

strengths. Existing collections of documentation and expertise are seen as one strong point, and another is immediate, pressing requirements — the information and technical needs of native industries. "Every effort," states a TIS report on Bolivia, "should be made (1) to make use of all information resources now existing in the country; and (2) to select carefully and obtain the additional resources absolutely needed to fill the gaps."

A good example is pointed out in a report regarding information services to industry in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica. TIS engineer Mr. Jack Chander was invited to conduct the survey by officials of "ICAITI" — an acronym for the name in Spanish of the IDRC- and OAS-sponsored Central American Research Institute for Industry. He advises them to visit the Inter-American Center for Documentation and Agricultural Information in Turrialba, Costa Rica, and to study its *modus operandi*. This Center is part of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IICA), an OAS-sponsored organization with the aim of upgrading agricultural practice in Central America. "The Center," remarks Mr. Chander's report, "has excellent facilities and provides assistance to other documentation centers in the field of agriculture throughout Latin America. In order to facilitate cooperation among agricultural libraries, it has become the headquarters for the Interamerican Association of Agricultural Librarians and Documentalists. It also provides short courses to train agricultural librarians and has a long list of publications. The structure of the documentation center of ICAITI should be similar to the IICA documentation center."

This Center and other existing facilities are perceived as nodes in a potential network, so the next buzz word is "integrate". The assessment of present resources and needs is step one of a planned long-term effort by each country to create a coordinated system with a single primary national focus and close links with similar services in neighboring countries and in the developed countries. The synergistic benefits of coordination range from savings on acquisition through bulk buying and avoiding duplication of infrequently

used material, to heightened opportunities for tapping world information resources and promoting their use within the country.

Perhaps the key recommendation, however, is that industrial information people should see themselves as interfaces between the sources of knowledge or knowledge itself, and those who are in a position to put it to work for the benefit of the country. Documentation centers, for instance, acquire and store collections as libraries do, but they also process information in a number of ways to promote its use. The Bolivia report recommends the establishment of a National Information Center whose functions would include compilation of union catalogues of scientific and technical material held anywhere in the country, as well as the offering of training courses for library staff and regular current awareness service to inform those interested of usable new knowledge.

The establishment within the network of technical assistance centers with the specific mission of discharging the interface responsibility is also recommended. Staffed by engineers and other technical specialists and backed up by documentation facilities, these centers are the focus of contact between the user and the technical advisor. As TIS people do in Canada, their personnel should be prepared to advise on new equipment and methods, to do feasibility studies, to provide management advice for specific situations — in general, to foster the optimal utilization of human and material resources available in the country.

"There's a further side benefit of this to Canada," adds Gérard Kirouac. "Many requests about the availability of equipment come to us from foreign contacts and we have been able to recommend Canadian suppliers, with the result that there have been some substantial orders for our products." □

Bruce Henry

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