



MORE LETTERS

Subject: librarianship

I write in support of Pim McCready whose letter was published in *InCite* on October 3rd under the title 'Moonlighting for Firelighting'.

I have worked in a university library for the last five years as a Library Assistant (level 1). I have a B.A. (Librarianship) from Leeds Polytechnic, U.K., and am an Associate of the LAA. I applied for a position as Assistant Librarian (level 2) in this library and was verbally informed by the University Librarian that:

- a) I would not be interviewed or even considered for the position as my qualifications are inadequate.
- b) My experience would not be taken into account, even though I have worked in an acting position as an Assistant Librarian on two separate occasions for a total time of fifteen months.
- c) I should 'do' another degree, any degree provided it is a subject degree.

I have seen advertisements for positions of Assistant Librarian (level 2) in another university library requesting a subject degree plus library qualifications. A.B.C. (Librarianship) or B.App.Sc. (Library Studies) is obviously not considered adequate for a professional position in a university library.

It would seem that as far as university libraries in this State are concerned I have been wasting my time for the last five years working in all sections of this library to gain experience so that I could cope well with promotion.

Undergraduate students of Library Studies should be warned that they are probably deluding themselves if they believe that the qualifications they gain will assist them in obtaining a professional position, as Librarianship does not seem to be considered a 'subject'.

Pat Newby

A civil question

On the back page of *InCite* No. 17 there is a note about apartheid. This article follows the majority of writings on the South African subject; it attempts to theorise on what actions are appropriate to take.

Firstly, I for one do not abhor the South African regime, but not because it is not abhorrent. As I have never been to South Africa there are no facts I can draw on, I simply do not have the expertise. Ninety percent of those who confer on this subject are in exactly the same situation, because without living in the country for a considerable time, there is no way to produce facts.

Secondly, above all else, the South African situation is a Civil matter, something that must be dealt with internally to have any sort of successful ending. Nearly every major country in the world has had Civil strife and war at some stage in their life. In this respect, Australia is still the lucky country.

America fought its Civil war over many of the same issues that now confront S.A., and that is now one of the most powerful nation's in the world, and it did it on its own.

As soon as external influences become involved in Civil matters, it becomes a question of taking sides and the problem becomes that much more complex. Let the South African's run their country and let everyone else run their own. That way the trouble is kept at a manageable size and can, in time, be eradicated.

— And it has NOTHING to do with libraries in Australia.

T.C. Lawton



— the bottom line

Your receipt of this issue of *InCite* coincides with the last meeting of General Council for 1986.

As usual, the agenda is packed — at least 55 formal items to be dealt with in two days. The Corporate Plan will be high on the list: final decisions on the recommendations; further discussion on name and objects; new services to members; income targets; fees; relations with ASLA; the Head Office structure review; not even the role of General Council itself escapes.

With an Association as large as ours, spread-eagling itself to represent the interests and aspirations of most of its members, it is extremely unlikely that all of us will be happy with all of the Council's decisions.

But decide it must. Our internal review has been in process since August 1984. And in the meantime our operating environment has become distinctly less friendly, even hostile. The warning signs are all around. Currency devaluation has severely eroded purchasing power. Staff ceilings are compressing core services. Education Departments, particularly in SA, Vic and WA are getting away with increasingly off-hand treatment of library workers and library services, and the squeeze flows

inexorably through to school libraries. Public libraries, university libraries, college libraries and some State libraries are also taking a battering.

State Branches, severely hampered by available and motivated troops are fighting valiant rearguard actions, but back at HQ we debate structure and function. We seek to create a revitalised Association while our adversaries gnaw at our vitals.

My perception is that Council, like the members, wants to get on with the job. The talk-fest has run its course. Useful therapy when we appeared to need it, but circumstances have jostled us out of introspection.

Sure we've been active, we may even have impressed each other with our activity, but I doubt that our supporters, our customers, have noticed.

So if you disagree with some of Council's decisions, particularly on the Corporate Plan, try not to divert too much energy to protesting. Cop it sweet. After all you've had more than two years to express your opinions. Remember we have to get on with the main chance: improving the range and quality of library services.

Let's see a new LAA with a customer focus. Let's have an Association characterised by a service outlook made practical and credible by mutual support and involvement across the spectrum of Australian libraries. Let's wheel the Trojan horse back out the gate and concentrate on rebuilding a network of libraries so useful, so popular and so valuable that the troglodytes perish for lack of support.

It seems to me we die the death of a thou-

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B Burgess, C/-Bankstown College of TAFE, 500 Chapel Road, Bankstown NSW, 2200 by 9 January 1987.



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