that we won't get anymore money from our Government. We will be lucky to

maintain level funding and, though being pushed by the Government to earn more money, we will never earn that much more money to be able to pay for such things. Therefore we were asked to undertake a review of all the Library's operations and services the lot without any limitations, which I did with another fellow director. We spent about three months on this looking at, coming up and trying to identify areas where cash could be saved, or where things which we did, were felt to be of lower priority and therefore could be considered to be stopped or reduced to the size , where resources redirected to those areas we wanted to take part in. One of the elements of this, related to the collections and the Library as a whole, including humanities collections, science collections, and Boston Spa collections, estimated the value of the total acquisitions in 1992/93 at £ 11 million. We spent an equivalent of £ 11 million on acquisitions in 1992/93 all the Library, of which about £ 3 million was represented by the equivalent value of the legal deposit material, which actually you don't have to pay cash for. And we had a general budget about £ 8 million for purchase material. Now within that, looking at the total costs they estimated that there was a total amount of about £ 2.5 million spent on buying duplicates and material we got by other means. Now about the large part of it was obviously because of duplicates for lending purposes. That is a lot of money. And, if you look at the funds, we reckon that probably about £ 400,000, something like about £ 400,000 were being spent on duplicates non-English material. In another words, that excluded all duplicates copyright. And £ 400,000 a year is a lot of money. Therefore one of the things we've been doing is looking to see how far we could reduce the level acquisitions. That gives you a rough feel for the amount of money spent on duplication and areas where some savings could be made. So, from that point of view we would, I think, accept that duplication is only valid in those areas, where it is absolutely essential, and that is basically where it is providing, where it is essential to support the service. And in many cases we may only want to spend that money for a short period of time, while

there is a peak in demand, and to get rid of it afterwards, if we could find some ways of avoiding spending that money for a short period of time, we also save quite a bit of cash. Now the theory is you could cut down level duplication, but probably if you reduce service performance standards and will that be acceptable. If you try to get other people to help you out, which is difficult because they only have one copy anyway, and they get overloaded, or you could look for greater production of material in digitised format, which is where the future will come; But that is going to be quite a number of years. And obviously duplication is again reflected in the Enright report, you could pick up a few leads from that to fill in the gaps.

Question: National libraries have been seen as 'comprehensive'; however, in the current climate they can no longer aspire to comprehensiveness. National and international acquisition/retention strategies, involving interlibrary loan, have been put forward. Is the BL involved in any negotiations, related to this area, and if so, what are the objectives ?

Reply: I think so far the Library has expressed interest in principle, and talked about in principle, but I don't see any evidence of going beyond that as yet. I think it's an area where everybody agrees it's a good idea but if they can possibly avoid it, they do. Let's rephrase that. I think that isn't particularly true of national libraries. I mean you've already seen in the university field pressures to cut the budgets, and therefore the problem of sharing between different institutions and maintaining core stock. And that is true, that is valid. We have, as a national library, for example, got the funds to be able to subsidise all sorts of universities. There is a general reduction in the level of provision. We could and logically would develop closer relationships, particularly with the major libraries in the EC, the distance from Germany, France, Italy, from Switzerland,

from Spain, is not that far and when our new library opens at St Pancras, it should be easier with the Channel Tunnel as well. But I haven't seen any reality coming up like this so far, except perhaps you may get the odd specialist year, where that occurs, but is almost because between them they can't afford to cover everything anyway, so intelligent co-operation is where we are trying to cover a small part of a large field and trying to spread themselves thinly as much as possible. But there's not been a lot that I know of in this area. In a sense, the better national library is, the more national libraries retain their comprehensiveness the better. Because they are never completely comprehensive. But there should be at least one major collection with large back-up resources in each country and available to each country.

Question: It is argued that national libraries in the past have failed to relate the consequences of acquisition to retention obligations. Therefore they now have to face much higher costs of preservation in terms of priorities, stock reassessment, relegation, and disposal. Having said this, is a selective approach to preservation to be expected, and if so, what materials are given priority?

Reply: In essence, preservation has to be related to both the intrinsic value of the object and the level of use of those items. So you're going to have material which is very valuable in its own right, which is heavily used, and has one set of treatments. You have material of importance, which is rarely ever used and has another combination of treatments. You have material which is high-use, of little value, or low-use and little value again a different set of treatments and you have to adjust your policies towards this. Obviously you need the input from the curators in terms of the value of their collections, whether they know there are other copies of it, whether they think it is important. Preservation costs are

considerable and what we have tried to do is to develop a series of average costs for various forms of treatment for various types of material. So that we have done this in combination with giving parts of our preservation budget allocated to collection areas and then say to them, you've got, shall we say, £ 100,000 spend on preservation this year. Which do you consider are the most urgent areas and we then, from the preservation point of view, will say, right, we can do this, do you realise this will cost you this much or this much? If we get things that turn out to be expensive, £ 200 or more, what we did was to institute a device whereby we will go back and ask them, if they're really sure they wanted it done before doing it. We also had to have a mix of processes, and keep a balance of work going through it, because we had large conservation studios to be able to undertake hand repairs, sometimes very expensive, sometimes very simple. We had facilities to do microfilming, we had facilities to consider digitisation, not much of that. We had facilities to be able to box them. And what you have to do, you obviously cannot say that one year we'll have all hand repairs and microfilm, and the next year reverse it, because you can't employ people like that, so we were adjusting the mix of skills to collection needs has to be taken out on a longer term basis, and within that, get the curators to come up and identify the areas which need priority treatment. And then pick in relation to that, the sort of treatment is best suited. So it's quite a sophisticated requirement, and you are as part of that quite explicitly saying, some material of low value and of low use, we will do nothing about it. We do not have the resources to do anything about it, and in effect we are leaving it to the policy of benign neglect and in due course it will fall apart and there is nothing you can do about it. But you can never keep everything: it is unrealistic to think you can keep everything. But you have to start from the positive and say you must do something about these, the rest will have to wait. I mean that is also combined with the fact the other approach is to see how far bulk treatments methods are made available, such as chemical treatments. We were involved,

and are still involved, in developing a paper strengthening process like the Americans were developing a de-acidification process. None of those are yet operating on a large scale, but there is good potential there. And if that should occur, we are then talking of a treatment which would cost in the order of £ 5 a book, compared with say £ 40 for microfilms and £ 150 to treat by hand. Then you can begin to see where your money goes. Our backlog there is also ridiculous, because we are relatively well off. Our collections are nowhere near as bad as the Americans and about 15 per cent of the collections published postdated 50 are acidic and in need of treatment, and that's 1.6 million books. That's almost 300 camera years of effort. For hand conservation of rare books, we have 1.5 million, the quarter of which need some kind of treatment. We have a backlog of hundred years of treatment. You can see why we have to prioritise what we do.

Question: The BL is going to be a single library with two major sites: London and Boston Spa. What is the division of collections and functions between them going to look like ?

Reply: I think the simple answer is we are not quite sure yet. What I think we are trying to do is expressed in terms of our funding. If you look at what I was saying about acquisitions, costs; that is part of the picture. Obviously, what we are talking about is the fringe areas of lower use material. The core collections of heavily used materials in the sites will stay the same for the next ten years at least. Where we will be looking will be in terms of grey literature, things like periodicals to see where the most heavily used ones we could get away with a single copy rather than these multiple copies, and the onset of digitisation and electronic data. With this, in theory, it will enable us to buy one copy and to access it wherever we happen to be in the library, so that in theory is the long

term solution to that. But it is only a solution which is a tip of an iceberg because it only applies to newly published material and a small proportion of that as well. What you can do is to hope that you get digitised copies of the really heavily used materials, and heavily used periodicals which represents a large part of the total usage and diverts a substantial chunk away from it. The other element is that we are looking in terms of network services to try to support both areas, north and south. One element of that is the distribution of collection. Obviously that is still going to be in dispute for some time between the reference function and the lending function which is roughly split between North and South. That will be softened up by time but it will take many years to overcome that. Since we already have 15 to 20 million books and periodicals in print, we are not going to get very far in digitising all of that, and that is going to be a substantial part of our usage in many decades still. The question of information services is probably the area where we could do more sharing and that possibly needs looking at in terms of how far we can go. A user coming in asks at one desk, then gets sent to another one and another one and another one. When you come in first, they can put you in touch with the person who can solve your problem. That will be a combination of what your problem is, what the subject is, what the date range is and how detailed it is. You won't be able to do that with everybody, but that is a concept we are trying to develop while we hope that with the networking we will begin to bring the North and South closer together. So we see this as one of our strategic objectives we are going to spend some of the £ 15 million on. We have now got one of our on-line catalogues being made available. They will be available from these buildings this autumn and will be available in machine readable formats in St Pancras. Links with these catalogues to the outside networks like Janet will be opened from this autumn but they won't meet everybody's needs because it is a very sophisticated system inside, and to provide a converter from that to a simple

teletype format would be very expensive and of questionable use, but an area where the electronic developments will begin to merge our services.

Question: It appears that the question of adequate space still remains unresolved, in spite of new buildings. So where does the future lie ?

Reply: Trying to pick up a practical response to your question, I think a couple of things. One is that whatever library you are, whatever country you are in you are never going to have an infinite amount of space available at any one time and the practical reality is that you have to make a bid for additional funding for additional building on a continuous basis and you are probably looking at that to get chunks of buildings that will last you five or ten years at a time in order to give you enough planning period to identify what you want, get hold of it, adapt it, move books in, begin to fill it up and seven years before it is full up, start on the next cycle of the next round of acquisition of space. That is one realistic thing that will happen. The second question which is more difficult, is the advent of the electronic library, as everybody likes to call it, where we are beginning to get a significant increase in the publication of material in CD's or in other electronic forms. In terms of this problem of digitisation, a lot of this is being done in reference tools, which don't represent much of the library's input. Areas where it is beginning to extend considerably is in things like abstracts (chemabs), it is extending into the patents area so for patents publications probably in 5 to 10 years' time not only will current patents be coming out in machine readable form, but large parts of the old patents will be digitised as well. But if you happen to be a patent library, like we have to be, that is of major use, but if you're not it doesn't make any difference. The other thing is we will be particularly into is of periodical type publications, but even so I think it is going to be in the 15 to 25 year range before they begin to have

significant effect and it will be an even longer term question before you get much of your existing collections put into digitised form. So I could see that in the 10 to 20 year range, your rates of growth would have slowed down in terms of space, assuming you have the space to put the computers to run the optical discs and you've overcome the problem of running multiple discs on juke-boxes, or whatever they happen to be called, but that will still save you significant space but cost a lot of money and you may therefore slow down your rate of growth of storage, but it will be 30 to 50 years, I suspect, before you can get rid of existing storage which is full of those things called books.

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