

S.A. Archives Journal; issued by the Archives of the Union of South Africa. Number 1, 1959.

This publication, of which the first number is dated 1959, was begun in order to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the appointment in 1919 of the first Chief Archivist of the Union. It is issued by the Union Archives, and orders for subscriptions may be sent to that institution, whose address is Private Bag 236, Union Buildings, Pretoria. The cost is not shown (our number was received in exchange for Archives and Manuscripts) and it is presumed that the publication will be annual.

This journal is evidently intended to be read by those who are bilingual. Forewords by the Minister and Secretary for Education Arts and Science and the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission are in Afrikaans, for instance, and no translation is offered. About half the articles are in English, however, and the choice of language offers some surprises. An article on Dr. G. McCall Theal, a Canadian-born librarian who was nominated for the position of Archivist of Cape Colony and Parliamentary Librarian, is written in Afrikaans, although all the quotations from Theal's writings are in English. Articles on the Natal Archival Repository and on the Cape Archives are in Afrikaans, but one on the Map Collection of the Transvaal Archives is in English. This may, of course, be part of an official effort to acquaint the Afrikaans-speaking S.A. archivist of developments in areas where English is more often spoken, and vice versa.

From the present reviewer's viewpoint, the most interesting article is that by Dr. P.J. Venter, a former Assistant Chief Archivist of the Union. Dr. Venter recalls his experiences as an officer of the Union Archives, whose staff he joined in 1930. His experiences have later been paralleled to a large extent by Australian archivists. He early learned the value of library training, particularly as it taught him something of the discipline necessary in any one seeking to apply order to an unorganised mass of materials. He also learned, to his cost, the futility of trying to card index the tremendous mass of documents which came under his purview. He speaks too of his realisation of the need for study in administrative history, and his comments on destruction schedules make interesting reading for the Australian archivist.

R.C.S.

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