

Letters

Quasi-Departmental Libraries

To the Editor:

Experience from the Royal University Library, Oslo, Faculty of the Social Sciences Division confirms Elrod's observations (letter regarding quasi-departmental library, *C&RL*, September 1977) on the article by Genaway and Stanford (*C&RL*, May 1977).

Before 1968, teaching institutes in the social sciences were scattered throughout Oslo and located many blocks from the university library. As a matter of necessity, the institutes built their own collections through purchases using institute funds and through gifts, and in time these collections contained most of the current social science literature in Norway. As a means of gaining access to these "private" collections, the university library first offered professional help and later other services to aid in purchasing, registering, and caring for these collections. The university library gradually assumed most of the expenses for these services, and now the use of institute funds is mainly restricted to purchase and binding costs.

Since 1968 when buildings were completed for the Faculty of Social Sciences on the University of Oslo campus, the scattered collections have been gathered in one library, administered by the university library, located on the fourth floor of a twelve-story building. The teaching institutes have offices and seminar rooms on other floors of this building and connecting buildings, and stairs and elevators provide rapid access to the library. This facility is open from 9:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and provides all library services from acquisition through circulation and interlibrary loan.

The arrangement might now seem ideal, but to many the library collections no longer seem comfortably close, and during the past ten years the library administration has waged a constant, and partially losing, battle to prevent the growth of new departmental libraries. Fairly good control has been maintained by offering rapid purchas-

ing and cataloging services for all collections, both the "official" ones in the library and the "unofficial" ones in the departments. Also there has been insistence that these QD libraries should be limited to duplicate and reference works. Still, these collections, which are inaccessible to others than members of the individual institutes, have continued to exist and grow, albeit very slowly.

It seems clear that proximity of a familiar core of books and the ability to restrict use of a collection to known persons are powerful attractions for the busy faculty member. In Oslo the attractions have been great enough that institutes are willing to pay for two library collections.—*Nancy E. Frank, Leader, Cataloging Section, Faculty of the Social Sciences Division, Royal University Library, Oslo.*

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