

tiously can produce some economies. As it is presently used as a harsh remedy, it threatens to convert free-standing, self-directing universities and their libraries into homogenized state systems. The old faiths of institutional initiative, academic freedom, flexibility of approach, and innovation are being stifled by red tape. Initiative is crippled, ultimate responsibility is diluted, and true accountability, ironically, is destroyed—all in the name of "management overkill."

To sum up the year, the Association has sought ways to respond to the multitude of problems faced by academic librarians today. We have addressed ourselves to some of them, certainly not all; indeed, some are yet to be discovered, as Mr. Anderson's committee will doubtless find. Perhaps no demonstration of our efforts to get to the grass roots, to get to know what the membership sees as most important, has been as well received as the encouragement of local chapters. Within a framework of such chapters, ACRL members can meet and discuss matters of local, regional, and

national concern in a manner that is impossible for the membership at large or the divisions to do. George Bailey, associate library director, the Claremont Colleges, Claremont, California, chairs the ad hoc Committee on the Development of Chapters in ACRL.

As outgoing president, I would like finally to express appreciation on behalf of the Association and offer my own warm thanks to the many people who helped make this year the successful one that it was: the other officers, the hard working staff at ALA headquarters, and those who chaired and otherwise served ad hoc and standing committees. The membership owes its biggest debt of gratitude by far to Beverly Lynch, ACRL's tireless executive secretary, who worked long, arduous hours on all of the Association's projects, traveled ceaselessly on the Association's behalf, attended meetings interminably, and who deserves the major portion of the credit for steering the Association through the year.

Norman E. Tanis
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Inside Washington

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Commissioner of Education Dr. John Ottina had just recommended to the Senate subcommittee that academic library programs be phased out, suggesting that the administration's proposed Library Partnership Act would soon take the place of traditional federal support for libraries. From across the felt-covered table Senator Norris Cotton fixed him with a baleful eye. "Do you really think it will make any sense to let proven programs die while you wait around for authorization on this?" the New Hampshire Republican asked.

The question from the ranking Republican on the Senate's Subcommittee on Labor-HEW Appropriations underscores the basic problem with the administration's sole venture into library support. To many people the proposed legislation looks like a diversionary tactic by an administration determined to kill off traditional federal aid to libraries.

A draft of the bill now making the rounds in Washington says its purpose is "to encourage and support innovation and improvement in library and other information services and to promote the equalization of access to such services within communities and among local, state, and regional jurisdictions through various

means, including cooperative activities among libraries and other information resources."

That sounds a great deal like two library programs already on the books—the research and demonstration part of the Higher Education Act (HEA II-B) and the interlibrary cooperation part of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA III).

According to the current draft of the bill, money would be designated for:

"(1) extending library services to the handicapped, institutionalized, and economically disadvantaged persons and identifying the information needs of such persons;

"(2) designing and developing interlibrary cooperative services and activities;

"(3) designing and demonstrating exemplary projects under which libraries may become non-traditional community resource centers;

"(4) integrating library and basic education training services; and

"(5) demonstrating improved methods of library administration and fiscal control."

No one can quarrel with a program designed to provide better service to the handicapped or to make libraries into modern, efficient institutions serving schools and communities with added purpose.

The problem is not in what the Library Partnership Act will do, but in what it will not do if it replaces existing legislation.

First, it would mean the end of the familiar \$5,000 basic grants (not to mention supplemental and special purpose grants) for academic library resources, not a great loss to Yale, but a crippling cut for a private junior college in Wisconsin. Then it would mean the end of traditional federal support for public library service under LSCA and would therefore put a lot of state library agencies and small, undernourished public libraries out of business.

The administration has openly said it intends to cut off these two programs. Aid for academic libraries has been left out of the budget (but restored by Congress) two years in a row; funds for public library service have been almost halved in the budget proposal with the open admission that the next step is cutting them out entirely.

That much is straight and above-board, coming as no surprise to anyone. Behind this, however, lies a more dangerous provision.

Existing library legislation contains specific language making it mandatory for the government to distribute a certain proportion of the money appropriated either directly to the states or to the nation's institutions of higher education. Thus libraries are entitled to this money by law, whatever the personal opinions of the secretary of HEW or the director of the Office of Management and Budget may be.

However, the Library Partnership Act proposes that all library funds (\$15 million in the administration's fiscal year 1975 budget proposal) be distributed at the discretion of the secretary of HEW in the form of individual grants and contracts to libraries, state agencies, and other relevant institutions.

There is one paragraph, under "Criteria for Approval of Applications," that suggests projects might be chosen with an eye to "the degree to which approval of the application will contribute to an equitable distribution of the funds appropriated under this Act throughout the various regions of the country." But what does that mean?

It seems ungrateful to look this gift horse in the mouth, but from an administration with a reputation for refusing to spend appropriated money ("you call it what you want to, I call it impoundment," Senator Warren Magnuson told HEW officials at an earlier appropriations hearing) there is precedent for suspicion.

Yet there are some good things in the Library Partnership Act. Most important is the recognition by the administration that it is in the national interest to foster interlibrary cooperation and to support experiments in library service.

Among academic libraries federal support for interlibrary loan may soon become essential. According to a report done for the Association of Research Libraries by Westat Inc. this February, the costs of interlibrary loans "pointed to a clear role for the federal government to equalize access to materials by providing subsidies to the libraries which needed to go across state lines to obtain material. The role of national subsidies should be carefully considered in long-range planning for an improved ILL system."

Similarly, librarians have looked to the administration's proposal as a way around state lines in multi-jurisdictional areas such as metropolitan Washington, D.C.


The problem is that in both of these examples librarians are looking for more than funds for a single demonstration project. And that is not what the government sees as its role. Under the proposed act the funds can be designated, in decreasing proportion to the library's contribution, for as much as three years. But after that what? ■ ■

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