

## MISCELLANY by M. Saclier

Further to my letter . . .

At a meeting held in Perth on August 21, attended by those members of the Archives Section who had attended the Biennial General Meeting and several non-members, the question of forming an association of archivists was discussed.

The consensus was that such an association was desirable and a steering committee was set up to investigate the practicabilities of the proposal and to work towards forming such an association. This committee consists of myself as convener, Mr John Cross, Archives Office of N.S.W., Miss Pat Quinn, Bank of N.S.W., Mr Gerald Fischer, University of Sydney and coopted members to be appointed as required but in particular a representative from the Commonwealth Archives is (if willing) to be appointed as soon as possible.

Corresponding members to liaise with the profession in the States were also appointed. These were Mr John Love, South Australian State Archives, Mr Paul Wilson, Queensland State Archives, and Miss Margaret Medcalf of the Battye Library and Archives in West Australia. Since the meeting Mrs Mary McRae, Archives Office of Tasmania, and Miss Ann Green, Commonwealth Archives, Melbourne, have also agreed to act in this capacity. It is intended that any proposals emanating from the committee will be submitted to the profession through the corresponding members in draft form for discussion and comment, the aim being the greatest possible degree of participation in the formation of an association.

At the time of writing (September) the Committee has held one preliminary meeting which was devoted to defining its terms of reference and reaching agreement on the proper form and objectives for an association. It is hoped that by the time this issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* reaches subscribers more definite proposals will have been formulated and submitted via the corresponding members to the profession for discussion.

In the meantime it can be said that the committee visualises such a body as being an association primarily of archivists and manuscript librarians but with room for others who support the objects of the association. Those objects the committee sees as being to promote co-operation in the field, to promote a professional identity, to encourage the development of standards of archival practice and administration and standards of archival training and to publish a professional journal. It need hardly be said that this list is neither exhaustive nor final but merely indicative of the thinking of the committee.

### **Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material**

This body was formed at the National Conservation Seminar held in Perth during the week August 6-10 which I mentioned in this section in the last issue. The ACT Committee mentioned at that time is now the ACT Division of the Institute. Membership enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary of the Institute, Mr Ian Cook, National Library of Australia, Canberra, and I would urge as many individuals and institutions as possible to join.

Although much broader than my rather naive characterisation in the August issue — I plead in extenuation that when I wrote I had not seen a copy of the programme — the seminar was very heavily weighted towards museums, art galleries and the National Trust and this is reflected in the Executive and Council of the Institute.

Despite the enormous conservation problem in the archival area (outweighing, in my opinion, all other fields together) it was only a last minute appeal from the few archivists and librarians present which obtained archival representation on the Council.

Miss Ann Beggs of the Commonwealth Archives was elected and is also convener of the working party on archives which with parties in other fields are to formulate policies for the Institute.

### **Seminar on the National Archives**

A seminar on the National Archives was held in Canberra on Saturday, September 1, attended by some 60 archivists, academics and public servants. Its purpose according to the background paper distributed beforehand was to introduce the Government's consultant, Dr W. Kaye Lamb (formerly Dominion Archivist, Public Archives of Canada) to the views of academics, archivists and others interested in the field "in order to help him reach a definition of the role of the National Archives".

Until Dr Lamb's report is made public it is impossible to gauge how much influence this and other discussions may have had and even then such an estimate must be of very doubtful validity. The seminar did, however, allow the academics to give vent to their feelings on various archival matters and permitted some constructive comment and discussion on others.

Two things which have aroused more comment than the actual discussions are the lists of those invited – or rather those attending – and the form which the seminar took.

The delegate list shows quite surprising anomalies. Neither the Archives Office of N.S.W. nor the South Australian State Archives were represented by their senior practising archivists. The Melbourne University Archives was not represented at all nor was the University of New England Archives nor any *in situ* business archives except the Reserve Bank and Bank of NSW. There was no representative of the only training institution with a course in archives administration – the University of N.S.W. School of Librarianship. Yet there were two representatives from the Canberra College of Advanced Education, three from the National Library, two from the A.B.C., one from the C.S.I.R.O. library and one from the Society of Genealogists. There were similar anomalies in the academic contingent and these have been remarked upon acidly in academic quarters.

As regards the form of the seminar the original programme as outlined in the letter of invitation was to be a free-ranging discussion, unstructured by formal papers, on a series of topics to be suggested at least in part by the participants. Had this format been adhered to a good deal more might have been achieved in acquainting Dr Lamb with the views of the participants.

Alas, on arrival at the venue it was discovered that the greater part of the day was to be taken up by speakers delivering papers – some good, some bad and some irrelevant. Comparatively little time was available for discussion and far too many red herrings were abroad. Consequently many vital topics (actually listed in the preliminary papers) never received an airing.

### **The Australian Historical Association**

This association was formed in Perth at the meeting of Section 26, A.N.Z.A.A.S. on August 16. This is (or should be) a matter of considerable interest to archivists in the light of the Roosevelt Library Case in the United States.

The objects of the Association are (in the words of the preamble to the interim constitution) "to encourage historical study, teaching and research. To formulate archives and library policies and express opinions on such issues of public policy as concern historical study. To circulate general information relating to the profession, such as developments in teaching, research and the accumulation of resources. To organise general and local meetings and symposia. To make secretarial and administrative arrangements to carry out the objectives of the Association".

Membership is open to all those who support these objectives on payment of a subscription of \$5 and a cheque addressed to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr W. Prest, Department of History, University of Adelaide, North Terrace, Adelaide, will carry you through to the end of 1974. The Hon. Secretary is Dr T. G. Parsons, Macquarie University and the President Professor A. G. L. Shaw of Monash University.

In view of the general interest to archivists of the Association's aims, especially the second of those listed above, it seems to the writer that membership would be a good idea.

**University of Papua New Guinea Archives**

Mr H. J. Gibbney of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and formerly of the Commonwealth Archives Office has gone to Port Moresby (by the time this appears he will have long since returned) to advise the UPNG on the establishment of its archives. More details should be available for the February issue.

**Next Issue**

People and events have completely engrossed this section for this issue. Lamination and deacidification will feature in the next.