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ABSTRACT

The largest patent libraries annually acquire over 300,000 descriptions. The tasks and problems of patent libraries are characteristic for patent libraries in many countries. However, until recently, international cooperation mainly boiled down to mutual patent document exchanges. These libraries did not participate in various international associations. A meeting of the heads of patent libraries of the IFLA country-members held in Moscow in 1970, proved that there are opportunities for extending cooperation between patent libraries. One of the main problems facing these libraries is the organization of the patent description collections according to the union classification system of the International Patent Cataloging (IPC). Only the first steps have been made in the transition to the IPC system, since the patent departments are classifying only new patent description publications according to this system. Another important problem is the organization of the retrospective exchange of the descriptions of inventions and information publications. Patent libraries should exchange opinions about the forms which further cooperation among them should take. (NH)

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Certain Problems of International Co-operation
of Libraries of Patent Departments

Libraries of patent departments have begun to appear in the industrially developed countries in the last century along with the adoption of laws protecting industrial property and organisation of corresponding patent departments. In Russia industrial property began to be granted various privileges way back in 1812. At present besides the All-Union Patent Technical Library there is in the Soviet Union a ramified network of libraries, organs of information and patent services, collections of patent documentations numbering over 250,000,000 copies of descriptions of inventions and information publications of patent departments.

The specific features of the activity of these departments in various countries connected with peculiarities of protecting the industrial property by juridical documents in the form of author's certificates and patents and also the special character of patent documentation which at the same time is the source of

information and a juridical document have imparted a deep imprint on the librarian work.

At present these libraries can be divided conditionally into two categories depending on the obvious and research system of patenting the inventions. In those countries which keep to the former system, the patent libraries have a much narrower task of organisation of book stocks. Very often it is restricted to acquisition of patent documentations and patent and juridical literature of its own and of other countries. Those libraries in which the research system is used acquire additionally scientific and technical, agricultural, medical and other literature.

The existence of the two systems is conditioned in the principally different character of the activities of the patent departments using the obvious and the research systems of patenting the inventions. In the first case a patent department does not subject patent applications of the inventors to a thorough study. Protests about incorrect issue of patents are being considered not by patent offices but by a corresponding court instance although with a proper use of the research patenting system. Therefore in this case there is no need for scientific and technical, agricultural and other literature. In the libraries of this type the descriptions of the inventions are very often being arranged according to the geographical and number sequence so that experts use

them but rarely. In the second case, libraries in addition to the patented documentations and literature concerning patent, juridical and licence problems have in their stocks scientific and technical, agricultural, medical and other literature, required for making an examination of the invention claims from the point of view of its world and local novelty. The descriptions stock are arranged in geographical-systematic-numeration or systematic-geographical-numeration sequence which is very convenient for examining claims.

Our knowledge of the librarian activities in Rumania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Bulgaria, FRG, Britain is much better than those in the USA, Austria, Holland and in other countries. We have insufficient information about the libraries in the developing countries to characterize their activities. However if we compare the patent libraries with any other libraries we can, in our opinion, single out specific features which can be attributed only to them. Thus the stocks of patent documentations, patent and juridical literature and other sources of information serve as the basis for:

(a) juridical protection of the industrial state property as a whole; and in the capitalist countries - also for individuals;

(b) approval of the priority in the inventive work;

(c) solution of patent and licence problems.

It is necessary to stress especially the specific character of the patent documentation proper, which is not only the source of scientific and technical information, which is an important factor in itself, but also the source of the juridical and economic information. Each description of the invention contains this kind of information. On the whole the invention descriptions stock should be regarded as documentation of primary importance while studying the history of the invention, development and the present state of machines, mechanisms and technological processes in forecasting the development of various branches of the national economy, and so on.

The above-mentioned features of the patent libraries testify to the specifics in solving the librarian and bibliographical problems and, first of all, to the questions of responsibility for the promptness and quality of their execution. Naturally, the patent librarian experts do not subject the invention claims for expertise themselves. It is not their duty also to state the priority of an invention. These questions are being solved by the patent office experts who directly conduct the expertise of the claims. However, the experts make their expertise on the basis of the patent office libraries whose librarian and bibliographical documentation stocks are organized accordingly

and with due account of the demands of the experts. Here, too, the responsibilities of the libraries can hardly be overestimated. We are far from belittling in this connection the role and importance of other special libraries. It is general knowledge that each of them is tackling big and important problems. Nevertheless it would be wrong not to note the specific features of the patent library activities.

Along with the already-mentioned a few words should be said about the creation of the facilities for the specialists engaged in the work in various branches of science and industry for working with patent documentations as well as technical, agricultural, medical and other literature. For instance, the FRG Patent Library grants the use of literature and patent documentation not only to departmental experts but also to all those who wish to do so. On the contrary, the All-Union Patent Technical Library issues literature only to the experts of the All-Union Research Institute of State Patent Expertise. This is conditioned not only by the differences in the activities of the libraries but also with the presence of stocks of scientific technical, agricultural and other literature on the premises of the libraries of other patent departments. In this connection we may speak of the different approach of the patent libraries towards the creation of conditions for the use of the sources of scientific and technical information by specialists in

industry and science, by the patent experts and by other persons.

Finally, speaking about the place occupying by these libraries in the general librarian system, we would like to note the number of the information sources in the form of the description of inventions. At present there are about 12 million published descriptions of the inventions in the world and the largest libraries, like the USSR, All-Union Patent Library possess over 40 million descriptions together with duplicates.

The patent libraries of Czechoslovakia - over 12 million descriptions, Bulgaria - over 5 million, Hungary - 8 million, etc. The same factors condition huge scale and practical significance of work with the collections of the patent libraries. For comparison sake we shall mention that the collections of the Lenin State Library contain over 25 million copies of literature, those of the USSR State Public Library of Scientific and Technical Literature - over 6 million, the Fundamental Library of Social Sciences has over 7 million and the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library - about 14 million of various information sources.

The patent libraries collections are being steadily replenished by big numbers of acquisitions. Every year over 525,000 claims are being examined, according to Patents. Spur to American Progress published in Washington in 1965, and 370,000 patents and author's

certificates granted. (In a number of countries the invention descriptions are not published and therefore there are more patents being granted than there are descriptions of them.) Thus in the number of the patent documentations being acquired annually by the patent libraries they occupy not by far the last place. The largest of them annually acquire over 300,000 descriptions.

Thus all the patent libraries are united in their efforts by the necessity to solve a host of general problems in ensuring the protection of industrial property in the form of the author's certificates and patents. In their more than a 100-year-old history, the libraries have formed into a special category of the librarian-bibliographical and information organisations. In their totality they represent a harmonious system of special libraries which assist firstly, the scientific and technical progress of their countries and secondly, perform specific function of the patent departments.

These tasks and problems are characteristic for patent libraries of many countries. Hence the desire to exchange the working experience on equal and mutually-advantageous terms. However, until recent times the international co-operation mainly boiled down to the mutual patent documentations exchange. Regretfully, these libraries did not take part in various international

associations. Obviously it was due to the fact that although these libraries were easily accessible to the readers of a given country, nevertheless, many of them could be regarded, first of all, as narrowly departmental and infrequently as libraries of this or that organisation.

A meeting of the heads of patent libraries of the CMEA country-members was held in Moscow this year. We hope that the experience of the meeting will help to extend international contacts between the patent libraries of all the countries taking part in the 36th IFLA Session. The result of the meeting have proved that there are big opportunities for the extending of co-operation between the patent libraries in most varied ways.

The patent libraries of Bulgaria, Hungary, GDR, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia have agreed to extend co-operation in exchanging patent documentations in their possession, mutual information about literature on patent-juridical and license questions. The meeting discussed questions concerning mutual information about the national patent documentation catalogues, methodological problems, in particular the working out of recommendations on acquisition, organisation and use of the patent collections and of other sources of scientific and technical information.

One of the main outcomes of the meeting was a broad

exchange of information on the basic trends of the activities of each library and on the ways of solving various problems. This will undoubtedly help to map out in the future work concrete ways for the solution of the general problems facing the patent libraries. A number of questions were raised at the meeting the solution of which will help to improve the work of the patent libraries.

From our point of view one of the main problems facing these libraries in the present-day conditions - is the organization of the patent description collections according to the union classification system of the International Patent Cataloging (IPC). At present a number of countries have already gone over to the IPC system or are in the process of doing so. To these belong: GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, FRG, France, Netherlands, Scandinavian countries and some others. It should be noted with satisfaction that the United States as of 1969 have begun to classify the descriptions according to the IPC system.

These problems should be solved uniformly because many patent libraries organize the descriptions of various countries either by the national classification, e.g., in geographic-systematic-numeration order or in geographic-numeration system. Only a few of the patent libraries as, for instance, in FRG, the Hague International Institute, among some others, have organized their description catalogues as their national and as

catalogues of other countries according to the systematic-geographic-numeration system. The organization of the descriptions cataloguing has demanded a great amount of complicated work of reclassification of the patent descriptions stocks of many countries.

The unification of these stocks will facilitate their use by patent experts and by the readers at large. The examination of patent documentations in the absence of the union classification system requires the study of various systems of classification. This makes it difficult for the specialists to put the inventions to good use, because the national classification patterns are, as a rule, based on different methodological methods making it difficult to take stock of the specifics of each system.

At present, only the very first steps were made in the transition to the IPC system, since the patent departments are classifying according to this system only new patent description publications. In the USSR all the publications beginning with 1924 have already been reclassified. Some of the patent departments, among others in FRG, the Hague International Institute, in the United States are in the process of reclassifying their national descriptions collections according to IPC system. In this conditions it is highly important to organize the exchange of information concerning the collections which have already been reclassified in the past years. This

will be of great help in organizing collections according to the union classification.

The union collections will be organized and carried out all the better if the work will be undertaken by the specialists of the national patent administrations themselves. This may not be the case if these departments will also try to reclassify the collections of other countries as well.

No less important problem is the organization of the retrospective exchange of the descriptions of inventions and information publications. This will enable the libraries in various countries to fill the gaps in their collections and facilitate various patent research.

In organizing patent documentations stocks, it is essential to obtain descriptions of inventions through the international exchange in several copies since each system of classification envisages many-sided presentation of the content of the nature of this or that invention. While being arranged, the descriptions should be placed also by the related indexes. This, too, requires to have several copies available. Obviously, a certain part of the patent libraries, besides organizing their descriptions stocks in a systematic order is also makes up the collection in the geographic-numeration order. In this connection the All-Union Patent Technical Library is quite satisfied with the existing exchange of the patent description with the patent department libraries

of Bulgaria, Hungary, GDR, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, FRG, Britain, France, Switzerland and of other countries from which we receive information in several copies. We hope to organize similar exchange of patent documentations with the patent libraries in other countries as well.

We feel it fruitful for the interested libraries to raise the question of extending also the exchange of information published by patent departments and the exchange of patent-juridical and license literature. This kind of exchange will be of no less importance than the exchange of the patent documentations. At present moment it has already been started only between several libraries and on the limited scale at that. The patent-juridical and license literature is being published not only by the patent but by other departments as well. In most cases it is rather difficult to follow the new publications on the above-mentioned topics, because there are no special prospects about this literature. At the same time, most of the patent libraries are acquiring all the patent-juridical and license literature coming out in the country. Therefore, we suggest that the libraries in the future buy the literature in numbers sufficient to exchange it for the similar literature in other countries.

Obviously, a number of patent department libraries

will be interested in the exchange of scientific-technical, agricultural, medical and other literature on the basis of which experts examine patent claims. Regretfully, no practical steps have been taken in this direction. The mutual exchange of these information sources will make it possible for each patent library to organize patent collections similar to those in other countries. Thus, a basis will be created which will help patent experts to examine thoroughly the claims. On the whole, it will improve the quality of an expertise and allow to make a more objective decisions concerning the claims. The exchange of the kind is also important due to the fact that today many libraries are unable to acquire on their own all the technical literature being published.

The patent department libraries work, essentially, with one and the same patent documentations and many of the specialists study this sort information for the solution of one and the same problems. In these conditions, naturally, a question arises about the development of a union methodics of organizing collections of patent descriptions and of other patent documentations, required both for experts and for other specialists studying patent documentations. The joint development of such a method would benefit the exchange of experience in organizing patent documentations stocks. Other recommendations of the general methodological character

could have also been worked out on this basis.

Side by side with the above-discussed problems it seems expedient to exchange opinion about the forms of further co-operation among the patent libraries. The study of the work connected with the problems discussed will further improve the activities of the libraries member-countries of the present forum.