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CO-OPERATION AMONG ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NEW ZEALAND

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New Zealand occupies an area approximately similar to that of the British Isles but supports a population of only 3 million people. It is geographically isolated and the nearest major neighbour, Australia, is over 1500 miles away. There are six universities, the largest of which is the University of Auckland. This has a library collection of about 800 000 volumes and the total holdings of university libraries in New Zealand are approximately 3 1/2 million volumes. The necessity for co-operation is obvious. Two bodies have played a major part in the organization of co-operative ventures. These are the National Library of New Zealand and the Standing Committee on Library Resources of the N.Z. Vice Chancellor's Committee. This last comprises the librarian and a member of the teaching staff from each university and representatives of the National Library and of the N.Z. Library Association. It was this body which four years ago took the initiative which led to the annual publication of N.Z. university library statistics. These were modelled on the Australian pattern and their compilation involves a considerable amount of co-operation which cannot be taken for granted - witness the fact that there are no similar publications for a number of other countries including the United Kingdom.

Acquisitions.

There has been some successful co-operation in the purchase of expensive sets and in the rationalisation of current periodical subscriptions. The National Library regularly circulates an "Expensive Materials Bulletin". This is in two parts - the first consists of items which have not so far been recorded as having been ordered by any N.Z. Library but which the National Library considers worthy of attention. The second part lists expensive items which have been ordered or received by libraries in New Zealand. These entries are indexed cumulatively and there is no doubt that this list can have an important influence on purchasing decisions in academic libraries. In addition the Trustees of the National Library have a fund from which each year grants-in-aid are made to other libraries towards the purchase of expensive items not otherwise held in New Zealand.

Co-operation over periodical purchases has been of two main kinds. Standing Committee has in the past organised surveys of subject fields, such as Mathematics, in order to determine N.Z. resources, to find gaps and if possible to come to agreement on

additional purchases. These surveys appear to have had a limited effect. More recently the National Library agreed to co-operate with the university libraries when rising periodical prices made it appear likely that local decisions could have important effects on national resources. The university libraries agreed to notify the National Library of any proposed periodical cancellations. The National Library agreed to review the effect of proposed cancellations and ask the subscribing library to reconsider its decision if this seemed desirable. If the decision was still in favour of cancellation the National Library agreed that it would, whenever possible, take up the subscription if it appeared that this would be in the national interest.

Inter-library loan.

There is a well established system of inter-library loan operated by the National Library (with some difficulty because of government imposed limitations on Staff). The National Library publishes on fiche a union list of serials and for monographs a union list on cards is maintained in Wellington. So far the National Library has not managed to find a solution to the embarrassment caused by libraries which report their accessions in machine readable form.

Automation.

Although there has been a considerable amount of talk among the National Library and the University libraries about the need for co-operation in automation very little has been achieved. I believe that this is mainly because the National Library has found it extremely difficult to obtain access to governmental computer resources and unfortunately there has been no national source of funding for pilot projects. There have been some small local projects, and there are signs that institutions which deliberately held back because it was hoped that national schemes could be developed, will develop local systems because of dissatisfaction with lack of progress at the centre.

Library Staff.

One important area of co-operation which can get overlooked is the arrangement of regular meetings of librarians of various grades and interests to discuss matters of common concern. In N.Z. the university librarians themselves meet twice each year and there are also regular meetings of other members of university library staff such as reference and medical librarians. I think it is particularly important that others beside the chief librarian should be given the chance to participate in meetings of this kind. A major goal in co-operation should be the improvement in communication between institutions at a variety of levels.

DISCUSSION

Mrs. E. Törnudd: Mr Durey, the isolation of New Zealand seems to be a great problem. Have you easy access to data transmission networks to say California or Australia?

Durey: No, our local telephone system does not cater properly for data calls.