

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In July 1957 the National Science Foundation awarded a grant of £10,000 to Aslib for an investigation to be made into the comparative efficiency of four indexing systems. This work was to be undertaken at the College of Aeronautics, Cranfield, England, under the direction of the Librarian, Mr. Cyril Cleverdon. The grant made was to cover the first stage of the project which involved the indexing by the four systems of 18,000 research reports and periodical articles in the general field of aeronautical engineering, with half of the documents dealing with the specialised subject of high speed aerodynamics. Three indexers were required for the work, and they took up their appointments on the 1st April, 1958.

The staff consisted originally of Mr. J. R. Sharp, Mr. J. F. Hadlow and Mr. T. Opatowski. Mr. J. R. Sharp is a Fellow of the Library Association, and after serving in the Royal Air Force from 1940-1945, returned to work at Hull Public Library until 1954, when he took the position of Technical Librarian with Short Bros. & Harland Ltd., a large aircraft firm in Northern Ireland. There he had experience in indexing the type of literature covered by the project and he resigned that post to join the project staff.

Mr. J. F. Hadlow spent two years with Northumberland County Library before joining the Royal Air Force for two years as a National Serviceman. He then spent a year at Newcastle School of Librarianship where he passed the Registration examination of the Library Association. For a further year he was again with the County Library before joining the staff, but had had no experience in the type of work involved in the project.

For the third position Mr. T. Opatowski was appointed. He had completed a post-graduate course in aeronautics, and had spent several years in aircraft research work. He showed a real aptitude for the work and was a stimulating and valuable member of the team, particularly in the early stages of the work when a great deal of time had to be spent in evolving satisfactory methods for setting up the various systems and with the revision of the schedules of the Faceted Classification. However, when more time had to be given to the basic work of indexing documents, he found it increasingly onerous, and by October 1958 came to the decision that he would not be able to continue to do for two years the type of work that the project involved, and with reluctance his resignation was accepted.

There is no doubt that this stage of the project imposed a severe mental strain on the indexers, and it is to the credit of the project staff that, in spite of unexpected problems in the early stages the work was completed in the scheduled time. Following the resignation of Mr. Opatowski, I considered it would be inadvisable to take the risk of appointing another technical person, due to the danger of their under-estimating the difficulties involved, and as a result, Miss B. Warburton was appointed and joined the staff on the 1st January, 1959. Miss Warburton, an Associate of the Library Association, started her career in Sheffield Public Libraries, and for five years had been librarian of the United Steel Co. Ltd. in Sheffield.

The Council of Aslib appointed an Advisory Committee consisting of Mr. B.C. Vickery, at that time Librarian of Imperial Chemical Industries, Akers Research Laboratories and now Deputy Director of the Lending Library Unit, Mr. J. Farradane, Information Officer, Tate

& Lyle Ltd. , and Mr. R.C.Wright, Librarian, Royal Aircraft Establishment. In addition Mr. W.K.Lowry, Manager, Technical Information Libraries, Bell Telephone Laboratories, agreed to serve as a corresponding member, and, following his appointment as Aslib Research Director, Mr. C.W.Hanson became a committee member in January 1959. This committee met at Cranfield on five occasions.