# VIEWPOINT

ECENTLY WE witnessed the first joint conference between the LAA and the New Zealand Library Association. Naturally the question on many lips (participants and those who witnessed from afar) concerns the success of the venture.

It is not my intention, nor is it possible, to answer that categorically because success may be judged from a multitude of viewpoints and be tempered by each individual's preconceived purpose of the conference.

Without much fear of contradiction I would list these points as some of the positive comments or outcomes:

Venue – superb;

Organisation – carefully planned and usually thorough;

Exhibitions – compact, well presented, easy access;

Social program – variety, at times outstanding.

But of course these are but some of the paraphernalia. What of the essence of the conference?

In comparing the goals of the conference with the actuality it seems to me that:

A varied professional program was provided which presented an analysis and perspective of current developments in both countries;

The opportunity for interaction between participants was present in abundance during formal sessions and non-formal occasions:

The presence of over 50 colleagues from such areas as Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Philippines, Fiji, USA, Canada, Great Britain and Norway gave a truly international flavour and the opportunity for considering common professional concerns;

The proposal to establish a standing committee to consider, amongst other things, future co-operative ventures in the Pacific region gives some hope that the stimulus for regional co-operation will prosper;

The level of exchange of ideas and of mutual understanding has undoubtedly

heightened.

Obviously there were low points in each participant's perception of the conference. Hopefully they were no more serious than the negative aspects of every seminar and conference. The questions we must address now, while perceptions are keen, are:

Was a joint conference justified?

Was the choice of New Zealand as the venue reasonable to the profession in Australia? Should future joint ventures of this nature be considered?

At least one person gives an affirmative response to all questions. Perhaps in time we may be prepared to share similar activity and expertise with other Pacific neighbours. Members' views on these points would be useful to have. Jim Dwyer LAA President

### Another language?

Languages Galore and Qantas are offering a prize of \$5000 worth of international travel (flying Qantas, of course) for the best bilingual book by an Australian resident.

The manuscript or book may be totally bilingual or may be written in one language and have a substantial amount of the text in the other language(s).

For more information contact Helen Thompson, School Library Services, 35 Mitchell Street, North Sydney NSW 2060, (02) 922 6700. Closing date for the competition is 3 July 1981.

## Project MIND ...

#### a column on Meeting the Information Needs of the Disabled

#### Bibliographies on handicapped children theme

Vicki Williamson of Armidale CAE Library is attempting to compile a bibliography of children's books containing handicapped characters and/or themes. She is anxious to locate reference sources or agencies which can assist in this work. Write to her c/o Armidale CAE 2350.

Handwriting training

A development at ANU may enable blind persons to learn to write by hand rather than rely on mechanical devices such as typewriters. Dr Iain Macleod has developed a computer-based system which gives trainees information about pen positions and the shapes of letters in audible form. By improving awareness of spatial position and letter shapes through a range of high and low tones presented stereophonically by the computer, the trainee develops writing skills. The ability

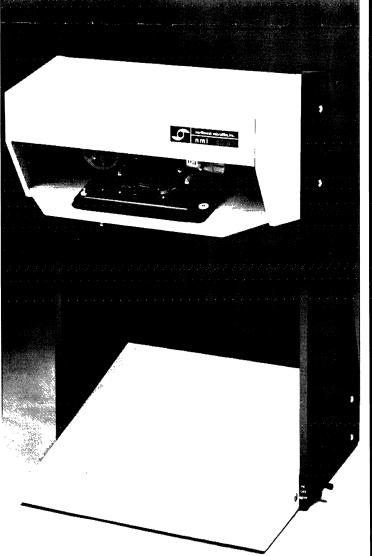
to write legibly and conveniently should boost the blind person's confidence and dignity. (From information supplied by Mrs Winsome Plumb, ANU Library).

Starting a MIND group?

Special emphasis is being placed on the role of libraries and librarians in 1981 - the International Year of the Disabled Person. Each State has a MIND organisation, and will welcome participants. If you need help in getting started, or need contacts, get in touch with the Convener of the MIND Central Group, Don Schauder, 49 Ayr St, Doncaster 3108.

Contributions to this column are sought from readers. Send them to Lloyd Junor, Melbourne State College, Carlton, 3053. Phone: (03) 341 8111. Contributions will be acknowledged. (MIND column no7)





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