I have looked through the IBM proposal for Deering Library, and I have a number of comments which I will list for whatever they may be worth (no charge).

1. There appears to be no provision for verifying the accuracy of the card-punching operations. The most satisfactory way of doing this is by machine verifying, which would require additional verifying machines and approximately double the total card-punching time. An alternative way would be to list the cards and proofread the list.

2. Although no specifications are given as to the type of student ID card which the machines would accept, I am sure that the present ID card is not suitable, and it certainly is not desirable to expect the students to carry an additional ID card for only the library. This may require a considerable amount of discussion among the several University departments involved in the creation and use of the ID card.

3. Similarly, the use of a 5-digit ID number is not compatible with the present system of ID numbers. I am sure that some other equally simple way could be devised to separate students from faculty than the way described in the proposal.

4. The only reason which I can see for the need for the alphabetic feature on the collator is because of the occasional letter which is a part of the call number. This tends to be a troublesome feature, and I suspect some way of punching the call number without requiring the alphabetic collating could be devised.

5. The proposal calls for printing catalog cards on the accounting machine, which might be a problem. I am thinking in particular that the weight of the card stock which would satisfy the library as far as durability in the catalog might be difficult to feed in the machine, and would be expensive to buy in continuous forms. A similar problem with the book pockets might be avoided by printing adhesive labels and sticking them on the pockets.
6. There are several other concepts which might be grouped under the general heading of "this really should be done by the University's Tabulating Service Department."

a. The most expensive single item of equipment is the accounting machine, and it appears to be used only a relatively small amount of time. Since the Tabulating Department now does cost of the University accounting, it would seem reasonable that they could do the book fund accounting. Similarly, since all University disbursements, including those of Deering Library, are not processed through the Tabulating Department, the printing of book purchase orders would be a natural addition. Furthermore, the Tabulating Department has the keypunchers, verifiers, operators, and experience to get this part of the job done properly.

b. Likewise, the Tabulating Department already maintains a file of student names and addresses, and it seems very foolish to attempt to maintain a complete duplicate file at Deering Library for the sole purpose of sending out notices of overdue books. I have experienced some of these problems in attempting to keep track of just such students for mailing the COLUMBIA BULLETIN.

c. Transferring these jobs to the Tabulating Department would eliminate the reproducing punch, accounting machine, and at least 2 keypunchers from the requirements. There is a good chance that the interpreter would not be necessary if the keypunch involved in the chargeout procedure were replaced by a printing punch. It is, of course, possible that some additional machines and operators might be needed in the Tabulating Department, but certainly not the accounting machine. I feel sure that the net additional cost to the university would be less.

d. On the other hand, it does not seem feasible to me at the present that the chargeout procedures can be done by the Tabulating Department because of the physical separation involved. The library would probably desire daily processing of book charges, and would have frequent desire to refer to the cut file. However, even these difficulties may be circumvented with the increasing availability of devices such as the data collection station, one of which is already included in the proposal. If the other parts of the job were to be done by the Tabulating Department, this aspect would deserve further investigation.

I don't want to close before the idea that I am not in favor of the whole idea; actually I think it is long overdue. However, I would not like to see it never attempted because the library doesn't want to start its own data processing installation, nor would I like to see it attempted and fail because of a lack of appreciation of some of the problems involved. I am sure that someone such as Howard Smith of the Tabulating Department could find many more hidden traps, and offer many more constructive suggestions.