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# "ALL MANNER OF BOOKS" Cambridge University Has Been Printing For Four Centuries

UNIVERSITY publishing has been well in the news in *The Listener* in 1946. Early in the year we interviewed the Overseas Manager of the Oxford University Press, David Fullerton; a few months later, the University of New Zealand took the first steps towards establishing a University Press here in the Dominion, and we made that the occasion for a long article on how university publishing began (at Oxford and Cambridge), how it operates to-day in England, America, and Australia, and how New Zealand's University had taken this step after about 30 years of sporadic consideration and deferment. And now, just as the year closes, we have had the opportunity to talk to a representative of the Cambridge University Press, who is visiting New Zealand.

He is C. E. Carrington, a New Zealander himself (in his own words "a backsliding New Zealander") and he is Educational Manager to the Cambridge University Press. He has come to look into the local market for books of the kind Cambridge publishes. For himself, personally, it is his first visit for 20 years. He left New Zealand to go to the first world war (in the infantry), stayed in England afterwards, married a New Zealander (a daughter of the late Mr. Justice McGregor), joined the Cambridge Press in 1929, and served again in the second world war as a staff officer, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He was for a long time on the personal staff of Air-Marshal Sir Arthur ("Bomber") Harris, and was liaison officer between Harris's headquarters and General Montgomery's. He freely admits that he "has a story to tell about that," but doesn't intend to write a book, doesn't think much of "gossip from the servants' hall," and would rather talk about the Cambridge University Press. So we invited him to go ahead.

### Ancient Charter

Cambridge to-day prints mainly school and college textbooks and works of learning. As a publishing firm, the organisation is not nearly as big as what Mr. Carrington calls, "our very good friends and rivals at Oxford," but it consoles itself with the knowledge that as a university press it is more than a match for its rival.

It operates on a charter granted by Henry VIII. in 1534, which is still current. It gave Cambridge University authority to print "all manner of books," and Oxford did not have that right until a hundred years later. Cambridge began printing the Bible about 1612, and still has that privilege.

"As a matter of fact, minute accuracy is essential in printing dates from those early Bible printings," Mr. Carrington said. "We have always offered a guinea to anyone who found an error in the Bible, and I believe it may be claimed once in 20 years or so. We now carry that same standard into our mathematical and scientific works, and we claim that we do by far the most accurate work. We're printers to the Royal So-

ciety, and we do all sorts of terribly abstruse mathematical papers."

Mr. Carrington spoke fondly of the extraordinary people who tackle the work of proof-reading in this branch of publishing. When we asked him how it was done, he told us that a corps of learned men were kept locked up in cages, and employed in checking every symbol—correcting the accents of distinguished Greek Scholars, and so on: "It's a peculiar form of lunacy, of course," he said.

### Managed by "Syndics"

The press is administered to-day under a constitution framed in 1696 and used continuously since then. It was organised by Dr. Richard Bentley, Master of Trinity College, after whom its London publishing house is named. And it is governed by a managing board of the university composed of about twelve "syndics"—all members of the teaching staff. All its officers are on the staff of the University. There are about 400 employed in the printing house in Cambridge, and 100 in Bentley House in London.

The concern has been self-supporting since Bentley's time, and is a money-making branch of the university. Its policy is to make profits on textbooks and standard works of reference and devote them to the production of unprofitable works of learning. If there remains a surplus it goes to (for example) the cost of a new building for the library, or perhaps the foundation of a Professorship. A chair of American History was recently founded in this way.

### We Get Our Share

When we asked him about exports and shortages, Mr. Carrington said that he believes New Zealand is getting its share of what books can be produced. Great Britain is already exporting more books than she was before the war, he said, but although she was "more than supplying the current demand," there was still the huge deficit of six years to be made up; and that deficit, coming from the negative causes of the war, had also been exaggerated by a positive thing—the world-wide increase in the demand for education.

Two important factors were governing Britain's book exports. First, there was a huge increase (as compared with the trade of the 'thirties) in exports to Europe itself. Countries like Norway, Holland, and Belgium, which had imported works of scholarship chiefly from Germany, were now being brought into the British orbit, and English was replacing German as their second language for study. Second, Britain had to



C. E. CARRINGTON  
Moral links are being strengthened

export to the United States to get dollars. Nevertheless, Mr. Carrington said, a very high proportion goes to the Dominions, higher now than it was before the war.

Publishers appreciate, he said, that however the political links may be weakening—and rightly weakening—between the units of the Commonwealth, moral links were being strengthened. And the export of books was a vital part of this new strengthening.

### Exchange of Brains

From this topic (which is to be the subject of a Sunday evening talk he will give from the national stations on January 5) Mr. Carrington inevitably moved to the topic of New Zealand's "export of brains."

"I've thought about it a good deal," he said, "without ever thinking about New Zealand's great loss when I went away! And really I think it all levels up. I think the most important thing about the Commonwealth, proper, is the common citizenship. You can go freely from one part of it to another, and in five minutes you've forgotten where you are.

"Did you see what that silly man Joad said in the Brains Trust the other day? He said that a British working man has more in common with a man in the same occupation in a European country than he has with a sheepfarmer outback in Australia. That's rubbish, and the Australians were rather annoyed about it when I was over there. No, I think you should let your young ones go if they must go in order to do the things they want to. You get it all back in imports—you import professors and lecturers, and technicians of various kinds, and I think it works out evenly in the end. I believe that that free interchange within the Commonwealth is one of the most important things about it, and it has to carry on."

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