

# **An Australian Library in the A.M.**

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**Earlier years of the University of Sydney Library**

**Royal Australian Historical Society**

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## **An Australian Library in the A.M.**

### **Earlier Years of the University of Sydney Library**

A paper read to the Society 13 August 1968.

Some preliminary explanation seems to be in order before I speak about the early history of the library I am honoured to direct. What is this 'A.M.' that I have insisted in including in the title of this paper—other than perhaps the sublimation of some frustrated journalistic urge for the sensational headline?

In 1934 the Carnegie Corporation sponsored a survey of Australian libraries. The survey was conducted by Ralph Munn of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Ernest R. Pitt of the Public Library of Victoria. Its report,<sup>2</sup> which appeared in 1935, proved to be such a turning point in the development of Australian libraries that it is not at all too fanciful to divide our country's brief library history into A.M. (or ante-Munn) and P.M. (or post-Munn). The Munn-Pitt report, moreover, was of particular significance for the University of Sydney Library. The report criticized the library very severely and had some particularly wounding things to say about the then librarian. More importantly, fairly considerable changes took place in the library from soon after the publication of the report. Thus, it is certainly possible at least to make a case that the report, while its most dramatic results were to appear in other fields of librarianship, did have a measurable effect on the development of the University of Sydney Library.

This paper accordingly is an attempt to trace the growth of the University of Sydney Library during its A.M., and to discuss the justice of the Munn-Pitt criticisms in the light of this history.

Should the A.M./P.M. division seem somewhat artificial, however, an alternative basis for division which could feasibly be applied to the story of the University of Sydney Library, would be, on a geological pattern, into three eras: The Palaeozoic (the no-librarian-at-all era), the Mezozoic (or the era of the Talented Amateur) and the Cainozoic (or the era of the Professional). It so happens that, broadly speaking, the period. I will be covering in this paper corresponds with the first and second of these eras. There certainly seems to have been no effective librarian prior to the appointment of J. Le Gay Brereton as Assistant Librarian in 1902 and the

first librarian who could be claimed to have had professional experience at the time of his appointment was undoubtedly E. V. Steel, who succeeded H. M. Green in 1946.

So much by way of introduction, now to our story. K. W. Binns, certainly one of the most distinguished former members of the library staff, pointed out in an article written at the time of the opening of what we now call 'Old Fisher',<sup>3</sup> that the University Library really was given a most auspicious start. In Binns' words, the Senate 'before they appointed any professors or teachers, devoted a part of the funds at their disposal to the purchase of books to form the nucleus of a University Library'.

Indeed, the Senate, which had met for the first time only on 2 March 1851 resolved as early as its ninth meeting on 11 June that year to form a committee to 'select from and purchase such of Dr Mackaen's books as they should think suitable for the University Library'.<sup>4</sup> It was not without significance that this resolution should have been moved by 'Futurity' Merewether himself and that the Vice-Provost Dr (later Sir Charles) Nicholson should have been elected to head the committee.

By 7 July a second list of books had been received from Dr Mackaen and the *ad hoc* committee previously appointed was replaced by a more permanent body 'for the selection and purchase of books as opportunity offers'. The committee was to report proceedings monthly and was not to expend more than £50 in any one month. On 11 October 1852, Nicholson's address as Vice-Provost at the Inauguration Ceremony included the significant words 'It is the intention of the Senate to appropriate a fixed sum every year for the establishment and maintenance of the Library'.

It looked as if the infant library was well on the crest of the wave. In August 1852, £5 was paid for Dr Mackaen's book case, and in October, the Senate found £500 for books and a list of desiderata was sent off to 'Mr Bohn' in London.<sup>5</sup> In August next year the newly appointed professors were consulted about book needs. They replied, after a week's thought, that they would have to wait and see just what turned up from Mr Bohn. In December 1852, Nicholson secured the appointment of Frederick Hale Forsham, 'late scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge' as librarian at £50 per annum. By 16 February 1853, after some skirmishing in the Senate, a committee 'which had secured the valued cooperation of the Professors' submitted a list of books 'after much research and labour' to the value of £2,500, a sum which the Senate had decided to allot from unexpended endowment. Finally, in the following year, a further £300 was found to complete these purchases.

Sad to say, this was to be the end of the honeymoon. The grand wave of bibliothecal enthusiasm subsided as suddenly as it developed. Forsham resigned on 6 March 1854, and, in November of the same year, Nicholson

withdrew from the Senate a crucial motion 'that, as it is expedient that some regular provision should be made for keeping up the supply of books, the share of fees accruing to the University be appropriated hereafter for the purchase of books in England'.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps another straw in a wind which was veering significantly away from library development was to be seen in the progressive modification of the Senate's building plans. The Building Committee's first report in January 1854, put a library at the head of its list of 'indispensable' items to which priority should be assigned. The library, the committee suggested, 'should be at least 80' in length by 35' in breadth and be furnished with movable presses thereby serving the double purpose of a receptacle for the books and a temporary hall for the holding of the public meetings of the Senate and for examinations'.<sup>7</sup> By June of that year, however, Blackett's plans were developing and the breath-taking concept of his Great Hall had fired the imagination of the Senate. The library was out, save as a consideration to be borne in mind when allocating space in the main building.<sup>8</sup>

In January 1855, the Registrar was allowed a library assistant at £50 per annum, presumably to replace Forsham, but that was the end. No further money whatever appears to have been spent on books or anything else till 1858, when a total of £60 appears in the Senate's annual Statement of Accounts.

It had been a substantial honeymoon, however. The Senate's balance sheet for 1853 records that of the University's total income for the first three years of its life, no less than 20.8% had gone to the purchase of books for the library. Not until the foundation of the 'Murray Committee' Universities in the 1960's would any Australian University Library manage again to secure such a lion's share of foundation finance.

Books continued to trickle in, however, even after the funds cut out. For example, the Senate Minutes for 1855 contain the first record of book donations to the library.<sup>9</sup> Inexplicably also, periodicals began to arrive regularly for, by 1858, as we shall see, the Vice-Provost was able to table a list of them.

Understandably, however, the magnificent buildings going up at Grose Farm practically pre-empted the Senate's attention during this period. It was not until 'the arrangement of the books in the new library was nearly completed'<sup>10</sup> that there was time to think of more permanent arrangements for the library's administration.

A Senate Resolution of 5 August 1857, brought into existence a permanent Library Committee, which included the first four professors, 'to superintend the Library of the University'. Allowing for the probable working of this Senate/Professorial partnership, this Library Committee is the clearly

recognizable ancestor of today's. Indeed, with noticeable fluctuations of importance and interest over the period, the professors of the University have constituted, for 110 years, its Library Committee.

Nicholson presented the first meeting of the new committee (3 May 1858) with two lists, one of books needed to complete the 1853 order and one of periodicals in the library, and opined that the two matters most in need of attention were first, the production of a catalogue and second, the revision of the Library Rules.<sup>11</sup>

The committee solemnly considered both the Vice-Provost's opinions and the Senate's instruction

that it is the duty of the Committee to propose to the Senate such Regulations as it may consider expedient for the gradual augmentation of the Library and to manage the expenditure of such sum as may be placed at its disposal by the Senate for the purchase of books including the regular supply of the outcoming numbers of periodicals taken by the University.

Its first and only resolution at this meeting, however, was on a somewhat less exalted, though perhaps more practical plane. It resolved 'that it be a recommendation to the Senate that further bookshelves be provided in the Library for the books for which at present there was no room.'

In fact, new rules did actually appear, though not till the following year.<sup>12</sup> They were reproduced in full in the Annual Report of the Senate for 1859. Similarly, the first draft of the catalogue was tabled at the Library Committee on 3 January, 1859.

Like the first excitement of the library's foundation, however, the burst of energy that brought forth the Library Committee was not sustained and the next twenty years of the University's life were very dull indeed as far as the library was concerned.

Infrequent entries in the committee's minutes indicate that the Senate could be prevailed upon on occasion to buy a few books. For example, it appears that in 1866 approval was actually given to purchase a number of books, offered by Professor Smith, including a copy of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Since the offer had been made originally in 1862, however, this was hardly a precipitate decision. In only three years (1862, 1869 and 1871) during these two decades do the University's accounts reveal actual library expenditure. If there was any such expenditure in other years, it must be submerged in the 'miscellanea' entry. No wonder the Library Committee's meetings were infrequent and that on occasion they lapsed for months or years at a time.<sup>13</sup>

In 1878, however, attention was drawn again to the library by Thomas Walker's purchase for it of the books of Nicol Stenhouse, a well-known

Sydney solicitor. This handsome gift—it cost Walker £700<sup>14</sup> —was to have important long term effects. The immediate result seems to have been a quickening of interest, expressed in more regular meetings of the Library Committee and, more importantly perhaps, in the fact that 1879 was the last year in which the University's accounts fail to show regular outlay, however small, on books for the library.

In August 1879, the committee resolved that the books in the library ‘including those presented (sic) by Mr Stenhouse be arranged and classified and that Professors Badham and Liversidge arrange for a competent person to be employed for this purpose’.<sup>15</sup> A week later, it determined that the Senate's attention be drawn to the insufficient accommodation for students in the library and that Mr James Oliver, B.A., be recommended for employment on the task of organizing the collections.

As for the actual Stenhouse books themselves, it must be said that there seems reason to doubt whether their practical usefulness outweighed some of the problems of their acquisition. They seem from the first to have been regarded largely as rare books to be preserved rather than used, something of a luxury in a library whose total collections were estimated by the Chancellor at only 12,000 volumes as late as 1885. By 1883 the committee was seeking wirefronted book cases for the Stenhouse books as a discouragement to misuse and, by the same token of course, to any use at all.<sup>16</sup> In 1887, to anticipate somewhat, the committee was to recommend that

instructions be given for the books in the Walker/Stenhouse library to be stamped with some distinguishing mark showing that they belong to that library; that a list be drawn up of the books which it is desirable should be maintained in their present position in that Library, and that the remainder be stored in cases in order to allow of more room on the shelves for newly purchased books.<sup>17</sup>

The long term effect of the Walker/Stenhouse gift was much more important. It did not appear till 1884.

In his address at the Commemoration ceremony in 1879 the Chancellor (Sir William Manning) in announcing the gift, explained that the Senate had been given the option of making a selection or of retaining the whole of Stenhouse's library and added words which I think may significantly have altered the University Library's history:

This subject brings to my mind the deficiency and, I may add, the practical inconvenience of our Library accommodation; and I will be so bold as to give expression to the hope that the day will come when one of our men of great wealth and equal public spirit will . . . earn the gratitude of their country by erecting for this University a library worthy of comparison with like edifices at home. With such a building to receive them, we may confidently anticipate that contributions of books would freely flow.<sup>18</sup>

This was in July 1879. In October 1880, Thomas Fisher signed the will in which he bequeathed what was to amount to £30,000 to meet just the need the Chancellor had outlined though, fortunately for the library, the testator left it to the Senate of the time to decide just how the funds were to be used to 'establish and maintain the Library'. Perhaps too much should not be built on this link between Manning's words and Fisher's action, but the timing seems about right and Fisher's own knowledge of Stenhouse has recently been satisfactorily affirmed.<sup>19</sup>

Fisher died in 1884, but the Senate was determined not to dissipate his bequest on immediate needs and, in the outcome, their caution was justified, but the library had to suffer more than fifteen difficult years as a result. Interestingly enough there is considerable evidence of a basic difference of opinion on the best way to spend the windfall.

The Chancellor soon made clear his own strongly held view that the last thing to do with the money was buy books. He thought that the fund

... will probably suffice for a handsome and well-designed Library Building and for a partial endowment of the Librarian's office. As regards books, my conviction is very confident that with a suitable building and a good librarian they will so assuredly follow as to dispense with any appropriation for them out of this fund.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, the Library Committee, that is to say the professors, by April 1886, were recommending the expenditure of £700 from the interest on the Fisher Fund on urgently needed books. In December the committee was asked officially by the Senate to advise on an appropriate disposition of the fund and while, on this occasion, it 'played it cool' by postponing any advice 'until full information as to the requirements of a modern library should have been obtained'<sup>21</sup> its real interest was clearly revealed by its instruction, in April 1887, that each committee member should draw up desiderata lists against the possibility of Fisher funds being available.

In his Commemoration address on 14 April 1888, the Chancellor revealed that, in December 1887, the University had finally made up its mind about the Fisher Bequest. First, any excess over £30,000 was to be appropriated immediately for books. Second, £20,000, plus any accumulation on it by way of interest, was to go into a building fund, to be dangled as bait, with the fond hope that the government might match it £ for £ and so allow not only the library but other desirable 'annexes to the building for other purposes' to be built. Third, the remaining £10,000, which the Chancellor had dearly wished to see as an endowment for the librarianship 'as being an inevitable future requirement and better adapted to keep Mr Fisher's name in remembrance, as he had certainly hoped' had been 'negated in peculiar circumstances in favour of creating a Perpetual Fund for books', but, warned

Sir William darkly, 'the subject will be brought under reconsideration'.

The dispute was solved, as it turned out, by simply requiring the Perpetual Fund to carry both proposals. In addition to the purchase of books, the assistant librarian's salary (and later the librarian's) was to be paid from it until as late as 1937. Nevertheless it did at last provide a real foundation on which to build the library's bookstock. The results are clearly shown in the growth of the collection from 18,000 volumes in 1886, the last 'pre-Fisher' year, to 50,000 in 1899.

As to the building to be erected from the '£20,000 plus interest', time does not permit more than a sketch of the heart-breaking delays, the false hopes so brutally shattered and the half-glimpsed political manoeuvrings that had to be endured before the government finally 'came up to scratch'. In October 1889, for example, the future seemed assured with government agreement to provide £25,000 to match a Fisher £25,000<sup>22</sup> and, in November, the Library Committee had a happy time actually allotting space in what was to prove no more than a castle in the air.<sup>23</sup> In 1893, however, the Chancellor was reduced to assuring his Commemoration audience that the Senate 'does not yet abandon the hope that the Government may carry out the proposed agreement'. By 1895 the Library Committee for one clearly had abandoned hope and so resolved 'that in view of the great want of books for the use of all Departments and the unfortunate contraction in the appropriations for the purchase of books . . . the Senate . . . postpone the erection of a Library Building and allow the interest on the Fisher Bequest to be applied in the meantime to the purchase of books'.<sup>24</sup> By this time the annual book fund had shrunk to about £700 from the Fisher Fund and less than £150 from the Senate though this total was double that of 1886, the last pre-Fisher year, and a veritable wealth of Croesus compared with the situation a scant five years before that.<sup>25</sup>

Sir Normand MacLaurin's first address as Chancellor in April 1889, however, hinted strongly at the possibility of a breakthrough. He said

The Senate has raised the corpus of the Fisher Fund to £40,000, the income from which would provide a fairly liberal endowment for the purchase of books, librarian's salary and the other incidental expenses of a library . . . what we now suggest is that the Government . . . should show their respect for the interests of learning by undertaking the charge of erecting the necessary building and so add to the architectural beauties of the city.

An Act of December 1900, authorizing the expenditure of £10,000 in the Loan Estimates was the first indication that the suggestion had been taken up and, in his address at the 1902 Commemoration ceremony, the Chancellor was able to 'offer the thanks of the University to the present

Government . . . which has had the liberality to give us the Library building for which we have been waiting so many years'. After all the years of nagging uncertainty the government had decided to find the full cost of the building. It was truly the end of an era.

It was the end of an era in another way, too, for, on 10 February 1902, John Le Gay Brereton was selected from ninety-one applicants for the position of assistant librarian, the committee noting — though history does not record for what particular reason — that it was 'not desirable that a lady be appointed'. Though Brereton's appointment was only on probation for twelve months in the first instance and although it was twelve years before he became officially librarian, nevertheless this day marked the effective end of the library's Palaeozoic Era.

In the last years of the no-librarian period some notable development had taken place. Caleb Hardy who became assistant librarian in 1888 had pioneered the use in Australia of the then new-fangled Dewey Decimal classification. In 1896 he wrote a paper on the subject which Anderson, the Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales and later a member of the University Library Committee, presented on his behalf to the First Australian Library Conference in Melbourne.<sup>26</sup>

In 1897 H. E. Barff, the Registrar, who also doubled as librarian wrote about the University of Sydney Library for the Second International Library Conference in London.<sup>27</sup>

A new printed catalogue was issued in 1885 and another in 1893. In 1894 a second full-time member of staff was added<sup>28</sup> and a third followed in 1898. The collections too were attracting gifts of quality. Gould's *Birds*, even then valued at £1,000, was presented in 1893 and the first instalment of what was to be a magnificent gift of books and manuscripts came from Sir Charles Nicholson in 1887.

Much less satisfactorily, as early as 1880, the inevitable problem of decentralization had reared its ugly head, with professors reporting that 'they were willing to take charge of the new books in their respective Departments until such time as proper supervision for their books in the Library should be provided'.<sup>29</sup>

With 'J. Le Gay' at the helm a new direction appeared in library affairs. Both the Library Committee Minutes and the annual reports which he meticulously submitted, even while only assistant librarian, testify to his drive and to his keen interest in the improvement of the library. In addition to their literary delights these documents also present yet another completely new feature. The new assistant librarian was perfectly capable of drawing attention to the library sins of the very professors who had appointed him and who had indeed dominated the library for at least forty years. Thus, in

his first report, he was already worrying about 'permanent loans' to professors.

He was also agitating for an executive sub-committee for the library, describing the theory and practice of analytical cataloguing, recording an experiment in binding, drawing attention to the need for revising the Library Regulations, deploring the excessive use of 'cribs', pondering on the unethical behaviour of borrowers (women borrowers in particular), worrying about the Law School and solemnly reporting the great success achieved in a large-scale dusting operation employing 'Harvey's pneumatic dusting machine'. The age of the talented and enthusiastic amateur had arrived.

It is impossible to resist illustrations of Brereton's literary style. In 1903, for example, he reported succinctly that 'several innovations have been made, each of them increasing the Library's efficiency and the staff's burden of work'. Was there ever a more elegant dissection of the deficiencies of professors as book selectors than: 'they neglect to make their requisitions on the proper forms, to write legibly and to give the full particulars of date, publisher and price. Sometimes they even omit the author's name and misquote titles. Delay is the least of evils caused by this carelessness.'? How more pithily could one describe the vagaries of departmental collections than: 'it has become apparent that in one Department the students have not such free access to the books as they should have and that in another, access is so free that the whereabouts of many volumes is a mystery.'?

From 1902 the Senate ceased its regular grant to the library and for the next nine years, until after World War I, its total income was the interest on the Fisher Fund. This had to meet both salaries and books,<sup>30</sup> the normal provision for the latter being of the order of £1,250 or so per year. In 1911, however, to the library's obvious relief, an additional government endowment of £1,000 was added to this each year.

The distribution of these funds over the various subject fields which the library had to endeavour to cover was always a key issue with the Library Committee, dominated as it was by the Heads of the Teaching Departments. The first record of what was to be the standard pattern for the whole period covered by this paper is found in the committee's minutes as early as 20 July 1882, when a special grant of £100, which comprised the library's total funds for books in that year, was solemnly divided on the basis of £25 each for each of the three then teaching Departments (Classics, Mathematics and Natural Science) and £25 for binding and minor expenses. This pattern had been followed, when money was available, through the years up to 1902, the only variation being the inclusion of new departments in the sharing process<sup>31</sup> and the exclusion from it, not infrequently, of any provision at all for binding. This last action of course resulted in urgent appeals to the

Senate at irregular intervals.<sup>32</sup>

The first budget over which Brereton could have had any real influence (that for 1903) allocated £300 for binding and divided the remaining £950 equally between the Departments in Arts and Law on the one hand and those in Science and Medicine on the other. A balance of £75 was left in the hands of two professors to spend for special purposes. For 1904, however, the 'special balance' had become firmly the General Fund which very clearly was at the discretion of the librarian (or assistant librarian as he then was).

Brereton was not always successful in these financial matters. In 1914, for example, he failed to convince the Library Committee that, in order to prevent the funds (which were not susceptible of annual increase) from being crippled by the increasing number of departments, those departments which had parliamentary grants for book purchases should be excluded from the Fisher Fund . . . nor was any department prepared to suffer in that year the 6% reduction which he proposed for each to support the employment of a desperately needed extra cataloguer!<sup>33</sup>

Despite his reverse over the extra cataloguer, Brereton did succeed in having the staff substantially increased, though it can never have been adequate. At his appointment in 1902 he had only one assistant, the next year he had a second and a further one was approved in 1906. There was a total staff of five (including one at Law) in 1910 and, by the time of his translation to the Chair of English in 1921, he had eleven all told (including two at Law).

Some of the people recruited to these extra positions were to carve their own niches in the Australian library world. K. W. Binns, who joined the staff in 1895 later became Commonwealth Parliamentary Librarian. E. V. Steel, who would himself be Librarian of the University of Sydney, first appears in the staff list in 1911 and J. W. Medcalf (sic) in 1917. Mr Metcalfe was to go on from Fisher to the Public Library of New South Wales and a career of considerable distinction both in that library and in the whole area of library development in Australia.

As to accommodation, the Fisher building was completed in August 1909, and opened on Monday 20 September in that year. Though the library needs of later generations were to discover its imperfections, it was unquestionably an outstanding building of its time. Its huge, monumental reading room, though notably handsome, was strictly traditional, but the multi-tier bookstack was of extremely advanced design and set a standard to be envied and emulated for decades.<sup>34</sup>

The new building had not been provided any too soon. By 1910 the library's bookstock totalled 92,000 volumes, an increase of almost 100% in less than twenty years. The imagination boggles at what conditions must

have been like in the old library which, by the time of the move to Fisher, had spread over staircases and into cupboards, and of which all too great a proportion, perforce, had found its way into Academic Departments and professors' private rooms.

It was surely correct for the Senate to say of the new building at the end of 1910 that 'the spacious accommodation it provides for readers and books together with its modern equipment for the shelving and handling of books has enabled the Fisher Library to enter upon a new era of usefulness'. Moreover, though no supporting evidence was provided, it was probably equally accurate to assert also, as it did, that 'this has already been demonstrated by the phenomenal increase in the number of students frequenting the reading room and also the increased use the teaching staff has made of the Library'.<sup>35</sup>

One of Brereton's most lasting innovations was the establishment of the Library Executive Committee. The full committee had had periods of frequent meeting in the past, for example it met almost monthly while the question of the disposal of the Fisher Fund was alive but, by the time of Brereton's appointment, it met normally once only, usually early in the year, and had been known to let a year go by with no meeting at all.<sup>36</sup>

In his indeterminate position as assistant only to Barff, the nominal librarian, Brereton could well have seen the need for a smaller body which would be more responsive to his ideas than the intensely conservative professorial group, whose infrequent meetings were all too often largely devoted to the jealous defence by individual departments of their traditional share of the library's moneys.

At all events, in 1905, he was complaining that 'it is now three years since preparations were being made for the immediate formation of a living Library Committee'<sup>37</sup> and presumably he continued to press the matter year by year till, on 23 April 1910, the Library Committee adopted his proposed new library rules (twenty-two in all), which included the constitution of the Library Executive Committee. The Executive Committee was to consist of the Chairman of the Library Committee, two members of the Library Committee elected annually by that committee and the librarian.

The first Executive Committee was very promptly summoned and found itself immediately and, dare one say, deliberately, being faced with questions of day to day administration, for example, perusing applications for loan privileges and suspending erring students from library use.

It must be confessed that, towards the end of Brereton's term, the Executive Committee failed signally to meet as frequently as the regulations stated it should. Far from meeting 'at least once a month' in fact, it seems to have lapsed completely after 1919, and indeed the one meeting in that year

seems to have been the first for more than two years. There seem to be two possible explanations for this, one quite reasonable suggestion being the difficulty of the war years—on the other hand there does seem to be a tempting coincidence in time between Brereton's formal acknowledgement as librarian in 1914 and the fairly rapid lack of interest on his part in the Library Executive Committee.<sup>38</sup>

Certainly the first Executive Committee meeting at which the new librarian, H. M. Green, acted as secretary (15 May, 1921) had before it a resolution moved by one clearly disgruntled professor at the Library Committee 'that the Library Executive Committee furnish a report of its actions to the Professorial Board stating inter alia the number of meetings held in the last three years'. It was pointed out indeed that no Executive Committee had been elected since 1917.<sup>39</sup>

If there is some evidence here of a librarian attempting to establish himself and his library against the Divine Right of Professors this is borne out by other actions during Brereton's regime. In 1910 he persuaded the Library Executive Committee to inflict fines on members of the academic staff who infringed the regulation and the next year he did not hesitate to name Professor Anderson Stuart and Professor Sir Henry Barraclough as 'the serious cases' of not returning books on loan, as required by the regulation. Again, in 1913, we find the Executive Committee pressing hard on academic staff who did not make out their annual returns.<sup>40</sup>

The inevitable migration of books from the library to departments was by now a serious problem, despite all the new regulations could do to stop it. In August 1910, the Executive Committee heard a series of grievances brought forward by student representatives. Their list predictably included difficulties with department libraries, though they were also vocal about having no access to the subject catalogue and no right to borrow current numbers of periodicals. They were critical as well of delays in binding and particularly upset about the £1 deposit required of them by the new regulations before they could borrow from the library.

On this occasion the Library Committee empowered the executive to declare particular books and serials to be laboratory equipment provided duplicate copies were available in the library.<sup>41</sup> This, however, seems not to have been a unanimous view since, in 1915, Brereton was asking the executive whether the University Library should not 'comprise all books which are the property of the University'. The question, the chairman felt, would have to be put to the full committee. There is no record of it ever having been so put.<sup>42</sup>

Under Brereton's hand the stock continued to increase steadily. By the end of 1920 the total holdings were of the order of 113,500 volumes, a figure

which no other Australian University Library would achieve for another twenty years. Brereton was unable, however, to effect the bibliographic control of this swelling mass, that he had dreamed of in 1902. In 1912 he was forced to admit the need for a new form of catalogue, which would omit the analytical entries to which he himself attached such importance, and which would considerably abbreviate all entries, compared with the full treatment after which he craved. The new catalogue should desirably, he thought, take the classified form that was so favoured in libraries in the United Kingdom.<sup>43</sup>

But John Le Gay Brereton was at heart a scholar and it is doubtful whether he viewed with any great pleasure the change which he must have seen by 1920 was inevitable, from the intensely personal and relatively leisurely business of creating a scholarly bibliography to the need to produce, under increasing pressure, the working tools for a rapidly growing collection. In 1921 he was appointed to the Chair of English. The Annual Report of the Senate for that year rightly described him as a 'distinguished graduate of the University of Sydney' and recorded that he had 'lately occupied the position of Librarian in the Fisher Library with great success'.

To succeed Brereton the Senate selected Mr H. M. Green, 'a distinguished graduate of the University who has had considerable experience in business and literary work'.<sup>44</sup> Green's field, like Brereton's, was English literature but, perhaps more than Brereton, he had had some exposure to the extra-University world. He wasted no time in drawing attention very vigorously to the library's needs and was singularly undeterred in this process by the continuing presence on the Library Executive Committee not only of his immediate predecessor (for Brereton soon became virtually its permanent Chairman), but also of Barff the Warden who, as Registrar, had controlled the library from 1882 to 1914.

As early as October 1921, Green was required by the Library Executive Committee to submit a written report on the needs of the library. On 5 November his report was not only submitted to but endorsed by the Executive Committee. He drew attention first of all to the increasing work load of the library, pointing out that, while the academic staff had grown since 1917 by the additions of seventeen professors and/or associate professors and seventy lecturers, the library staff had risen by only two. He reported that there were 12,000 volumes uncatalogued, not to mention 80,000 to 90,000 which needed recataloguing. He contrasted the staffing situation with that in the Public Library of New South Wales and finally drew attention to a gross disparity in salaries paid in the two libraries. On the average, he affirmed, Fisher salaries were 14% below those paid in the Public Library and no less than 56% below those currently being claimed by

Public Library staff. 'Most important of all', he said, 'there is a whole series of catalogue records where there should be only one.' After this recital of horrors it comes as a shock to find that the remedy he proposed was no more than the addition of three assistants (though this of course represented a total staff increase of 30%) and a total bill for increased salaries of £450 per year. All told, 'the additional sum' he claimed '... is little more than the salary of an Associate Professor. It seems a small price to pay for efficiency in the Library.' It was, of course, far too small a price, if all his claims were as over-sanguine as the proposition that two additional cataloguers could reduce the five catalogues to one in the space of two years for, in fact, this particular operation was not to be completed for forty years.

At all events, two extra positions were approved on the staff for 1922 and Green broke with tradition with a vengeance by appointing the first women assistants in the library's history. Whether the possibility of this iconoclasm had leaked out or whether it was the salary increases granted by the Senate (though these had to be found perforce at the expense of money for books) there were no less than seventy-six applicants including 20 graduates) for one position alone.<sup>45</sup> By 1935 the total staff had gradually increased to sixteen, of which three were in Law and one in the Medical School.

On the face of things, the library was much better off financially in the earlier years of Green's librarianship since, from 1920, an extra £1,000 a year was made available (except in 1923 and 1924) from the McCaughey Fund. Unfortunately this extra income was soon swallowed up by the University's expansion, each new department involving a reduction in the amount available to others for library purposes.

Moreover, it was a tragedy of considerable proportions for the new librarian that the world depression should have developed so soon after the library had seemed to achieve this measure of financial security. The first hint of trouble came as early as 1921 when it became clear that, under the Reparation Recovery Act, the price of German periodicals would rise by 100%.<sup>46</sup> More catastrophic still was the reduction of the vote by one third overnight in 1923 due to the removal of the McCaughey grant. This was a real crisis which the Library Executive Committee could only meet by resuming credit balances accumulated by some departments in previous years. The repayment of these credits remained a sore point for years.<sup>47</sup>

In 1923 the Fisher allocation system was given its final embellishment by the development of its well-known unit basis. The following principles governed this arrangement. First, allocations were available only to departments with Professorial Heads. Second, after subtracting necessary sums for general purchases, binding and so forth, the balance available in any year was to be divided by the number of departments, the result of this

division being the unit for that year. Year by year departments were allocated units (including multiples or fractions of units) by the Library Executive Committee, though each year the budget so drafted was subject to the approval of the full Library Committee. In the first year of operation the unit happened to be £45, though the Executive Committee noted nostalgically that the average per department had once been as high as £100. It was explained further that in any year when the vote was unduly small the allocations might have to be varied to allow each department to cover the subscription cost of periodicals taken in its subject field or fields.<sup>48</sup>

In fact, this kind of re-adjustment had to be made regularly through the twenties and thirties, as income from the endowments declined and the Senate was unable to make good the deficiency. For example, when the vote for 1925 seemed certain to be £400 lower than in 1924 the Senate was able to find only an extra £300 (of which £100 was a special grant not to be repeated) and to agree to a suggestion that the library receive the income from the invested interest on accumulated library deposits. This gave a further £19. By 1927, however, even this partial recompense had been swallowed up. In 1928, having cut the binding vote twice in successive years and having failed to persuade the Senate to release the £428 of the Fisher income still used for salaries, the committee faced the unpalatable truth that, once the periodical bill was met, a grand total of £240 remained for new books for the whole library. Rock bottom was reached in 1931 when devaluation brought a huge exchange charge in its wake and the whole available balance of the vote (less a laughable £11 for emergencies) had to be used to meet periodical subscriptions.<sup>49</sup>

The corner was not turned till 1932 when the Senate made available an extra £1,000, though some departments were still unable to purchase any new books (Geology's share, for example, was shown solemnly as —£7!). By 1934 the value of the unit was back to £62 and the committee could even contemplate some new periodical subscriptions.<sup>50</sup> Not until 1936 would it be possible, however, for the committee to report that 'for the first time in many years every Department would have something left over' for the purchase of books.

Green had problems other than financial, though the financial problems clearly were bad enough. Despite the crippling restriction on purchases, books continued to come in year by year. Even in 1932, the leanest year for intake, 4,863 bound volumes were added to the collections and the annual average was nearer 6,000. In a bad year, of course, up to three quarters of the books would have been received through gift or copyright deposit.

As early as 1923, as a result, it was clear that the planned extension to the bookstack would be needed within two years and, to Green's relief, work

actually commenced on it in 1924. The outer shell was completed by 1926 but, alas, the depression postponed the finishing off of the interior until well after the period of this paper. Accordingly, there was never a time from 1925 on when the accommodation situation was other than desperate—and this only sixteen years after the occupation of Fisher.<sup>51</sup>

Like Le Gay Brereton, Green had his share of trouble with intransigent professors and, in view of later criticisms of his administration, it is worth recording that he was just as determined as his predecessor, at least on occasion, not to be browbeaten. In a head on collision with Carslaw, the Professor of Mathematics, in 1930 over non-return of a book, the librarian was loyally supported by his executive. A threatened Library Committee resolution that ‘no members of the teaching staff shall have his right to use the Library suspended by the Librarian without the consent of the Library Committee’ was replaced by an executive resolution that

the Library Committee requests that members of the teaching staff will on returning books to the Library see that they get back their borrowing cards. If the Librarian is unable to trace the return of any book for which he holds a borrowing card he is to regard this book as not having been returned until the Executive Committee otherwise directs.<sup>52</sup>

The Minutes record, moreover, that Professor Carslaw did, in the end, return the book in question.<sup>53</sup>

Like both his predecessors, and his successors too, Green had to grapple with the Departmental Library problem. In 1932 he secured a specific instruction from the Executive Committee that Department Libraries must not be unattended and that the number of keys to them be restricted. At the same time, the physics library which had become virtually inaccessible was to be ‘opened’ for regular use and physics journals of interest to engineers were to be displayed regularly in engineering as well as in physics, where they would be finally lodged.<sup>54</sup> It is true that some of these instructions were modified, under pressure, the following year, but no one could say Green had not tried.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, it fell to Green to point the way to what seems to be the final solution, at least for Sydney, of this vexed problem of decentralization. When the new Medical School, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, opened in 1935, it included an official branch of the University Library set up on a proper basis as a viable library service point and not a ‘black market’ operation resting uneasily on what certainly had been in some cases the polite fiction of long term personal loan.

The collections grew in quality as well as quantity under Green. The balance of Nicholson's collection came to Fisher in 1924. It totalled some

3,000–4,000 items including 12 incunabula, a notable collection of manuscripts and valuable seventeenth century pamphlet material. In 1926, receipt of the Barlow and Donovan Collections enabled the Senate to say ‘The Library now possesses a collection of old books which is probably as fine as any in this part of the world’.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, as Green was able to claim in his comments on the Munn-Pitt criticism, the collections were extended deliberately into fields not the concern of formal courses. The General Fund, which Brereton had managed to establish, was maintained intact throughout the depression. After 1927 it never fell below 25% of the total available for new books, whereas the best Brereton had ever achieved was 10%.

Another development into which Green put a tremendous amount of work and which the library seems to have undertaken on his initiative was a proper organization of the regular publication and distribution of series of reprints of articles by members of the academic staff.<sup>57</sup>

This project must have appealed to Green's public relations sense. Another evidence of this sense is to be seen in the considerably increased mention made of the library in the Senate's Annual Reports. From 1924 it became the regular practice for the report to include several paragraphs taken from the librarian's own annual report.

Perhaps above all, however, the new feature which Green brought to the librarianship was a real interest in the use of the library, especially by the growing number of students. Brereton had certainly experimented (and reported very gratifying results) with posting suggested reading lists for assignment work<sup>58</sup> and his interest in analytical cataloguing certainly sprang from a keen concern with the usability of the stock. Only with Green, however, do we find a real attempt to measure library use from year to year, to speculate on the pattern revealed by carefully collected statistics of reading room use and extra-mural loan and to suggest fundamental alterations in the service pattern.

Green's early years, for example, were marked by increasing liberality in allowing access to the bookstack by students. The discovery of a degree of mutilation of irreplaceable books unfortunately put an end to this, perhaps permanently, in 1927. But, noting that the reimposition of access restriction was paralleled by a falling off of loans, Green reported in 1928 that ‘all this helps to show the advantages of the open access system over our own, which is also out of date. But to alter it would cost a good deal of money.’<sup>59</sup>

He came back to the open access question frequently in his reports but always found the same difficulty—finance. Extra money would be required; first, to weatherproof the reading room (which leaked badly round the windows) if open access shelves were to be set up in it, second, to rod and re-house the catalogue so it could be brought out for public use and, third, to

provide staff to man the extra exit control that would be required.<sup>60</sup>

But time forbids us to analyse Green's librarianship in any further detail. In 1934 the Senate granted him a year's study leave to work on his interests in Australian literature and almost simultaneously it became clear that the Carnegie Corporation had made possible a survey of Australian libraries. As it turned out then, it was the acting librarian, E. V. Steel, with whom the surveyors actually dealt, though Green was careful to meet them socially<sup>61</sup> and to offer any assistance he could, while making clear his complete confidence in Steel.

The report of the survey appeared the following year. It was generally critical, with reason, of the standard of Australian University libraries, the key to the criticism lying in the indisputable statement that 'no Australian university appears to regard the development of its library as such a vital factor in its progress as do the leading Universities in the United States'.<sup>62</sup> In general the surveyors criticized what they saw as professorial domination of the library, resulting in unbalanced book selection, proliferation of departmental collections and general lack of concern for student needs, expressed particularly through purchasing policies, restrictions on student access to collections, and lack of encouragement to read outside the specific needs of courses.

Treating of the University of Sydney Library specifically they seem to have been determined to take as strong a line as possible in emphasizing examples there of the points included in their general criticism. They concluded this section of their report with the following paragraph:

The present librarian is a scholar, appointed because of his ability as a lecturer. He was without experience in library work at the time of his appointment. Because of the unquestioned competence of some of his subordinates, the library administration appears to be alert and able, but its initiative is apparently limited by the fear of arousing the displeasure of Professors. The librarian is not given a status comparable with that of members of the teaching staff.<sup>63</sup>

It is not possible within the scope of this paper to dissect and consider individually the charges made against the library, but what recorded evidence I have been able to sight, including Green's correspondence with Munn himself, with Ifould of the Public Library, and with Binns of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library and others leads me to the following generalizations:

Some of the charges made against the library were true, and some, while basically true, were overstated, some were the result of incorrect or misunderstood information; and certainly very little credit was given to the University or its librarian for having been aware of at least some of the

library's deficiencies or of having struggled manfully to overcome them. The paragraph aimed directly at Green, however, seems inexcusable.

What appears equally inexcusable is the distinct impression given by the report that the library was in some sense inferior to other university libraries in Australia. In particular it was presented in a very unfavourable light compared with that of the University of Melbourne. It is hard to square this presentation with the recorded facts.

At the end of 1934 Sydney's library held 220,088 volumes, not greatly less than all the other university libraries put together. Its nearest rival, interestingly enough, was Adelaide with 97,000 and not Melbourne which, although founded within a few years of Sydney, had only accumulated 92,000 volumes. Sydney's annual accessions (7870 in 1934) were almost twice those of its nearest rival. It received about the same number of current periodicals as any other two put together. Whatever its failings it was clearly, as it has remained, the leading University Library and one of the major libraries of the nation.

As to its internal difficulties, the departmental library situation was certainly unsatisfactory. It was not as grim as painted by Munn but there was undoubtedly a degree of special pleading, and perhaps a twinge of conscience, in the Library Committee's refutation of Munn's criticism on this particular point.<sup>64</sup> The book vote was equally unsatisfactory though no credit was given to Green, as Munn later admitted it should,<sup>65</sup> for his very strenuous efforts to balance the book selection activities of the professors. Incidentally, future generations of scholars all over Australia would bless the University's grim determination to hold to its extensive periodical subscriptions in the most serious financial straits, though this certainly resulted in the budget for books being much smaller than Melbourne's by the time Munn arrived. It also certainly did have the result, accordingly, as noted by Munn,<sup>66</sup> that there were insufficient copies of books for students.

Green's first inclination<sup>67</sup> was to let the report go unnoticed, but the Library Committee wanted to know what action was to be taken both on the report itself and particularly on what the chairman referred to as 'some serious misstatements'.<sup>68</sup> The Executive Committee was authorized to take the matter up with the Senate and, after much discussion, resolved that 'while there are many valuable suggestions and criticisms in the Report (e.g. on the question of open access) with which the Committee agrees, there are some statements which, the Committee feels, scarcely do justice to the library of the University of Sydney'. After commenting on a number of these statements, the committee concluded,

But the criticisms which have caused the Executive Committee most concern are

those in the concluding paragraph having reference to the capabilities of the Chief Librarian. It is true that when he joined the staff of the Library, Mr. Green had no library experience. At the time of his appointment it was customary in British Universities to appoint librarians on the ground of scholarship; and it may reasonably be maintained that in a University library scholarship is of as much importance as a training in library methods and technique. After his appointment, Mr. Green made it his business to acquire the necessary knowledge of library administration. The Committee has no doubt that what the authors of the report intended to convey was that, in the making of new appointments the Committee should give more consideration to professional training, but, because of the rather unfortunate wording of the paragraph, the Committee feels that an unmerited slur has been cast on the Chief Librarian's competence as an administrator. The Committee desires to put on record its appreciation of Mr Green's services.<sup>69</sup>

It seems a reasonable and dignified answer to what, at least in part, was an undignified and unreasonable criticism, but perhaps it would be only fair to leave H. M. Green the last word. In some notes made for the committee he reminded them that 'the Commissioners were able to spare only two hours for what is the third largest library in Australia, though they had also the answers to a Questionnaire'. In a letter to Ralph Munn he said simply 'It is hard to see how the administration of any library can be alert and able if the librarian is incompetent himself, and leaves it to some of his subordinates'.<sup>70</sup>

## References

I have deliberately used the term 'University of Sydney Library' in preference to the customary term 'Fisher Library', for two reasons. First, the term 'Fisher Library' could have no application prior to 1910 (when it first appeared in the University Calendar). Second, whatever the situation in the interim, the term today has legal application only to the building housing the central library, the Senate having resolved to call it by that name at the date of its erection (1959-62) to replace the first Fisher Library.

2. Munn, R., and Pitt, E. R., *Australian libraries*, Melb., Aust. Council for Educ. Research, 1935.

3. Binns, K. W. The Fisher Library. *Lone Hand*, October 1909.

4. University of Sydney. Senate. Minutes. 11 June 1851. Dr Mackaen was a local resident. In total the library purchased 53 titles from his collection. Significantly, 44 of these were on language or literature and no less than 11 were in Latin. The total cost was £97/8/6. The first book on the list (Senate. Minutes. 7 July 1851) was Joannes Scapula's (Unclear:), printed in Basle in 1615. This, accordingly, the Library regards as its first book. The University Calendar records conscientiously year by year that 'the first books were acquired in 1851, and shortly after the library of Sydney College was added'. This is supported by K. W. Street (University of Sydney. Centenary Celebrations. Syd., [195-], 65) who says that 'with the building (i.e. Sydney College which was purchased by the University) was also taken over a small collection of books, mostly classics, some dictionaries'.

5. Senate. Minutes. 5 June 1852. There were transport problems in those early days. To guard against the risk of loss the original letters and bill were sent direct to London by one ship (the *Phenician*), the duplicates by another (the *Resolute*) to Madras for the overland route via Marseilles. It was five months before the Senate could be informed (3 November 1862) that the books ordered 'had been shipped via the *Vimeira*, the arrival of which was in daily expectation'.

6. Senate. Minutes. 11 September 1854. By the terms of their appointment, the original Professors received a portion of the lecture fees paid by students, the balance only was available to the Senate.

7. Senate. Minutes. 23 January 1854.

8. There are only a handful of references to Library needs in the records of the building committee. For example, on 4 August 1857 the architect was authorized to proceed with the plastering of 'the room above the anteroom' to be used as a Library. He was further instructed to have two tables (4 September 1857) eight chairs (1 September 1857) a stand for works of reference (26 September 1857) and bookshelves (19 October 1857) made—and that was it!

9. Senate. Minutes. 15 May 1855. These first recorded donations were a Hebrew work from S. A. Donaldson and a work on mineralogy from Professor Dana 'of Yale

College’.

10. Library Committee. Minutes. 3 May 1858.

11. The first rules had been drawn up by Nicholson himself and submitted ‘in draught’ (sic) to the Senate in 1854. On 3 April 1854 the proofs of these rules were ‘finally considered and adopted’.

12. They were not sent forward to the Senate till 7 February 1859.

13. The Committee averaged a meeting a year from 1859 to 1862, had a burst of energy in the form of two or three meetings a year in 1863 and 1864 and then relapsed to one a year till 1870 where there occurs a complete break in the record till 1879. On the question of expenditure other than in the years marked it is significant that to spend the £65 made available in 1862 the Library Committee provided a list drawn up by the professors in 1860. (Library Committee. Minutes. 3 November 1860, 18 March 1862).

14. Chancellor's Address, 19 July 1879.

15. Library Committee. Minutes, 13 August 1879.

16. Ibid., 10 July 1883.

17. Ibid, 22 April 1887.

18. Chancellor's Address, 19 July 1879.

19. Gray, N., *Fisher of the Library* unpublished manuscript. (I am greatly indebted to Mrs Gray for having kindly made her work available to me.)

20. Chancellor's Address, 2 May 1885.

21. Library Committee. Minutes. 1 December 1886.

22. Chancellor's Address, 1890.

23. Library Committee. Minutes, 22 November 1889.

24. Ibid, 23 April 1895.

25. The Senate grant grew £100 in 1881 to £457 (actually expended) in 1886. It was reduced to £291 in 1887 the first ‘Fisher’ year, rose as high as £1167 in 1891, but fell off rapidly after that year.

26. Hardy, C. *The decimal classification of Dewey*. Proc. 1 Aust. Lib. Conf. Melb. 1896, p. 56.

27. Barff, H. E., *The Library of the University of Sydney*. Tr. and Proc. 2 Internat. Lib. Conf. Lond. 1897, p. 197.

28. The Registrar appears to have had a full-time Assistant since 1855. The first record of a second full-time member of staff is to be found in the Calendar for 1894 which lists, in addition to Barff and Hardy, a ‘Junior Assistant’, J. S. Griffiths, B.A.,

but the office may date further back. In 5 March 1884, the Library Committee resolved ‘that a competent clerk at £3 per week be employed to continue and complete under the Librarian's direction a manuscript catalogue of the collections which at present form the University Library . . . [and] that a hand list (in 12 mo. or 8 vo.) be printed for the use of students and others’. The first printed catalogue, as noted, was published in 1885.

29. Library Committee. Minutes, 17 November 1880. By 1887 this problem had assumed sufficient proportions for notice of motion to be given in the Committee (11 August 1887) that, in effect, books in constant use in Departments be written off as ‘working tools’ providing duplicate copies were in the Library. This solution (not to be adopted finally for another 80 years) seems not to have been pressed at this stage.

30. Attempts by the Committee in 1908 (Minutes, 29 June 1908) and in 1909 (16 August 1909) to have the salary element met from the General Fund met with an unsympathetic response from the Senate despite the reiterated statement in the Calendar (1902 onwards) that ‘the Government of the State having decided in 1901 to defray the whole cost of the erection of the building, the whole of the principal money of the fund is now to be kept as a perpetual endowment for keeping up and adding to the Library’.

31. By 1889, for example, there were eight shares instead of three and by 1891 there were thirteen.

32. See, for example, Library Committee. Minutes, 2 May 1884, 11 August 1887, 25 June 1888.

33. Library Executive Committee. Minutes, 21 July 1914. Some proposal of this sort seemed in order since there were now twenty-two departments to share the vote. As Brereton's Minutes elegantly phrased it ‘Mr Barff's scheme was marked by expediency and could hardly be rejected, in as much as the admission of new Departments to a share in the Fisher fund would mean a constant diminution of the amounts expended annually by the Departments whereas the needs of all Departments alike were increasing’. The Executive also recommended that the Library Committee approach the Senate with a request that on the creation of each new Chair the Library funds should be increased to meet the additional demands upon it. This proposition was never to be accepted completely by the Senate. As Brereton himself was to say later as Chairman of the Library Committee (23 July 1923) the question was characterized by ‘precedents but no principle’.

34. There are numerous descriptions of Fisher, probably the earliest and perhaps still the best being that of Binns referred to earlier (*v. sup*, note (8)). He notes that the Reading Room had at the time of its construction, the second largest roof span in the world. He draws attention not only to the bookstack as ‘a new introduction to Australia’ but also to the use of tinted glass to protect the books from direct sunlight, and to the installation of two booklifts.

35. University of Sydney. Senate. Annual Report 1910.

36. *v. sup*. Note (B). Meetings were more regular in the years 1879-1897, it being

usual to have two or three a year. There-after there was usually more than one meeting each year till 1902. The Committee did not meet at all in 1901.

37. Annual Report of the Assistant Librarian, 1905.

38. For example, in 1917 (31 November 1917) the Minute book records that a circular was issued about a proposed alteration in borrowing regulations: ‘ . . . in lieu of holding a meeting of the Committee, the Chairman suggests that individual members of the Committee should notify in writing if they have any objection to the proposed changes’. Then again the meeting of 11 September 1919 had before it several letters written directly to the Finance Committee by the Librarian.

39. The Professorial Board recommended, in the outcome, that the Library Executive Committee meet once a term. This the Library Committee accepted (27 July 1922).

40. Library Committee. Minutes, 21 May 1913.

41. *v. sup.* Note (29).

42. Library Committee. Minutes, 28 July 1915.

43. Annual Report of the Assistant Librarian, 1912.

44. Senate. Annual Report, 1921.

45. Library Executive Committee. Minutes, 24 March 1922.

46. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1921.

47. The Executive had agreed that this ‘repayment’ be ‘a first charge on next year's vote’ (Executive Committee. Minutes, 12 April 1923). In fact no payment was made till 1925 when £100 was released. Another £200 followed in 1926, but the situation deteriorated so rapidly thereafter that not till 1939 could another £100 be found.

48. Since the unit basis was strongly criticized by Munn-Pitt, it is worth noting that a full debate on the whole question of allocations had occupied the Library Executive Committee as early as 18 October 1912. At that meeting Professor MacCallum suggested that since the scheme of allocations ‘would certainly not be acceptable in the future’ advice be sought from the British Museum and the Bibliotheque Nationale. To this proposition one of his scientific colleagues objected ‘that these libraries supplied the demand of the populace and the analogy would be false’ since popular demand would result in a preponderance of literature over science. To the counter-suggestion that more enlightening advice might be obtained from overseas University libraries, MacCallum was stung to reply in a moment of great truth that ‘in Universities the decision depended less on principle than on the comparative aggressiveness of some members of the staff’.

49. It really was a time of increasing despair. As early as 1924 the Library Committee was drawing attention to the ‘serious position in which we as teachers of the University are placed as a result of the inadequacy of funds placed at the disposal of the Library’. Three years later Carslaw spoke for the Committee in saying that ‘the needs of the Library were amongst the most clamant in the University’. Next year it

was clear, in the Committee's words, that 'the Library was speedily drifting into an impossible position' and again that it was 'incredible that in a public appeal the needs of the Library should have been placed after those of grounds and of sport'. In 1930 Sir Henry Barraclough pointed out that 'in another ten or twenty years there would not be an up to date book in the Library affecting the work of the scientific departments'.

50. After several years of increasingly critical scrutiny of new periodical subscriptions, the Executive Committee had finally announced in 1931 that no Department could initiate a new subscription unless it was balanced by a cancellation of at least equivalent price.

51. The Library Committee had to be informed, for example, in 1924 (21 July 1924) that the magnificent Nicholson Bequest comprising 18 large cases of books had arrived but that it would have to remain in its cases unless the caretaker's quarters could be taken over.

52. Library Executive Committee. Minutes, 7 August 1930.

53. The sequence of events was: (i) 10 July 1930: Executive was notified that the Professor had failed to return a book but had presented a copy of it on loan to the Library; (ii) 7 August 1930: the threatened motion, met by the Executive's Resolution; (iii) 16 April 1931: The Professor had withdrawn his motion, had returned the Library's book and had had his private copy returned to him.

54. Library Executive Committee. Minutes, 21 September 1932.

55. *Ibid.*, 3 May 1933.

56. Senate. Annual Report, 1926.

57. The first public account of this appears in the Annual Report of the Senate for 1933.

58. Annual Report of the Assistant Librarian, 1905.

59. Annual Report of the Librarian, 1928.

60. *see*, in particular, Library Committee. Minutes, 29 April 1935.

61. Letter to Munn, 30 April 1936.

62. Munn and Pitt, *op. cit.*, 89.

63. *Ibid.*, 95.

64. Said the Report: 'Unreasonable numbers of books are also kept by members of the faculties. It is estimated that at least 30,000 library books are at all times in their possession. Although departmental libraries are officially recognized only in law and medicine, enough books are indefinitely withdrawn from the library to form several sizeable collections'. (Munn and Pitt, *op. cit.* 94). Green's point in refutation was that these 30,000 books did in fact constitute other recognized Departmental libraries. It was an area open to argument in terms of the practice of individual Departments.

65. Letter to Green, 17 June 1935.

66. Munn and Pitt, loc. cit.

67. Or, more strictly, that of his Chairman (letter from Green to Steel 22 November 1956).

68. Library Committee. Minutes, 29 April 1935. As Professor Osborn said there was no misstatement, as far as they could see about the table of percentage expenditure on libraries in the various Universities. This table showed Sydney to be relatively ill-provided compared with others and surely provided a lever to use against the Senate.

69. Library Executive Committee. Minutes, 8 April 1935.

70. Letter to Munn, 30 April 1936.

\* A paper read to the Society 13 August 1968.