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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1977

It was very difficult to write my report for last year as there was very little activity to describe. I regret that I have no large and important achievements to record for this year. Perhaps the most distressing aspect of LIBER's responsibilities is the fact that at the time of writing this no publication for 1977 has so far appeared. The cost of publishing in the Netherlands has also caused the Treasurer some misgivings and we are therefore proposing that different arrangements should be made. We hope that as a result the Bulletin will be published at less cost to the Ligue and more regularly and up-to-date.

In this connection the Board, on a suggestion made at the Leiden meeting, has attempted to organise the issue of a news bulletin on developments among member libraries and in members' countries generally.

The Executive Board met three times in the year – in Münster in February, in Leiden in April and in Brussels in September. Mr. Birkelund, M.lle Bossuat, Mr. de Groot and Dr. Fiedler retired from the Board which expressed its warm gratitude to them for their continued support to LIBER and for their generous help in the work of the Board. Mr. Fifoot, M. Geiss, Mr. Mathys and Dr. Munthe were elected in their places.

The General Assembly was held at Leiden in April and although only 28 attended it was very successful thanks mainly to the efforts of Mr. de Groot and his staff. In addition to the Annual General Meeting there was an open meeting of the Working Party on Management to discuss problems of book prices led by Mr. Lyndon, Chairman of the American Book Prices Index Committee, and Mr. Schofield of the University of Technology, Loughborough

(UK). In addition Dr. Brochaus of the Museum of the Book at The Hague gave a talk on the conservation of rare books and Dr. Geh presented the report of the Working Party on Exchange of Staff.

The Working Party on Publications from the Third World is meeting under the Chairmanship of Mr. Clarke. The future of the Working Party on Management is under discussion.

Relations with the Council of Europe continue to be close despite the fact that no further funds are available to LIBER. Submissions have been made to the European Community for financial assistance in general and for the funding of seminars but no decision has yet been made. The possibility of LIBER being designated as a Section on Regional Activities of IFLA which was rejected originally is being discussed again as a result of changed circumstances.

Seminars have been arranged for 1978 on Maps at Copenhagen in April and on Inter-Library Lending at Florence in June. A very successful seminar was held on the organization of departments of rare books and manuscripts at Vienna in November organized by the National Library. The thanks of LIBER are particularly due to Professor Mazal and Dr. Irblich for organizing the meetings and above all to Dr. Fiedler who had proposed the meeting as the last function he could undertake for LIBER before he retired. The proceedings are to be published shortly in the Bulletin. One result of the meeting was the acceptance by those present of a suggestion that Groups should be formed within LIBER for librarians with special interests in common and that one such Group for manuscript and rare book librarians should be established as soon as possible. A draft regulation for the organization of Groups has been prepared. A joint meeting of medical librarians in LIBER with German medical librarians has been proposed for late 1978.

As it has not been possible so far to obtain sufficient financial support for a permanent secretariat the Executive Board decided to ask the National Central Library in Rome whether it could provide secretarial assistance to LIBER. Dr. Mancusi-Crisari has been able to make the

necessary arrangements which will come into operation during 1978.

I have written about LIBER in two articles and prepared an account of its activities since its inauguration for publication in the 1978 Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information.

Finally I must again make a plea to all members for their cooperation and active support. I rarely receive any reaction to letters or documents sent out to members and almost never any unsolicited comment. Invitations to annual meetings are answered by less than half the members. It can be said that it is not difficult to run LIBER – it is impossible, without help. If the Executive Board has no encouragement LIBER cannot hope to have any success.

K. W. Humphreys
President