

BIENNIAL REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S BIENNIAL REPORT

This report of the President for the Biennium 1973-1975 was presented at the Archives Section Biennial General Meeting, Melbourne, August 24, 1975.

As in previous years, the Presidential Report stands in somewhat mute testimony to the difficulties faced by the Archives Section in sustaining a corporate identity. With 285 members (December 1974) scattered all over Australia, it has been the smallest Section operating within the Library Association of Australia. Even at committee level, the Section has lacked strong and positive government principally because committee members rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to meet on a consultative and deliberative basis. Communication by mail has been a quite unsatisfactory substitute for the exchange of views and ideas which results from personal meetings taking place on a regular basis.

Personal meetings between the executive and individual committee members and officers have been possible only on a few occasions. During a private visit to Adelaide in 1974 I took the opportunity to meet with the Editor of *Archives and Manuscripts* and a number of positive suggestions concerning possible speakers and activities for the 18th Biennial Conference resulted from this meeting. From time to time, the Secretary/Treasurer has had a number of personal discussions with Mr Michael Saclier.

The publication of *Archives and Manuscripts* has remained the principal activity of the Section, though even this shop-window has been the work largely of one man, Mr R. C. Sharman, who has served the Section selflessly as Editor of its journal for fifteen years. It is a matter for particular regret that Mr Sharman is unable to be present with us at this Biennial General Meeting to receive in person the thanks of the Section for his outstanding and generous contribution through *Archives and Manuscripts* to the development of a distinctive sense of professional awareness for those engaged in employment as archivists in Australia. Mr Sharman's decision to step down as Editor of *Archives and Manuscripts*, given in his report to be read on his behalf by the Secretary, will, I am sure, be received by all members with some sadness.

As General Councillor representing the Archives Section, I have attended two Library Association of Australia General Council meetings; the first of these was held in Sydney in 1974, while the second was held over the past two days. At this most recent meeting, two major issues concerning the future of the Archives Section were mentioned briefly but as they will form a major part of our own considerations following the presentation of this report, I do not propose to refer to them in detail at this point.

It is appropriate, however, that the matters be noted in my report. These are the recent formation of an Australian Society of Archivists, and the proposal which has been advanced by the new Society to take over the publication of *Archives and Manuscripts*. For many, the

formation of the new Society is a welcome move for there has always been some feeling, even within the Archives Section itself, that the existing provision for a professional society was somehow inadequate or inappropriate. For others, particularly those who pioneered the Section from its beginning in 1951, there may well be regret and a sense of disappointment that the Archives Section, for as long as it did attempt to provide some meeting place for archivists and those librarians with more than a passing interest in the archival field, has met only limited support.

In June, the formation of the Australian Society of Archivists was brought before the Standing Committee of the LAA which resolved to "approach the Australian Society of Archivists with a view to forming a joint policy and planning committee" and that "if a joint committee is formed, the Association's representatives on the Committee be the President, the President of the Archives Section and the Executive Director".

In conclusion I wish to convey my thanks and gratitude to the Secretary/Treasurer for his work on behalf of the Section throughout the year.

Patricia Reynolds,
President,
LAA Archives Section.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S BIENNIAL REPORT

This report of the Secretary/Treasurer for the biennium 1973-1975 was presented at the Archives Section Biennial General Meeting Melbourne, 1975.

Over the past twelve months, the executive of the Archives Section has been actively engaged in planning a number of activities of special interest to archivists and manuscript librarians for presentation at the 18th Biennial Conference of the Library Association of Australia.

For the first time at any LAA Conference, the Archives Section has the honour of hosting an overseas visitor. Special thanks must go to the 18th Biennial Conference Committee for generously catering for the interests of the Archives Section through its invitation to Mr Peter Walne, County Archivist, Hertfordshire County Council, England. The Archives Section Secretary, in consultation with Messrs Michael Saclier, Peter Orlovich and Paul Wilson has drawn up a full itinerary to take Mr Walne on visits to Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane following the Conference in Melbourne.

The other major conference activity sponsored by the Archives Section is a Workshop planned for August 28 and 29 under the title *Conservation: Procedures and Practice*. Mr Peter Walne has agreed to participate in this workshop, together with Mr Michael Saclier. A number of other speakers from outside the Section will deal with various specialized problems concerning the care and conservation of archival and library materials.

Two members of the Archives Section Committee have acted as examiners in the Library Association Registration Paper 302 *Archives*

Organization and Management. Mr John Love was appointed Senior Associate Examiner in this paper in 1974 while Mr John Thompson has served as the Associate Examiner. These appointments remain current for the 1975 examinations.

A major item of business facing the Archives Section Committee during 1974 was the drafting of a letter to be sent by the Library Association of Australia to the Special Minister of State concerning aspects of the W. Kaye Lamb *Report on the Development of the National Archives*. Copies of a draft letter originally prepared by Mr Hans Groenewegen as General Secretary of the LAA were sent to each member of the Archives Section Committee for comment and/or amendment. As might be guessed, a variety of views were sent back to the Secretary who, acting against a deadline, drafted an alternative letter to be sent over Hans Groenewegen's signature as the official view of the LAA. The Section's advice on the letter was accepted, and it was sent to the Special Minister of State as the official view of the Association. The letters on this subject are preserved on file and the Secretary would be happy to make copies available to any Section member who would like to peruse them.

The advice of committee members on the question of a price increase for *Archives and Manuscripts* was also sought during 1974. Fortunately, there was unanimous agreement on this subject and the following increase was subsequently recommended to the Library Association of Australia to be effective from January 1, 1975: \$2.00 pa for members of the LAA and \$4.00 pa for non-members. An increase in the price of back copies was also recommended: \$1.00 per issue to non-members of the LAA and 50 cents per issue to members.

As in previous years, no financial statement or balance sheet is necessary since apart from the funds available for the publication of *Archives and Manuscripts*, the Section handles no finance.

It is necessary to note however that the costs of producing *Archives and Manuscripts* have escalated greatly during the past two years. The Editor's report refers in detail to his most immediate financial difficulties and I hope that by the time this report is presented, General Council will have agreed to provide supplementary assistance for 1975 to the extent of \$1,050.00. In 1974, the Section appealed urgently for a supplementary grant of \$857.00 for the publication of *Archives and Manuscripts*. Fortunately, this request met with a favourable response, although the LAA expressed the view that a price rise should be considered. As noted above, a rise was later adopted by the Section Committee.

Apart from *Archives and Manuscripts*, the Section has faced no other costs. Such incidental costs as postage, stationery, etc., have been met by the Secretary/Treasurer.

John Thompson,
Secretary/Treasurer,
LAA Archives Section.