

II<sup>e</sup> SECTION.

10<sup>e</sup> question.

HOW TO NAME THE LIBRARIANS

by L. STANLEY JAST,

*Honorary Secretary, Library Association.  
London.*

and W. C. BERWICK SAYERS,

*President, Library Assistants' Association.  
London.*

The nomenclature of British library positions varies greatly, and it will be difficult to resolve some order out of the terminological chaos at present existing.

The British Government has many library positions in its control, but the term librarian is only sparingly recognized. There are « librarians » of the two Houses of Parliament, the British Museum, the Board of Education, Admiralty, Patent Office and other government departments, but only in the Houses of Parliament are there any assistant-librarians so-named. The heads of departments in the British Museum are called « keepers », a traditional term, and the assistant librarians « Assistants in the Department of Printed Books » or « Manuscripts » as the case may be, which as a term in no way connects them with librarianship. In the Patent Office the term « Custodian » was formerly employed, but was dropped some eight years ago for « Assistant in the Library. » In the other Government or Civil Service libraries the assistant librarian is usually rated and named as a first or second class clerk as the case may be. It would be greatly to the advantage of librarianship if a proper government recognition of the term librarian as representing a specially

trained type of man rather than the occupant of a certain position could be obtained. At present it seems that clerks in any government office possessing a library can be moved from the office proper to the library and *vice versa*.

In municipal and similar public libraries the chaos is even more pronounced. The principal officer calls himself Chief, Principal, Head, Borough or City Librarian, or merely Librarian. Often the term Chief Librarian is adopted where the owner of the name is the only librarian on the staff, and the term « Chief » in these circumstances is meaningless.

In the nomenclature of assistant librarians the confusion is worse still. The principal assistant to the librarian is called the Deputy, Chief Assistant, Assistant, or Sub-Librarian in large libraries ; but the same terminology is imitated by the smaller libraries, and it is no uncommon matter to hear of an assistant with a salary of £ 30 per annum called a « sub-librarian », and « chief assistant » and similar terms are used very loosely to the bewilderment of library authorities who find that the Sub-Librarian of a great library like Birmingham holds apparently the same position as the untrained lad in a village library.

It is undoubtedly desirable to formulate a series of definitions which should govern the application of names to library positions. The resulting nomenclature if generally adopted would prevent the anomalies referred to. No librarian should call himself a chief librarian unless he directs the work of librarians ; the adjective is distinctly a relative term. Similarly a deputy- or a sub-librarian should be clearly a librarian of some technical equipment and training though he does not happen to hold an independent position. To apply this name to a young or boy assistant is undignified and is bound to cause confusion.

The following definitions are therefore tentatively recommended for general adoption as solving the difficulties under consideration. At the same time, human nature being what it is, we shall probably never do away altogether with a meaningless and inflated use of official terms in small libraries, and anything like a general adoption of our

proposed definitions in the larger libraries is perhaps unlikely. Even so, the adoption of these or other definitions for all general statistical purposes would be of great advantage.

#### SUGGESTED NOMENCLATURE AND DEFINITIONS OF LIBRARY POSITIONS.

##### *Chief Librarian. Bibliothécaire en Chef. Haupt Bibliothekar.*

The head librarian of a number of libraries, or a library system, under the charge of « librarians ». In the case of a single large library (e. g., the British Museum), where the departmental chiefs may fitly be styled librarians, the term chief librarian may be used to designate the head ; with such exception the term should never be employed for the head of a single library.

Le chef de plusieurs bibliothèques ou d'un système bibliotechnique sous la direction de « bibliothécaires ». Dans le cas d'une grande bibliothèque isolée (par exemple, le Musée Britannique) où on peut justement classer les chefs de départements comme « bibliothécaires », on peut employer le terme « bibliothécaire en chef » pour désigner le chef ; ce n'est que dans les cas semblables qu'on peut employer ce titre pour le chef d'une bibliothèque unique.

Der Haupt mehrerer Bibliotheken oder eines Bibliotheken-Systems, von Bibliothekern geleitet. Bei einer grosseren einzigen Bibliothek (Z. B. das britische Museum) wo man die Abteilungs-chefs passend « Bibliothekar » nennen kann, darf man den Namen Haupt Bibliothekar anwenden, um den Chef zu beschreiben. Ausser solcher Fällen darf man den Titel nicht benutzen für den Chef einer einzigen Bibliothek.

##### *Deputy Librarian. Bibliothécaire-adjoint. Vice-Bibliothekar.*

The principal assistant to a Chief Librarian, whose work belongs strictly to the general administration of a system. Not to be confused with Sub-Librarian.

L'aide principal d'un bibliothécaire en chef, dont le travail se borne absolument à l'administration d'un système.

Der Haupt-Gehilfe eines Haupt-Bibliothekars, dessen Tätigkeit sich auf die Leitung eines Systems verschränkt.

##### *Librarian. Bibliothécaire. Bibliothekar.*

The head of a library. Not to be confused with Chief Librarian, the head of a system of libraries.

Le chef d'une bibliothèque.

Der Chef einer Bibliothek.

##### *Sub-librarian. Sous-bibliothécaire. Unter-Bibliothekar.*

The principal assistant to a librarian, whose work is independent of departments, but not independent of a building. Not to be confused with Deputy Librarian.

L'aide principal d'un bibliothécaire, dont le travail est indépendant des départements, non pas du bâtiment.

Der Haupt-Gehilfe eines Bibliothekars, dessen Tätigkeit unabhängig der Abteilungen nicht aber des Gebäudes ist.

##### *Librarian-in-charge. Garde-bibliothécaire (?)*

##### *Aufsichts-Bibliothekar (?)*

The officer in charge of a district or branch library, or one of the departments of a central library, in a system under the control of a Chief Librarian. Not to be confused with Librarian.

L'employé chargé d'une bibliothèque filiale ou d'une bibliothèque d'arrondissement, ou d'un département d'une bibliothèque principale dans un système sous la direction d'un bibliothécaire en chef.

Der Beamte der als Vorgesetzter einer Bezirks- oder Zweig-Bibliothek dient, oder eine Abteilung der Haupt Bibliothek führt in einem System von einem Haupt-Bibliothekar geleitet.

##### *Branch librarian. Bibliothécaire d'une filiale.*

##### *Zweigs-Bibliothekar.*

Term not to be used. See Librarian-in-charge.

Ne doit pas être employé. Voir Garde-Bibliothécaire.  
Soll nicht gebraucht werden. Siehe Aufsichts-Bibliothekar.

*Chief assistant. Assistant principal. Haupt-Gehilfe.*

An officer in charge of a department, subordinate to a Sub-librarian. If subordinate to a Deputy Librarian the corresponding office would be Librarian-in-charge.

Un employé qui gouverne un département, subordonné à un sous-bibliothécaire. Si ce département était subordonné à un bibliothécaire-adjoint, le titre correspondant serait Garde-bibliothécaire.

Ein Beamte der eine Abteilung führt einem Unter-Bibliothekar untergeworfen. Wenn einem Vice-Bibliothekar untergeworfen, ist er ein Aufsichts-Bibliothekar.

*Senior Assistant. Assistant. Gehilfe.*

A higher grade of library assistant.  
Un grade plus élevé d'assistant.  
Eine höhere Stufe der Bibliotheks-Gehilfen.

*Junior Assistant. Sous-Assistant. Unter-Gehilfe.*

A lower grade of library assistant.  
Un grade plus bas d'assistant.  
Eine niedrigere Stufe der Bibliotheks-Gehilfen.

*Attendant. Garçon de salle. Dienstmann.*

A person who carries books, and performs other mechanical unskilled routine. If a youth the term « page » may be used.

Une personne qui porte les livres, et qui rend des services matériels semblables. Si c'est un jeune garçon, on peut le nommer « page ».

Eine Person die Bücher trägt oder sonstige mechanische Pflichten erfüllt. Wenn ein Bursche darf man ihn « Page » nennen.

*Janitor. Concierge. Aufseher.*

An officer (generally in uniform) whose principal duty is to maintain order in the building.

Un employé (qui porte généralement un uniforme) dont le devoir principal est de maintenir l'ordre et d'exercer une surveillance dans le bâtiment.

Ein Beamter (meistentheils in Uniform) dessen Hauptpflicht die Ordnungs-Erhaltung ist.

*Clerk. Commis. Schreiber.*

A person employed in general clerking work, not a part of the professional library staff.

Employé aux travaux d'écritures, mais qui ne fait pas partie du cadre du personnel professionnel.

Beamte mit allgemeinen schriftlicher Pflichten beschäftigt. Kein Teil des professionellen Stands.

*Probationer. Candidat. Kandidat.*

An assistant « on trial », or not permanently appointed, who may or may not be paid.