BY EVERETT T. MOORE

No words could please reference librarians more than those which appear in the Higher Education Act of 1965 under the matter-of-fact heading of “Strengthening College and Research Library Resources.” Granted, this endeavor is not ordinarily considered to be the principal concern of reference librarians, if their responsibility continues to be that of assisting readers in using the resources that have been amassed and organized by many hands. But as we read the text of the Act under this heading we find that appropriations are authorized therein to enable the Commissioner of Education to “transfer funds to the Librarian of Congress for the purpose of (1) acquiring, so far as possible, all library materials currently published throughout the world which are of value to scholarship; and (2) providing catalog information for these materials promptly after receipt, and distributing bibliographic information by printed cards and by other means, and enabling the Library of Congress to use for exchange and other purposes such of these materials as are not needed for its own collections.”

To reference librarians, this statement of intent in our federal statutes is full of promise. To acquire (so far as possible) “all library materials currently published throughout the world which are of value to scholarship” is an amazing objective in this age of exploding knowledge. We have, in these post-World-War-II years, been adjusting ourselves to the fact that no single library, no matter what its resources and skills, can attempt a real measure of completeness in all the fields in which it professes interest. How far toward such a goal the provision of federal funds might be able to carry the Library of Congress—acting in the interests of all the research libraries of the nation—has not been calculated, for this is an incalculable matter. But the aim and purpose are noble, and all librarians would have to applaud the intent of the Act.

Awareness of this broad and comprehensive program of acquisitions by the national library should give reference librarians throughout the nation a new sense of confidence in the ability of our libraries jointly to meet the requirements of scholarship in every field.

Even more practical and concrete is the promise of the next subsection of the Act, in which it is specified that the Library of Congress shall be enabled to provide catalog information for these materials—“promptly after receipt”—and to “distribute bibliographic information” by printing catalog cards and other means, so that every library in the nation may thereby share in the benefits of this grandly conceived program of acquisitions.

It is a fact well known to us all that at present the university libraries of the country can obtain Library of Congress catalog cards for only a little more than half of the books they acquire each year. Increasingly they have had to resort to methods of organizing and recording many of their important acquisitions—including many vital foreign imprints—in economical but bibliographically inadequate fashion, in order to make them available for use. Such minimal bibliographical control as the systems of single-entry listing in card catalogs which a number of libraries have adopted have had to be employed in lieu of the fuller cataloging we still believe in but must often forego, even for many of the books which need it most.

Promise, therefore, of a greatly extended program of centralized cataloging, to bring these essential materials of
research under bibliographical control to an extent we had almost ceased to hope for, is important news indeed.

This promise relates directly to the world of today. There is nothing complex about it, and every reference librarian can recognize the proposed measures as being simple extensions of present systems. Greater efficiency in acquiring the materials of research and providing bibliographic information about them to all the research libraries in the nation are logical, natural steps toward a better utilization of our resources.

Not so direct and simple, but more far-reaching in their implications, are the provisions in that other section of the Higher Education Act entitled “Research and Demonstrations Relating to Libraries and the Training of Library Personnel.” Here it is specified that the Commissioner of Education is authorized to make grants “for research and demonstration projects relating to the improvement of libraries or the improvement of training in librarianship, including the development of new techniques, systems, and equipment for processing, storing, and distributing information, and for the dissemination of information derived from such research and demonstrations...”

This part of the Act looks to research to help us develop new methods and techniques, new systems and equipment for better organizing information and making it available for use. “Information,” I judge, refers not only to the substance and content of scientific and technological knowledge, but to the body of bibliographical information which is the key to all literature and learning.

The potentialities of the library applications of the new technology have been finely described by William Dix in a recent article in University: A Princeton Quarterly. “At the national or regional level,” he writes, “there will emerge networks which will bring the book resources of the nation under much greater control, providing much greater depth of indexing and subject analysis, available locally through computer-produced book catalogs or through machine-readable tapes or discs. More rapid and efficient dissemination of the product of the basic intellectual operation of cataloging, performed centrally, may come fairly soon. The actual storage of the intellectual content of books in computers and remote facsimile transmission of texts, while of course actually possible now on a small scale, seem to be fairly remote as regular library operations because of their costs.”

The promise of the research and demonstrations section of the Act is one, therefore, of helping to bring such potentialities closer to realization.

Reference librarians look with anticipation to the development of library catalogs in machine-readable form, stored in memory devices, and capable of printing out selected portions on demand. To achieve such capability, libraries will of course have to work toward the standardization of bibliographical entries, so that information may be adapted to machine uses. Hence the importance of the plan for greater centralization of cataloging in the Library of Congress.

To serve the bedazzling variety of needs that are being created by interdisciplinary programs and area study centers, institutes for special studies, and joint research enterprises that are such important programs in many colleges and universities today, librarians may in many cases need to organize their services according to new patterns. The general reference librarian may give way in some situations to bibliographers or library specialists in a number of fields of interest: specialists who can work closely with scholars in providing information about library resources and in

---

developing collections for research and study. To perform such services will require more complete, more detailed bibliographic information about every kind of material for research: ephemeral materials not in book form, magnetic tapes, technical reports, official and nonofficial documents. Hence, again, the importance of greater, not less, attention to thorough and detailed cataloging and organization of materials.

Most of the new institutes and centers, as Frederick Wagman has observed, are "based on the premise that existing curricular and department organization, like library subject classification, has virtue and should not be abandoned, yet is inadequate to meet current research and instructional needs." 2

The area studies, Mr. Wagman points out, "have a new orientation, demanding not only a high rate of current acquisition but significant retrospective resources in which the major libraries of the country have always been deficient." 3 And, when the university organizes itself to cope with the problem of acquiring, organizing, and giving service on publications from an area of Africa, or of Asiatic or near Eastern or East European countries, the staff member initially engaged is likely to be "charged with responsibility for selection, acquisition, cataloging, and reference—the last only if students and faculty can find his desk in either the cataloging or acquisitions departments. When additional professional staff can be provided, the functions of book selection and cataloging may be separated, and eventually a staff specialized in reference work may be employed." 4

To meet the multifarious language needs for dealing with the publications which come in from all the less-familiar areas of the world we can only turn reasonably to programs of centralized acquisitions and cataloging. Federal aid which will make this possible seems our only salvation.

Douglas Bryant has noted that: "As research more and more frequently crosses traditional lines and as scholars work more in groups and become peripatetic both physically and intellectually, libraries must inevitably alter in significant ways if they are to continue to provide the means for teaching and research. The lawyer and the mathematician in a School of Education, the psychiatrist in a Divinity School, and the oceanographer recently become Director of a Center of Population Studies are going to approach their research in ways quite different from those of their colleagues who continue to work within the traditional framework of their subject fields. And their library requirements will be quite different." 5

In the Higher Education Act's provision for research and demonstration there is promise even in the vexing matter of interlibrary loans, for here are prospects for better bibliographic organization on a truly national basis. Systems for facsimile transmission of material from one library to another, as they are ultimately developed, will need to utilize the best organized and standardized media for published bibliographic information that can be devised, so that both location of material and transmitting it for use by the scholar who needs it can be provided. Our present chaotic procedures for locating and borrowing materials can only be relieved in this day of burgeoning research activity by utilizing new techniques and systems as they become available to us.

Certainly no functions or services of academic libraries will be more thoroughly affected by the fulfillment

3 Ibid., p. 345.
4 Ibid., p. 348.
of the Higher Education Act's provisions than will those of the reference librarian. We have already glimpsed enough of the bibliographical world of the future to be impressed by the necessity of taking every advantage of the kind of investigation and planning that this Act will make possible.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

BY HELEN M. WELCH

It's great to be a librarian in 1966, even a technical services librarian! It's respectable, now that libraries are costing the federal government so much. Education—including libraries—and welfare, they tell us, will be second only to national defense in the federal budget during fiscal year 1967.¹

If you want to be profession-proud, browse in the four volumes which make up the Senate and House committee hearings preceding the passage of Public Law 89-329. The set should be a best-seller for academic librarians. Note the easy acceptance by the Congressmen of the importance of libraries to this country, and consider that this is the result of a steady building process since the first major library bill in 1956. Note the implied and sometimes explicit request to librarians for guidance on what is needed. Note the gratitude expressed by both Chairman Morse and Chairman Green for the introduction by librarian-witnesses of the completely new proposal which became Part C of Title II. And note Senator Morse's appreciative statements on Edmon Low and Germaine Krettek. It's all in the record.

For technical service librarians, Title II, Part C is much the most important part of the Higher Education Act. It has several aspects that lift the heart. First of all, it's so short. Only seventeen lovely lines out of a document of fifty-two pages! Secondly, it establishes centralized cataloging—the thing we've wanted so much that we've even talked of paying for it ourselves! Thirdly, it was inserted in the bill by members of our own profession and was welcomed by the congressional subcommittees working on the bill. It's pleasant to ask for something you need very much, to be granted that thing, and then to be thanked for asking for it.

According to John Cronin, the proposal had its beginnings in a meeting of the RTSD Subcommittee on the National Union Catalog, held at LC in 1963. The committee's request that LC prepare alternative proposals for a centralized cataloging program led eventually to ARL's creative use of the hearings on the Higher Education Act to insert Part C into Title II. The whole process can give us pride in our profession: the subcommittee's request; LC's response to it; the ARL insertion into the hearings; the careful watching of the legislative process, and guidance through it by the ALA Washington office; and LC's masterly planning to implement the Act.

Those of us who work in day-to-day operations, acquiring books and giving them bibliographic addresses in our collections, sometimes feel that the great powerhouse of research libraries which the Association of Research Libaries represents is pretty far removed from our operations, that the head of a large library doesn't recognize the desperate flailing of the arms as we try to keep from going under for the last time in the flood of materials which come to us in ever increasing waves. But it was ARL which set up a Committee on Shared Cataloging and in 1964 voted unanimously to give its highest priority to