

REPORT ON ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

by the Archives Section.

This Committee was asked to report on the place of archives management in relation to library administration and of archivists in relation to librarians. Members of the Committee do not all hold the same opinion of the ideal library-archives relationship, but there is fairly broad agreement. This report tries to indicate the different views and does not presume to judge which is the best one.

REPORT.

1. The Committee believes that the trend in Australia will be, as it has been abroad, towards the separation of archives and libraries. But, even if all the State archives are separated from the libraries, there will still be archives in libraries and libraries in archives. The local archivist will probably still be attached to the library or at least work very closely with it, and every archival establishment needs at least a basic reference collection.

2. The Committee believes that there are two separate professions, archivist and librarian and that the Association should recognise this fact, particularly in its examinations. Initially this could be done by making the examination regulations less rigid. (See Professional membership in the addendum to this report).

3. The Committee believes that the Association must decide whether it is an association of librarians only, or an association of librarians and archivists. Also that archivists with more than 5 years senior service should be admitted to full professional membership of the Association, initially without examination.

4. The Committee believes that many archivists have no interest in joining the Association. We doubt if they would ever join an association of librarians because they believe that:

- a. An archives cannot function efficiently as an aspect of a library.
- b. That separate archives should invariably be established.
- c. That library qualifications are a decided disadvantage to the archivist.

- d. That archives work in Australia is important enough to warrant specialised institutions and specialist staff as in other countries.
- e. That librarians are members of a very mixed profession and that there are financial disadvantages to the archivist in being associated with them.
- f. That preliminary qualifications for archivists are higher than those for librarians and that this is borne out by the published requirements for archivists' posts, many of which have been widely advertised in the last few years.

5. The Committee believes that there are, however, a number of archivists who wish to remain within the Association and that provision should be made for them. That even if the archivist in a separate institution is not interested those who are working with archives in libraries will still be interested. This would apply also to those librarians working with manuscripts who would have a definite interest and knowledge of archival methods.

The following appendices are submitted for information.

- A. Summary of qualifications required of archivists in Australia.
- B. Summary of Organisations interested in Archives.
- C. Archives and Libraries in Australia.
- D. Professional Membership of the Library Association of Australia.
- E. Statement of Policy by the Council of Library Association of Great Britain on "Archives and Manuscripts in Libraries".

APPENDIX A.

Summary of Qualifications.

Required of Archivists in Australia.

(i) Government Archives.

a. Commonwealth National Library - Archives Division.

This is a separate part of the Library. Staff is not interchanged with other parts. The qualification required of the staff is an Honours degree in one of the humanities; no library training is required, nor is it expected. Several members of the staff have had British archival experience or training.

b. Public Library of New South Wales - Archives Department.

This is a separate department of the Library but is not defined as such in the Regulations. Staff is interchanged with other departments of the Library and by Public Service Regulation the Examinations of the L.A.A. or their equivalent, are required for permanent appointment and advancement. A university degree is required preferably with qualifying courses in history, and/or government. Archivists are, however, recruited and employed as Librarians or library assistants.

c. Public Library of Victoria - Archives Department.

This is a separate part of the Library. A degree in Arts, majoring in history (including Australian) and experience in historical research are required. Library qualifications are not required. Non-Government archives have in principle and almost entirely in fact been transferred from the Archives Department to another department of the Library.

d. State Library of Queensland - Archives Department.

Legislation has been proclaimed establishing this Department and it will be a separate department of the Library. A university degree in Arts, library qualifications, and experience in a recognised archives section are required for the position of Archivist.

e. Public Library of South Australia - Archives Department.

This is a department of the Library. Staff is not at present interchanged but subordinate officers are employed and paid as librarians. Library qualifications of L.A.A. Registration standard (including the Archives paper) and an Arts degree and experience are needed for promotion. The work of the Department includes the acquisition of non-official, local, documentary material.

f. State Library of Western Australia - J.S. Battye

Library of West Australian history.

This is a subject department of the Library. Staff other than the

Officer-in-Charge may be interchanged to give them wider experience for professional advancement. A higher degree in one of the humanities or library qualifications and experience are needed for promotion. The department deals with all local history material.

g. State Library of Tasmania - State Archives.

This is a separate department of the Library. Junior staff is interchanged. For appointment to the two senior positions there has been a tendency to stress a university degree or archives experience, rather than library qualifications. It is becoming increasingly desirable to have library qualifications to be promoted through the ranks to a senior position.

(ii) Non-Government Archives.

a. Commonwealth National Library - Manuscript Division.

A degree and library training are required.

b. Australian National University - Archives.

No connection with the Library. An honours degree in Economics was required by the advertisement.

c. Australian Broadcasting Commission. There is no connection with a library. Qualifications are not known.

d. Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

There is no connection with a library. The present Archivist has a degree in Economics.

e. Public Library of New South Wales - Mitchell Library and Dixson Library.

The staff is recruited for the Public Library of New South Wales in general. The examinations of the L.A.A. are required for permanent appointment and promotion. A degree with qualifying courses in history, literature or anthropology etc. is usually essential for advancement.

f. University of Sydney - Archivist.

There is no connection with the Library. The Archivist reports to the Registrar. The present Archivist was trained at the Scottish Record Office, and is an honours graduate.

g. University of New England Library.

The Library staff deals with local records.

h. Bank of New South Wales - Economic Department.

No connection with the Library; a degree in economics or history is required. This is usually a research position, but plans have been made to set up an archives on the model of the Commonwealth Bank.

i. Newcastle Public Library.

The Library staff deals with local records acquired.

j. State Library of Queensland - Oxley Memorial Library.

Appointees to the staff are required to have a degree in Arts, and must acquire library qualifications within a certain time.

k. University of Tasmania Library.

The Library holds a small collection of archives for students to use in gaining experience with original material. These are processed by qualified library staff and the Research Officer of the History Department.

(iii) Summing up.

There are three types of archivists in Australia. Firstly, the overseas trained archivist who is either a diploma holder from a university or possibly a library school, or the product of an "in-service" training scheme of a record office. Secondly, the archivist who is not formally an archivist by training but holds an Australian library qualification and has gained his archives training by working in an archives, and thirdly, the archivist, who is not qualified other than by the basic university degree which all archivists in the above categories must have.

This survey seems to prove that by and large archivists are required to have a higher standard of training than librarians. The Government Archives consider a degree essential and except in the case of the Commonwealth and Victoria, they also require their archivists to be qualified firstly as librarians. In addition to this they must have the skills of the archivist.

At the present time opportunities for advancement in the archival profession in Australia are so few that it is hard to recruit good people unless they can see some chance of rising above the assistant level. There are only three archivists on the staff of the Archives Department in New South Wales, and four in Victoria and these are the largest states. There is therefore, probably some advantage to the archivist in being qualified both as a librarian by examination and an archivist by experience. But this is the only advantage, for his salary is usually paid on a scale for librarians which is treated in most awards as a non-graduate profession. While he is attached to a library, it is highly unlikely that he will be able to improve his position.

In Australia, the only qualification that an archivist can gain is to pass the L.A.A. Archives Paper, R.9. This could only be called a preliminary examination in Archives. The only Archives which require it as a basic qualification are South Australia, and possibly Queensland. The National Library does not

require any library qualifications nor does Victoria. The other states require their archivists to hold the Registration and a suitable degree.

APPENDIX B.

Interested Organisations

Other than Libraries or Archives.

a. L.A.A. - Archives Section. A majority of Australian Archivists are members, and some scholars and others. A Journal is published irregularly and irregular meetings are held.

b. Business Archives Council. Councils in N.S.W. and Victoria. Publishes a journal and has held a Summer School. Advises businesses on archives and keeps a list of the location of records.

c. There has been a proposal to form a Society of Archivists of Australia and New Zealand.

APPENDIX C.

Archives and Libraries in Australia.

At the Government level all the Archives are associated with the State Library. At the business level very few libraries and archives are combined. In the universities there are both examples of separate archives and libraries; separate at Sydney and A.N.U. and combined institutions at Tasmania and New England. Where Archives is separate from the library it normally collects material that is not strictly archives, for instance the A.N.U. Archives is collecting back files of newspapers and periodicals.

APPENDIX D.

Professional Membership of the Library Association.

At present the requirements for the L.A.A. Registration Certificate are far too rigid for the archivist. There should be more opportunity for specialisation according to the inclination and needs of the student. Because papers on cataloguing and classification are compulsory most archivists do not attempt the Registration because these papers make it a waste of time for him.

to study for L.A.A. qualifications. The proposals recently made by the Archives Section to the Board of Examination were an attempt to correct this.

The Association presents a problem to the archivist who wishes to join it as a professional member. A number of professional archivists in the Commonwealth service and in private firms, etc. have not the necessary qualifications to be accepted as professional members of the Association. But it should not be argued that they were not at least as well qualified as archivists as holders of the Registration Certificate are as librarians. They are certainly qualified as archivists but are not given professional recognition by the Association which, presumably, professes to cater for both librarians and archivists.

APPENDIX E.

Archives and Manuscripts in Libraries.

The following statement of policy on the place of archives and manuscripts in Libraries was adopted by the Council of the Library Association of Great Britain on 31st May, 1957. It is reproduced here for information.

A. General Policy.

(a) The acquisition of archives and manuscripts is a legitimate purpose of libraries serving the interests of scholarship and research. Such materials may be appropriately consulted alongside collections of printed books, which are often needed to supplement or elucidate the manuscript material.

(b) Archives and manuscripts differ from printed books in being unique and incapable of wide distribution or standard treatment. Archives should be gathered in as few large repositories as is compatible with ease of access and storage.

(c) A good repository for archives and manuscripts should (i) have permanence and a secure income; (ii) have adequate strong room accommodation, fire and water proof, with temperature and humidity control; (iii) have a staff trained to deal with documents; (iv) be open during all reasonable hours, including evenings and lunch hours; (v) be readily accessible from all parts of the area covered by the collection; (vi) provide proper working space for staff and students; (vii) provide finding lists, catalogues, indexes and other aids to searchers; (viii) provide reference books needed by research workers; (ix) provide for repair of documents and seals and fumigation of documents; (x) permit photographic reproductions.

(d) Each repository should be in a town which is a cultural centre. The establishment of new repositories in areas already adequately covered is deprecated. Where existing repositories are adequate they should be utilized as centres for an agreed area. Any general outline of repositories should be modified when necessary so as to disturb as little as possible efficient institutions already firmly established. No one type of institution should be preferred to another, but all those institutions which fulfil the conditions listed, should be included in any national scheme established by law.

B. Qualifications.

A distinction in staffing qualifications must be made between those responsible for handling archival and non-archival manuscripts.

(a) Qualified archivists or qualified librarians may take charge of non-archival manuscripts, according to circumstances.

(b) The Library Association Final Examination in Palaeography and Archives may be regarded as a suitable qualification for:

(i) A librarian in charge of archives and directing the work of archivists.

(ii) A librarian working in a special department or on a special branch of work alongside archivists.

Such librarians should keep abreast of professional developments in the field of archives, and acquaint themselves with the professional publications and activities of archivists.

(c) A qualified archivist may be defined as a person who has (i) undergone a satisfactory course of training in archive administration, and has practical experience in this field, or (ii) has been accepted for membership by the Society of Archivists. The training given by one of the recognised full-time courses in archive administration is to be preferred.

C. Small Repositories.

No existing repository of archives can be considered satisfactory unless the quantity of material is sufficient to justify the employment of a qualified archivist.

Long established small repositories unable to conform to the majority of the conditions in A(c) above should consider adopting one or more of the following policies:

(i) Employing suitably qualified persons to calendar and list all documents dated earlier than A.D. 1800.

(ii) Handing over their archival deposits to a nearby large repository.

(iii) Employing a neighbouring Record Office or suitable commercial firm to carry out repairs, with adequate safeguards to preserve the continuous custody of the records.

D. Archivists in Libraries.

Archivists employed in libraries should not be expected to undertake routine library duties not connected with the departments in which they work. Where special departments may appropriately be staffed either by archivists or by librarians, their chances of advancement within the department should be equal. Archivists should have full facilities for attending professional meetings. Production of MSS without consultation with an archivist should only be undertaken by librarians when no investigations of a complex character are involved, and all documents should be replaced by the archives staff.

Just as library authorities should not be in charge of archives without employing qualified archivists, so records committees or similar bodies should not be in charge of considerable libraries without engaging qualified librarians.

There should be complete mobility of archivists between libraries and other employing bodies.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN QUEENSLAND.

In July of last year, Part IV. of the Libraries Acts of Queensland was proclaimed by State Parliament, thus enabling the establishment of an Archives Section under the provision of this Act. But while some efforts have already been made for the care of archives in Brisbane - in the first place, the obtaining of a building which is to be set aside for this purpose - the position here is dependent primarily on the appointment, which is at the moment pending, of an archivist.

The building, a former Government Stores building, is not without historic interest, as it is itself one of the few remaining examples of convict construction in Brisbane. The first floor is of convict origin and dates back to 1829. The remainder of the building was added at a later date. It is intended that some renovations will be made, among which will be the installation of a suitable type of steel shelving.