

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

The collection many people forget

It was as always interesting and useful to see the 1981 library statistics for Australian academic libraries, which are published as a supplement to the September issue of *AARL*. When several efforts to achieve nationwide coverage of library statistics have failed or are experiencing difficulties it is good to see this particular survey carried out so competently and regularly each year.

It reminded me however of the collection many people forget. Which collection has over 500,000 serial titles, over 7,500,000 monographs, over 5,000,000 prints, slides and photographs, 36,147 film titles and a further 380,000 feet of film and a large number of film strips, 8,000 well logs, 213,000 tapes and cassettes, 22,080 sound recordings, 900,000 press clippings, 188,000 music scores, 143,065 maps, over a million reprints, as well as standard patents, catalogues and trade literature of all types, manuscripts, braille material, theses, pamphlets, ephemera and microforms?

This is the collection of the 881 special libraries which reported holdings to the *Directory of Special Libraries in Australia* published in 1982 by the LAA Special Libraries Section. It is estimated that there may be as many as 1800 special libraries in Australia, so the statistics quoted above are only affected by the inclusion of departmental libraries of some universities. Nevertheless, it is a large collection. Those who do talk about specials tend to dismiss them as duplicators. Are they? While the same type of libraries may duplicate between themselves there is often agreement between related special libraries specifically to avoid the duplication where possible and when considering the range of their subjects it is unlikely that there would be duplication between, say, electricity generating board libraries and transport libraries, social service libraries and management libraries or, indeed, within categories such as the libraries of the various religions and denominations, between the pharmaceutical libraries and the steel industry libraries.

The other fascinating aspect of the collection is its diversity – many people think of specials as custodians largely of serials. Who, for example, hold all that audiovisual material: health-related libraries, arts, education, agriculture, meteorology, accountants, law and waste disposal authority libraries to name just a few.

For every library reporting its holdings for the *Directory* it is estimated that another did not. The resources are enormous, in many cases very specialised and, it seems, of infinite variety. The *Directory* is worth browsing through. One hopes that more special libraries will report holdings to the next edition and that those which reported to the current edition will, where necessary, improve their reports.

Linda Beveridge, one of the Councillors-at-large, recently asked the Australian Library Promotion Council why it did not promote special libraries. This *Directory* in itself provides a solid reminder that specials are special (as their conference badge proclaims). These libraries directly serve their users at the workplace, so to speak, in

government departments, business and industrial firms and specialised societies. We should, perhaps, in the Association declare a year of the specials to promote these libraries, to ensure that they have sufficient staff to serve their own uses and, where appropriate, allow others access to this great collection.

*The *Directory* is available at a cost of \$35 (\$45 non-members) from the LAA Head Office.

Unesco consultations

Not many members perhaps are aware that the Australian National Commission for Unesco regularly holds consultative meetings with non-government organisations to allow us to brief the Australian delegation to Unesco on matters of concern to us. In the latest round of consultations the Vice-President and I attended respectively meetings in Melbourne and Canberra on Unesco's Medium-Term Plan 1984-89 (Unesco 4XC/4).

While the whole document is of interest to libraries, parts III – 'Communication in the Service of Man' and VII – Information Systems and 'Access to Knowledge' are of special interest. Both parts are strong in advocating development of information technology but tend to ignore many of the basic needs and problems in the supply of library services to users in developing and, indeed, in developed countries. The Australian delegation, urged particularly by librarians on the Commission, have pressed for the inclusion of the more basic programs in the Unesco 'plans' for some years. Our LAA representations also centred on this point. The plan would be more balanced if the two Unesco/IFLA sponsored programs, Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) and Universal Availability of Publications (UAP) were included as specific objectives of the current 'plan'. In addition to pressing this view to the Unesco Commission, the President of IFLA has been alerted to these views.

\$233,000

Congratulations to Ian Tweedie on his marvellous win on the Sale of the Century, completed, we now discover, by an ex-librarian. Ian was one of the (self-financing) delegates to the Unesco/IFLA UAP Congress in Paris in May. We are glad he has got his reward so quickly.

Judith A.D. Baskin
President

Stocktaking closure

THE MITCHELL LIBRARY of the State Library of NSW will be closed for stocktaking from Monday 29 November 1982 to Sunday 2 January 1983 inclusive.

The following services will be closed:

- Mitchell Library Reading Room
- Mitchell Library Research Service
- Mitchell Manuscripts
- Mitchell Pictures
- Mitchell Maps
- Copying Service (for Mitchell material)

A limited telephone enquiry and referral service will operate from 9 am-5 pm on weekdays (except Public Holidays).

The General Reference Library will be open as usual, Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 9 pm, Sunday 2 pm to 6 pm.

The Galleries will also be open as usual, Monday to Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm, Sunday 2 pm to 6 pm.

On the international scene

THE SIXTH CONGRESS of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSOL VI) is to be held at the Shangrila Hotel, Singapore, from 30 May to 3 June 1983. It is being jointly organised by the Executive Board of CONSOL, the Library Association of Singapore and the National Library of Singapore.

The theme for CONSOL VI is 'The Library in the Information Revolution'. The conference will focus on the library in a setting in which it should take stock of itself in its own environment, and reformulate its policy and practice so as to be more relevant to the current needs of its users.

Anyone interested can contact: Mrs Peggy Hochstadt, Chairman CONSOL VI, c/- Central Library, National University of Singapore, Kent Ridge, Singapore 0511, Republic of Singapore.

The Secretariat of Unesco is about to begin the preparation of Volume 35 of *Index translationum*, the catalogue of translated books published in 1982.

The Secretariat would be pleased to include in Vol 35, as well as in future volumes, bibliographic details of translated books on all subjects, published in any language, during 1982. To these may be added details of books that many have been published in earlier years, but which have not been previously listed in the *Index*.

Anyone wishing to include bibliographic details in the *Index* should contact: The Secretary, Australian National Commission for Unesco, Department of Education, PO Box 826, Woden, ACT 2606.

Small miscellaneous advertisements are accepted at the rate of \$8 per line, \$24 minimum.

WRITTEN OFFERS are invited for the purchase of the following: *Chemical Abstracts* Vol 1 1907, Vol 95 1981, Vol 83 1975 – Vol 95 (1981 unbound).

Chemical Abstracts Cumulative Indexes 1st, 1907/1916 – 9th, 1972/1976 (9th unbound).

Chemical Abstracts Registry Handbook 1965-71 plus supplements up to and including 1980.

Biological Abstracts Vol 1 1927, Vol 60 1975 (Vol 58 1974 – Vol 60 1975 unbound, Vols 33-36 inc. incomplete).

Bioresearch Index Vol 3 1967 – Vol 11 1975 (Vol 11 1975 unbound).

Telephone inquiries to: Mr Michael Evans, Canberra (062) 49 4251. Offers to be addressed to **Acting Business Officer, Menzies Library, Australian National University, PO Box 4, Canberra ACT 2600.**

SPECIAL DROUGHT issue of Murray River Monitor \$3, postage included or a subscription of \$10 for 6 issues including postage.

A comprehensive collection of reports on the severe drought now devastating much of South East Australia.

From: **Mildura Regional Library Service**
PO Box 105
Mildura Vic 3500