

THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND LIBRARY CONFERENCE

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The General Council of the Library Association of Australia met in Melbourne on Monday 21 August, on the evening of Thursday 24 August, and on Friday 25 August, 1961. At the first of these sessions, we were represented by Mr. G.L. Fischer, as Representative Councillor, and at the later ones by Miss M. Medcalf, of the State Library of Western Australia, who stood in for Mr. Fischer when he had returned to Adelaide.

The Council meetings followed the Board of Examination meetings, and a number of questions discussed by the Board and accepted by Council are of interest to archivists. Certainly the most important matter was the proposed Registration Certificate in Archives. This proposal involves the issue of a separate certificate in Archives; the compulsory subjects in which candidates are to be examined will differ to some extent from those in which librarians are examined. Under the new syllabus, to be introduced in 1962, all candidates for examination will have to sit for, and eventually pass, three introductory papers (Nos 1 - 3) which will deal with

1. Books and related materials
2. Libraries
3. Acquisition, organisation and use of books and related materials.

The approach in each of these subjects is from the point of view of theory rather than technique. Paper 1, for instance, deals with the history of the media of writing and other methods of communication of ideas. There is coverage of such subjects as manuscripts, sound recordings, printing, lithography, photographic copying, as well as the more conventional bibliographic study of the parts and make-up of the book. Much of the subject coverage will be of interest to archivists, and an understanding of the whole field will certainly never be a burden to an archivist.

Paper 2 deals with the provision of library services, the history of book collecting, and the profession of librarianship. One of the eight sections as set out in the syllabus deals specifically with archives institutions. As the provision of archives services in Australia is still linked in the majority of Australian states with library administrations, and the one state archival authority to be separated from library control still works in close collaboration with the Mitchell Library, there are obvious advantages in the archivist knowing something of library provision.

Paper 3 deals with the procedures used in libraries and allied institutions to enable the reader to have access to the information contained in the institution. Some understanding of the cataloguing and classification processes is required, but no knowledge of specific cataloguing rules or codes of classification. The use of library

catalogues, a subject in which aspirants to any profession should be trained, is included, as is a knowledge of 50 ready reference works, many of which would be useful to the archivist in his search for information in response to enquiries. On the other hand, there is admittedly some content in this paper - especially the part requiring candidates to know about book issue from lending libraries - which an archivist will never use.

The old Preliminary Examination is abolished, and there is no intention of establishing an examination to replace it. Those who have passed the Preliminary in 1961 or earlier will, however, be exempt from Papers 1 - 3.

The proposed Registration Certificate in Archives will require of candidates that they pass, in addition to the three introductory papers, Papers 4 and 14 - 16. Paper 4 (also compulsory for librarians) deals with Reference work and aids to research. It requires a knowledge of both resources and methods, and is the subject in which all staff should be proficient before being placed at an enquiry service point, whether in a library or an archives institution. Government publications, non-book materials, finding lists and local indexes are included among the resources, as well as publications like trade catalogues which will presumably be less often used by archivists. Under methods, almost everything is extremely relevant to the archivist, and our service to the public and to departments would be improved if the knowledge which the examination aims to test were more widely shared.

Papers 14 - 16 are the specific archives subjects, and I need offer no apology for their inclusion in the curriculum for an archives certificate. Indeed, the bulk of the criticism I have so far heard is to the effect that they are not sufficiently all-embracing in their scope. They are:

14. Archival theory
15. History of archives institutions
16. Records Management and physical preservation of archives.

The candidate for the archives certificate will, in common with other aspirants for the Registration certificate, have to choose two further subjects from the range of nine other subjects available as optionals. The subjects available include Paper 5, Library Administration, with a choice between Public Libraries and Library Services, University Libraries, and Special Libraries; Paper 9, Book selection, Collection Building, Assistance to Readers and Aids to Research (with an internal choice); Paper 10, the History and Comparative Study of Libraries and Librarianship; Paper 11, the Production, Publication, History and Care of Books; and Paper 12, National, State, and Local Collections, with Special Reference to Australia (the Australiana paper).

The approval of Council in principle to this proposal has been given, although precise regulations have yet to be approved embodying the conditions under which the separate certificate will be issued. However,

the significance of the approval in principle should not be overlooked. For the first time in Australia, an attempt is being made to prescribe a course of study for archivists which contains at most a minimum amount of matter not relevant to the archivists' needs.

Arising from the situation created by the approval in principle of this certificate, the Archives Section wishes to interest archivists not members of the Association in participating in its activities. Hence the following resolution was agreed to:-

- (a) That a Committee be appointed to discuss with archivists who are not members of the Association the areas which are common ground to librarians and archivists and the ways in which these archivists might with advantage participate in Association activities as members.
- (b) That the Committee comprise the President, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Sharman, Miss Radford and the Chairman of the Board of Examination.

The members of the committee have so far exchanged some preliminary correspondence, and hope to tackle the matter more fully once the Association's Director has been installed.

The Annual Meeting of the Section took place during the Conference, and one resolution passed referred to the sale of copies of Archives and Manuscripts to non-members. However, the Council appointed a special sub-committee to enquire into the need and provision, sale and distribution, of all Branch and Section publications, so our own Section's resolution on this matter will need to await the presentation and adoption of the sub-committee's findings before we can implement it.

Another resolution from the Archives Section received consideration in General Council. This arose from the Paper read by Miss Medcalf (and written by her and Miss Lukis) on "Finding aids for the microfilm copies of Australian records in the P.R.O." . Miss Medcalf moved, and Mr. Richardson seconded, a motion which runs:

That it be a recommendation to the Standing Committee of A.A.C.O.B.S. that it appoint a representative committee of three people to draw up a plan for the preparation of a guide to the micro-film copies of the Australian material at the Public Record Office - this would involve instructions about the form and content of the guide. This is recommended in order to make the microfilms more readily accessible to scholars.

Mr. Richardson then made a further recommendation that it be proposed to the Standing Committee of A.A.C.O.B.S. that the committee referred to in the foregoing recommendation consist of Miss M. Lukis of West Australia, Miss J. Hine of New South Wales and Mr. G.L. Fischer of South Australia.

As a result, Council resolved:

- (a) That the proposal of the Archives Section for the planning of a guide to microfilm copies of Australian material at the Public Record Office be forwarded as a recommendation to A.A.C.O.B.S. for reference to its Standing Committee.
- (b) That it be suggested to A.A.C.O.B.S. a planning committee be appointed, recommending as members Miss M. Lukis, Miss J. Hine Mr. G.L. Fischer.

Conference provided an excellent opportunity for archivists to exchange impressions and views of a technical nature. The first paper presented under the auspices of the Section was by Mr. C.A. Burmester, Chief Reference Officer of the National Library of Australia, on "The collection of Australian historical records", which has been printed on pp 19 - 26 of this issue. This was followed by a Symposium, entitled "Archival resources of Australia; a brief symposium on the holdings of various State departments" presided over by Mr. F. Strahan, Archivist of the University of Melbourne. At this session, Mr. G.L. Fischer spoke on Holdings of the Archives Department of the Public Library of South Australia relating to the first World War; Mr. H. Nunn spoke on some of the Record groups of the Archives Division of the State Library of Victoria; and I spoke on the Colonial Secretary's Office records in the Queensland State Archives. The text of the last-mentioned address is contained in the printed Conference Papers, issued under the title "Library resources for the nation", on pp 53 - 57.

On the following day, Wednesday 23 August, a further symposium was arranged, this time under the chairmanship of Mr. G.L. Fischer. Papers read on the subject "Exploiting the official and private archival resources of Australia" were prepared by Mr. D.J. Bluford, Mr. P.R. Eldershaw, and (as a joint effort) Misses M. Lukis and M. Medcalf. Mr. Bluford's paper, on the Guide to Pre-Federation Archives, is printed on pp 15 - 19 of this issue. Mr. Eldershaw's paper, on Archival guides, is published in the Conference papers (op. cit) pp 57 - 60. Miss Medcalf's and Miss Lukis's paper has already been referred to in these notes, and is printed on pp 6 - 14 of this issue.

Also of interest to archivists is a paper read by Dr. E.F. Kunz, of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, on the subject of "Providing the reader with maps". This is to be found in "Library resources for the nation", on pp 136 - 144. The printed papers were indeed a very fine innovation, and were available to Conference members on the last day of the Conference. Copies can, I understand, be obtained from the Association's headquarters at £1/5/0 a copy.

The Annual Meeting of the Section was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Fischer in the Classics Room of the Old Arts Building at the University. Much of the business discussed has already been dealt with

in this report. The Executive reported that, in order to enable the Representative Councillor and other officers of the Section to have discussions with Mr. Ian Maclean, Chief Archivist of the Commonwealth Archives Office, it had been arranged for Mr. Maclean to visit Melbourne the previous weekend. This was thought desirable in order to enable members of the Executive more fully to understand the problems involved in bringing archivists who are not members of the Association into the Association. This action was confirmed, and the Secretary was authorised to reimburse Mr. Maclean for his air fares.

Mr. G.D. Richardson was elected President and Representative Councillor for 1962. The Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer for the same year are to be myself and Mr. D.J. Bluford respectively; and the Council members will be:

Misses T. Exley, J. Hino, and M. Lukis;
Messrs P. Eldershaw, G. Fischer, and A. Horton.

It was also resolved that the Annual Meeting be held in August 1962 preferably on a Saturday either just before or just after the General Council meeting.

The Section has been served ably and well by its officers in the past, and especially outstanding service has been given by Mr. Allan Horton, the retiring Corresponding Secretary. Mr. Horton has been in active leadership of the Section since 1955, when he, with Miss Mander Jones, was joint-editor of the first issue of Archives and Manuscripts. Mr. Horton was elected Honorary Secretary of the Section in May, 1957, and filled this office for that year and 1958, and again in 1960-61. His interests, however, are now very much centred on university Librarianship, as an outcome of his appointment to the position of Associate Librarian at the University of N.S.W. He remains, however, a member of the Archives Section Committee. We also express our appreciation to Mr. R. Whalan who has acted as Honorary Treasurer for a number of years, and to Mr. Fischer for his guidance and leadership as President and Representative Councillor during 1961.

NEWS NOTES FROM THE COMMONWEALTH ARCHIVES OFFICE

Mr R. Stewart has left the Commonwealth Archives Office's Melbourne Repository, and has taken up work with the Department of Trade. He has been replaced by Mr Frank Leslie. Mr Bruce Burne, also of the Melbourne Repository staff, is on a visit to Europe.