

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

THE data obtained from the co-operating libraries in the progress of the *Union Catalog of Theological Source Material* were reorganized and checked through during the past year. This phase of the work is nearly finished and by next year it should be possible to draw some conclusions from the material submitted. It has been decided by the Committee to continue the work and to approach it from a subject point of view. It is planned to draw the titles from standard bibliographies and recognized studies.

In 1954 the Board of the *Vereniging voor Seminarie- en Kloosterbibliothecarissen* sponsored a circular letter regarding a plan to establish an Institute for the purpose of reproducing research materials in the ecclesiastical sciences. The results of this survey were contained in a letter received from them under date of June 13, 1955. The text of this letter is given in full since it is felt that the conclusions and the reasons given will be of general interest to the members.

ADMINISTRATIEBUREAU

DER VERENIGING VOOR SEMINARIE- EN KLOOSTERBIBLIOTHECARISSEN

NIJMEGEN, 13th June, 1955.
Heyendaelseweg 290.

TELEFOON (K 8800) 24748

POSTREKENING 456817

BETR.:

REF.:

Rev. J. H. Harrington,
Archbishop Corrigan Memorial Library,
St. Joseph's Seminary,
Dunwoodie,
YONKERS.

DEAR FATHER HARRINGTON:

You will remember that in the beginning of 1954 I sent you a circular-letter regarding a scheme to establishing an Institute bent on reproducing in book form and publishing at cost price works that continue to be a matter of great importance for the ecclesiastical sciences, but are often only to be had with great difficulty.

The circular-letter in question was sent to a number of international bodies, as well as to many scientific institutions and associations, and to many scholars all over the world.

An unexpectedly great number of answers was obtained, which all, except one, agree in this, that they sincerely applaud the idea of the systematic republication of such important texts.

This generally favorable reception, however, in no wise guaranteed the practical possibility of the scheme, but it did justify the continuance of the inquiry and promoted it to a high degree.

However, the registrations, the mutual collation and closer considerations of the information I was provided with, as well as the suggestions and the remarks I received on the one side, and my personal investigations on the other, have led to the conclusion, that the establishment of an Institute as contemplated by me, would be too risky for it to be reasonably ventured. And this on the strength of the following considerations "in solidum," in connection with which the commercial exigencies should ever be kept in mind, in order to be reasonably sure, that in the event of the Institute being established, it will be able for at least several decades to produce, and to secure a market as well:

1.—As far as the older speculative theologians are concerned, the interest in them is beginning to flag, and it is likely that it will do so even more during the coming decades.

2.—If a corpus or series were to be compiled of older theological and/or philosophical works, it would not be necessary to include the best authors, because of their works quite recent critical editions have been published or are publishing. But as a matter of course such series are bound to lose much of their value and salability through this.

3.—Many texts written before the invention of the art of printing and which were edited in print at a later time, are so hopelessly corrupt, as to make it imperative to revert to the manuscripts themselves in the case of serious study; or else these texts are too questionable for an unmodified re-edition to be acceptable (moreover, a great many, often much more important works have never come out in print at all and consequently could no wise be included in my program).

4.—With regard to works considered to appertain to the reference-

library of students of ecclesiastical sciences (and those, after all, my plan chiefly aims at) and with respect to the manuscripts referred to above, a growing application of microreproduction should seriously be reckoned with, even though one were to assume that the technical development of microreproduction should no longer achieve any further real progress.

5.—All the texts which would come into consideration of being included in my program, are not protected either by copyright-acts of the several countries, or by international agreements.

6.—Partly, I know personally, and partly I surmise the existence elsewhere of similar plans, which are not to be ignored as part of the overall picture.

It will be needless to tell you, that I have only reluctantly decided to abandon my plan. But from the very beginning of my inquiry as to the practicability of the same, I have ever kept before me two rules, viz.: (a) Even if the inquiry should lead to a negative result, even then the interests which may be served by an eventual favorable result, would make it worth while to just make this inquiry. (b) In proportion as more should be at stake in the realization of my plan, the more it will be necessary that the chance of success should be safeguarded. Therefore, I do not think there will be any compromising myself, if I draw the conclusions from the above mentioned results of the inquiry instituted on the lines adopted.

In the meantime I once more wish to express my sincere thanks to you and to all who sent an answer to my previous circular-letter; especially to those, who with great responsiveness and readiness entered into the details of my scheme.

Furthermore I wish to give the assurance of my gratitude to the Board of the "Vereniging voor Seminaire- en Kloosterbibliothecarissen" (V. S. K. B.) and to the Board of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholisch-Theologischer Bibliotheken" (AKThB), who have defrayed the costs of the inquiry.

Likewise I wish to state, that I shall always be prepared to give my advice to those, who may think it possible to realize the same or similar plans either in a different form or under different circumstances.

Sincerely yours,

DR. J. D. BAKKER, S.S.S.

It is our privilege once again to express our gratitude to Francis Cardinal Spellman without whose constant encouragement and financial aid this Committee would not be able to continue its work.

JOHN H. HARRINGTON,
Dunwoodie, N. Y.