



Introduction

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WITHIN A YEAR of the appearance of this issue of *Library Trends*, the great quadrennial debate will be under way. Both (or all three) political parties will be formulating policy on many issues, including the role of the federal government in the support of libraries.

Much of the library legislation of the last twenty years is close to expiration now, and all of it is subject to question as new priorities are formulated in all areas of public policy. In order to plan wisely for the future, it is urgent that the library community—librarians, trustees and library users—understand what the impact has been of the federal aid to libraries which has been enacted since 1956. The needs of people for library and information services in 1976 and 1980 are not necessarily what they were in the 1950s and 1960s. More of the same kind of support may not be justifiable. We need to review our experience of the last twenty years, to determine which elements of library legislation have been most or least effective, to what degree the legislation has accomplished the objectives set for it by the library profession and the Congress, and what should be changed, continued and originated in the years ahead.

The Publications Committee of *Library Trends* conceived this issue as a compendium of data about federal aid to libraries, which would help the library community to reach a concensus about future needs and directions.

A caveat is in order about what this issue does *not* attempt. It is not concerned with the support and administration of the hundreds of libraries maintained by various federal agencies—legislative, judicial or executive—such as the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, the National Library of Agriculture, the Army, Navy and Marine libraries, etc. A discussion of these libraries and the federal

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committee which coordinates them might well be the theme of a subsequent *Trends* issue.

This issue does not attempt to identify all problem-oriented research on information science conducted and/or sponsored by various federal agencies, although Paul Janaske's article does refer to some of this research. It does not trace the Library of Congress's research and development which has resulted in the intellectual and technological breakthrough of MARC, although Alan Smith's article on the Higher Education Act does acknowledge the importance of this development.

The legislation which created the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and the more recent resolution which authorized a White House Conference on Libraries may have enormous significance for the future of American library service. However, because these programs are not intended to provide financial aid to libraries, they are not within the scope of this issue.

Finally, no article on the impact of the Medical Library Assistance Act and related legislation has been included here, not because it falls outside scope, but because, one year ago, in the July 1974 issue of *Library Trends*, Louise Darling traced the history and impact of this legislation in her article, "Changes in Information Delivery since 1960 in Health Science Libraries."

This issue includes two articles about the Library Services Act of 1956 and its successor, the Library Services and Construction Act, the public library legislation which pioneered all other federal support of local libraries. James Fry traces the legislative history of these acts, highlighting the issues, the debates, and the people who made it all happen. Joseph Shubert, state librarian of Ohio, calls upon his personal experience and those of his colleagues in other state libraries to measure the impact of this legislation on the extent and quality of American public library services.

Several articles probe the effect of Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA). Alan Smith concentrates on its legislative history and the impact of Title II-A in providing resources to academic libraries. Sarah Reed, formerly a member of the U.S. Office of Education staff administering Title II-B, discusses federally funded training for librarianship—fellowships and institutes under HEA II-B as well as training opportunities under other legislation such as the National Defense Education Act, the Educational Professions Development Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Medical Library Assistance Act. Paul Janaske summarizes the accomplishments of research and demonstration conducted under HEA II-B and other federal legislation.

Introduction

Margaret Grazier focuses on Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—its history, objectives, provisions and effects—as well as the impact on libraries of Titles I and III of ESEA.

Henry Drennan surveys major miscellaneous programs such as the Vocational Education Act and the Older Americans Act which do not focus primarily on aid to libraries, but contain provisions which can and have offered significant support to library programs.

No survey of federal aid to libraries could be complete without a discussion of the role which the American Library Association has played in the support and framing of library legislation. Eileen Cooke not only traces the history of this involvement, but also underscores the role which individual librarians, trustees and library users—as well as state, local and regional library associations—must play in framing and defending future legislation.

The authors bring the history of each act to the present, and explicitly or implicitly pose several substantive questions:

1. Does the federal government have a continuing role in the support of local and state libraries?
2. Assuming that the federal government should share with local and state government in the support of libraries, what is each level's "fair share"?
3. Should federal funds be conceived as demonstration/incentive/experimental/seed money, or as on-going operational support?
4. Assuming that the federal government should have a share in the support of local libraries, to what extent should priorities among various directions of library service be nationally determined?
5. Should federal funds to libraries be categorical, reflecting national priorities, or in block grants with maximum local determination of priority (as in revenue sharing)?
6. Should federal funds be channeled through state libraries to insure statewide planning, or directly to local libraries, thus possibly reducing administrative cost?

These and other questions have no easy answers, but within a few months the library community must reach a consensus about them if it is to make a responsible contribution to the 1976 debate.

The contributors and the editor of this issue of *Library Trends* hope that the information presented here will offer useful base data for making wise decisions in the crucial months ahead.

