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OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

TO : Lewis C. Coffin, Associate Director,
Processing Department

DATE: December 9, 1960

FROM : Emma Montgomery, Head, Hispanic Exchange Section, Exchange and
Gift Division

SUBJECT: Regional Seminar on Bibliography, Documentation, and Exchange
of Publications, organized by the Government of Mexico with
the collaboration of Unesco (Mexico City, November 21-December
4, 1960).

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*all OAS members represented
except Venez; Dom. Rep. Nicaragua
(US mem-off)*

The original plan was to divide the members of the Seminar into three groups, each one to consider one of the topics mentioned. However, most countries had sent only one delegate, and most participants were interested in all of the topics. Therefore, the three topics were taken up consecutively, and only on 2 or 3 occasions were separate meetings held. The conclusions (minus details) reached are as follows:

1. Bibliography of Central America and the Caribbean.

Group I of the Seminar constituted a Third Seminar on Bibliography of Central America and the Caribbean. The first two seminars were held in Havana in 1955 and in Panama in 1956, and resulted in publication of the Bibliografía de Centroamérica y del Caribe, edited annually by Fermín Peraza in Havana. The 1956-1958 volumes have been published by various means, and the 1959 volume is now in press in Havana. The Brazilian Government has offered to publish the 1960 volume.

It was decided to expand this bibliography as rapidly as possible to include other countries of Latin America, and to change the title to Bibliografía de América Latina. Argentina and Chile are to be included in the forthcoming 1959 volume, and Uruguay will be included in 1960.

For the time being only books and pamphlets are included; additional bibliographies for periodicals and reference works are contemplated.

Entries are to be supplied by "bibliographic groups" in each country. It is hoped that beginning with 1961 the publication can be financed from the sale of copies.

Unesco is trying to encourage each country to publish its national bibliography; it was thought that the Bibliografía de América Latina would not obviate their publication.

2. Bibliography and Documentation.

Group II concentrated on the possibility of establishing documentation centers in various countries. It was agreed that the following

steps are prerequisite:

- (a) Establish objectives
- (b) Determine the existing resources
- (c) Determine what is needed
- (d) Provide for financing the project.

The University of Chile has evolved a plan for establishing a bibliographic and documentation center, and I believe they will carry it out.

There was a good deal of discussion of a possible union catalog of the holdings of Latin American libraries. The Brazilians are very enthusiastic about this, but most delegates agreed that this is something for the distant future and that each country must first organize its own libraries, catalog all holdings, and establish national union catalogs. Better education for librarians (including bibliographers) is also critically needed.

3. Exchange of publications.

This is a topic which has been much discussed, with little tangible result, and a good deal of what was said was repetitious.

It was agreed that Latin American librarians will try to work for ratification of the Unesco draft convention of 1958 by their governments. In this connection, Unesco plans to help organize round table meetings in each country to which Government officials and other influential persons will be invited. Postal and customs difficulties would also be discussed.

It was generally agreed that new international agreements are not needed so much as compliance with the existing agreements. There was no enthusiasm for a new Inter-American convention at this time.

Several countries are interested in establishing national exchange centers. This question, with special attention to calculation of the cost, would be included in the agendas of the proposed round tables. Unesco may possibly be able to help set up an exchange center in one of the smaller countries having a good output of publications, such as Peru, Chile, or Colombia.

Most delegates felt that international exchange activities should be centered in the National Library rather than the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Uruguay is now in the process of making this change, and this action was commended.

Miss Ball from USEE described its activities with emphasis on its limitations. The example of USEE may assist others, particularly the proposed Chilean documentation center.

Delegates expressed the hope of having another Seminar in 1962 or 1963, possibly in Santiago, Chile.