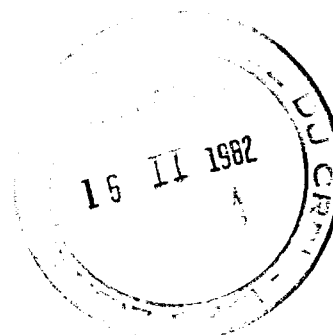


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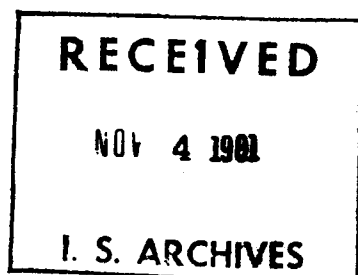
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE (IDRC), CANADA  
INFORMATION SCIENCE DIVISION



A NATIONAL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE SYSTEM IN BARBADOS

REPORT OF A CONSULTANCY MISSION (SEPTEMBER, 1981)

BY CARL KEREN



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OCTOBER, 1981

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To: Mr. John E. Woolston, Director, Information Science Division, IDRC  
From: Carl Keren

In accordance with the consultancy contract of the IDRC in its letter of July 30, 1981, I travelled to Barbados on September 4, 1981 and stayed on the Island until September 26, 1981. From September 28 to September 30 I stayed in Ottawa for debriefing.

In the consultancy contract I was required to:

1. Cooperate with the Ministry of Information and other authorities in Barbados.
2. Assess existing information activities and planning and determine areas of strength and weaknesses.
3. Draw up a medium term action plan for the development of information services in Barbados.

The Barbadian authorities and the library and information profession extended to me every possible support and assistance required to ease and facilitate my work. The Minister of Information, Senator N. Barrow, the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Ch. Thompson, the campus librarian of UWI, Mr. M. Gill, the librarian of CDB, Mrs. N. St. John, the librarian of BPL, Mrs. B. Carrillo, and many others, took great interest in my work and devoted much of their time and effort in order to assist me whenever needed. To them all I am indebted for making my stay on the Island so pleasant. I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to Mr. R. Archer of IDRC, for the very efficient administrative arrangements he has made.

In the enclosure please find my report of the mission. Any lacunae or wrong interpretations of the existing situation are my own and do not reflect the efforts of my hosts to assist me in every respect. The recommendations made were discussed, as far as possible, with the authorities directly concerned,

as to their feasibility of implementation and adjusted where necessary.

Thank you for having entrusted me with this mission. I believe that the efforts of Barbados to establish an improved information system are worthy your continuing support. If I can be of any further assistance to you or to my hosts in Barbados in connection with this mission, I shall be glad to oblige.

Tel-Aviv

October, 1981

Carl Keren

cc: Ministry of Information, Barbados

ABSTRACT

The Government of Barbados wishes to improve the library and information services of the country. For that purpose it has initiated a series of investigations by its National Council for Libraries, Archives and Documentation Services (NACOLADS) and by a consultant from abroad. The consultant's report recommends that Barbados reorganize some of its existing facilities, in order to create the infrastructure which a progressive national information system requires. The establishment of a Barbadian Library and Information Services System (BLISS), the training of personnel and the provision of resources needed for network implementation and operation are the principal topics for recommendations.

Keywords: Barbados; National Information System; NACOLADS; BLISS; Network; Training; Resources; Libraries; Archives; Information Services.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Remark: This summary was written on the assumption that the organization of the national library and information services system in Barbados has to be submitted to government for a decision. The summary contains the principal points made in the report and the main recommendations resulting from them and may thus form a discussion paper for the senior level.

#### National goals for a library and information services system

No official document has yet described these goals. For the purpose of this report they are defined as follows:

1. Safeguarding the documents which record the national heritage (archives).
2. Providing adequate sources of knowledge about the West Indies in general and B'dos in particular.
3. Providing access to reading material for children and adults and the public at large.
4. Preparing a sound resource for problem solving and gaining of knowledge in science, technology, business and other mission oriented activities.

#### Present resources

About 40 libraries are active in B'dos. Approximately 150 persons are employed in them, of which about 40 persons have professional qualifications (mostly at a graduate level). The remaining staff members are largely untrained or only partially qualified. Total expenditure amounts to about B\$ 3,500,000 annually, of which about half (50%) is spent by government, the rest by various public and private organizations. Of the total expenditure, about 80% is spent on salaries and incidentals, and less than 20% on acquisition of material. A rectification of this relationship towards a figure of 65:35 or even 55:45 should be an immediate goal.

No information services in the modern sense have been identified, all existing facilities operate as libraries in a very traditional sense.

#### Information policy

On the strength of the analysis of the national goals and of the existing situation, a policy was formulated which as a first priority would restructure ongoing activities within a time frame of about two years. During the restructuring process the cost-effectiveness and benefits of existing facilities are to be optimized and basic conditions for a modern library and information services network are to be created. The progress achieved during this reorganization phase and the improved users-facility relationship which will hopefully result, should provide clear trends for future development. Immediate critical decision areas relate to personnel, organization and resources.

#### Principal recommendations

Recommendations made in this report are mainly those of policy or involving significant structural changes. Detailed directives for activities are generally not spelled out, they should be the prerogative of those who implement this, or any other plan.

On personnel, the recommendations concern a significant training (and teaching) effort in order to upgrade staff and to open up venues of professional advancement and some job mobility. The latter is needed in order to comply with reorganization plans and the shift to mission oriented information services. A change in civil service conditions which govern employment in this field has been discussed and agreed to. The need to enlarge the job scope by the employment of subject trained specialists and technicians has been emphasized.

On organization, the principal recommendations concern the establishment of the Barbadian Library and Information Services System (BLISS), a network which would draw together and coordinate activities. Within the network, and especially its government sector, significant changes in tasks and procedures are suggested, necessitating also some reallocation of staff and resources. The network would be directed by a small directorate which is to be newly established. Some activities, especially of a technical and economic character, are to be centralized for the network as a whole.

On resources, the recommendations deal mainly with the restructure of expenditure items in order to establish a sound division between expenses for salaries, etc., and the acquisition of material. The reorganization of existing activities requires considerable financial means and the establishment of a special fund, amounting to B\$ 1,000,000, has been suggested for this purpose. Such a fund means an increase of government spending in this field of about 30% over the next two years and bring government expense for libraries and information services up to a level which is more acceptable than the present one, but still be considerable lower than comparable expenditures in other countries.

Other recommendations concern specific activities such as the archives, school libraries, libraries in various government offices, the need for database creation and regional cooperation, and the need to develop an information services capability to respond adequately to the development needs of B'dos.

#### The future

Once the reorganization and restructuring of activities has been completed, or at least is well under way, B'dos should be able to develop the socio-economic and technological information services without which a modern nation cannot function effectively. Throughout the report the faith is expressed that B'dos has the professional manpower, the resources and the administrative capability to see the task through to its successful conclusion.



## INTRODUCTION

There is considerable interest in the library/information field in B'dos. It is a genuine interest and appreciation of the role of this field for national development. This judgement is based on facts such as a better than average national infrastructure which was created by the efforts and motivation of national professionals, the support they are given by government, the advanced professional standard of senior personnel and by the degree of use (demonstrating utility) which patrons make of existing facilities. The background and decision papers which the National Council for Libraries, Archives and Documentation Services (NACOLADS) (the council was appointed by the Minister of Information in 1980), had prepared for evaluation by government, and on which I was asked to comment, reflect the maturity and seriousness with which B'dos prepares itself to enter the new era of information work. Whether an outside consultant agrees or disagrees with all or some of the proposed action plans is certainly less important than the fact that there is a demonstrated national ability to face the issues, to select alternatives, to set priorities and to translate planning into action.

In view of the foregoing, I considered it my main task to assist in the concretization of ongoing planning, the reconciliation of some divergent viewpoints, the sharpening of the need to select priorities and lending support in explaining action plans to decision makers in government. Here and there I was probably also able to share previous experience with my hosts and to clear up some ambiguous concepts and definitions which, if they would be allowed to stand, may introduce difficulties and misunderstandings at a later date.

The library and information services activity in B'dos has many areas of strength:

1. The high literacy rate of the population.
2. A basic infrastructure of relatively well maintained and functioning libraries.

3. A very good cadre of professional librarians, especially in the senior grades.
4. Considerable interest in this activity in high places. The Minister himself, his senior staff, managers in commerce and industry, academic and other decision makers, recognize the contribution which this field can make to national development and wish to assist it.
5. A very strong tendency to improve existing activities by indigenous means and to seek foreign assistance, principally for advice and as a resource to hasten development.

The weaknesses which were identified concern mainly:

1. Information users do not participate in the action, nor is there sufficient awareness that libraries and information services justify their existence by use.
2. Professional services are strongly library/technique oriented. There is no infrastructure for information services in the modern sense, nor has there been any staff (or users) education towards these tasks.
3. Sub-professional personnel has been insufficiently trained and its utilization is not as efficient as it could be.
4. The relation between salaries and acquisition of material is very unfavourable.

Basic to my task were the papers and recommendations produced by a number of working groups appointed and led by members of NACOLADS. On the strength of these working papers, NACOLADS had prepared an interim report which was submitted to government. It seems that due to pressure of time, this report was not sufficiently discussed by the plenum of NACOLADS members and is therefore not totally acceptable to all. The interim report deals mainly with general intentions and contains few indications on the ways and means by

which they are to be achieved. The interim report is due to culminate eventually into a final report into which the findings of this consultancy mission, as far as they are acceptable, are to be integrated. This final report, or rather the parts which are accepted by government, are due to constitute the medium term plan stipulated by the IDRC contract.

It should be added that the more essential recommendations of this report have been discussed with the plenum of MACOLADS on September 24, 1981 and have been found acceptable by a significant majority of them. The feasibility to implement these recommendations has also been discussed with the administrative authorities concerned such as the Ministry of Finance, the Civil Service Commissioner, and others. The authority responsible for the plans implementation, the Ministry of Information, has been consulted throughout. Only recommendations which were found acceptable by all concerned have been retained in this report. An additional basic constraint were considerations related to the economic realities of B'dos and its prospects to obtain assistance (financial and professional) from abroad.

Finally, I attempted to link, wherever possible, developments in B'dos to regional (Caribbean) and international activities. It should, however, be pointed out that a successful participation in these requires a sound national infrastructure and the majority of my recommendations concern the achievement of this task.

In the course of this consultancy I was asked to comment on activities of which, as I immediately pointed out, I have little knowledge and even less expertise. This disclaimer refers especially to the national archives, the school library system and the public library. Any comments and recommendations made with respect to these should be viewed with these reservations in mind and wherever they diverge from expert opinion, the latter should be adopted without hesitation.

Comment: Wherever financial figures are quoted in this report, they refer to Barbadian dollar. In September 1981 the rate of exchange was roughly B\$ 2 = US\$ 1.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES SYSTEM

The organization proposed by the NACOLADS interim report

In its search for an improved national information system, the National Council for Libraries, Archives and Documentation Services (NACOLADS) has proposed in its interim report of December 1980 the creation of a national library which would group together, under a single administrative umbrella, all government-dependent library services. Under the NACOLADS plan a directorate for such a national library is to be newly established, to be administered by the Ministry of Information and to draw all its budgets from that Ministry. The National Library would incorporate various centralized service divisions and direct through these, in a hierarchical fashion, the libraries operating in the various government departments, the public library and various technical support functions. A division in the national library structure (designated as "the research division") would be charged with the task to ensure cooperation between the national library and the archives and public and privately administrated libraries and information services.

The organizational option proposed in the interim report has several advantages:

1. A relatively large structure is created which through national predominance and the resources it commands, would largely influence the development of information services in B'dos.
2. The unified administrative structure (one ministry only represents the system: at government and at the budgeting level) would simplify procedures and make for short lines of decision making. A sympathetic ministerial approach could ensure relatively massive infusion of resources. (But this could, of course, also work in an opposite direction).
3. Economies of scale and of centralization are easier to enforce in a large and administratively homogenous structure.
4. Personnel in the proposed organization would have greater scope for advancement and job mobility.

5. The efficient application of scarce professional manpower, sophisticated equipment and buildings is easier to enforce in a centralized environment.

The proposed organizational scheme contains, however, also some significant disadvantages:

1. A relatively large and potentially unwieldy administrative superstructure has to be established which could easily focus attention on bureaucratic procedures to the detriment of professional progress.
2. Putting the structure together and optimizing its performance will take, even if fully supported, very much time and effort, possibly lasting as much as two years or even more. Whilst this basically administrative work is done, little professional progress can be anticipated.
3. Within the government sector itself, mission-oriented ministries would be separated from the information activities which are designed to assist their missions. The principal users representatives (e.g., Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, etc.) would no longer carry a responsibility for the development of a basic service which permits them to discharge their tasks. The present inactivity and disinterest of these ministries in the information field is thus legalized and, worse, made permanent.
4. The operational and administrative workload of the proposed structure will be heavy. Its discharge will always have to take precedence over purely professional duties and the flexibility of planning and experimentation which is necessary for future development is likely to be impaired.
5. Experience has shown that national information activities which are operationally subordinated to a single administrative authority may easily lose the freedom of professional decision-making and decisions which suit administrative purposes become dominant. The relatively large and powerful government agency which is the center of activities may also

deter some smaller, independent units in their cooperation.

6. The need of regional cooperation is rightly emphasized throughout the interim report and in future planning. Here again, decision-making and cooperation might become more cumbersome if the B'dos partner is represented by a relative large and powerful unit which is administratively, operationally and organizationally totally identified with governmental interests.

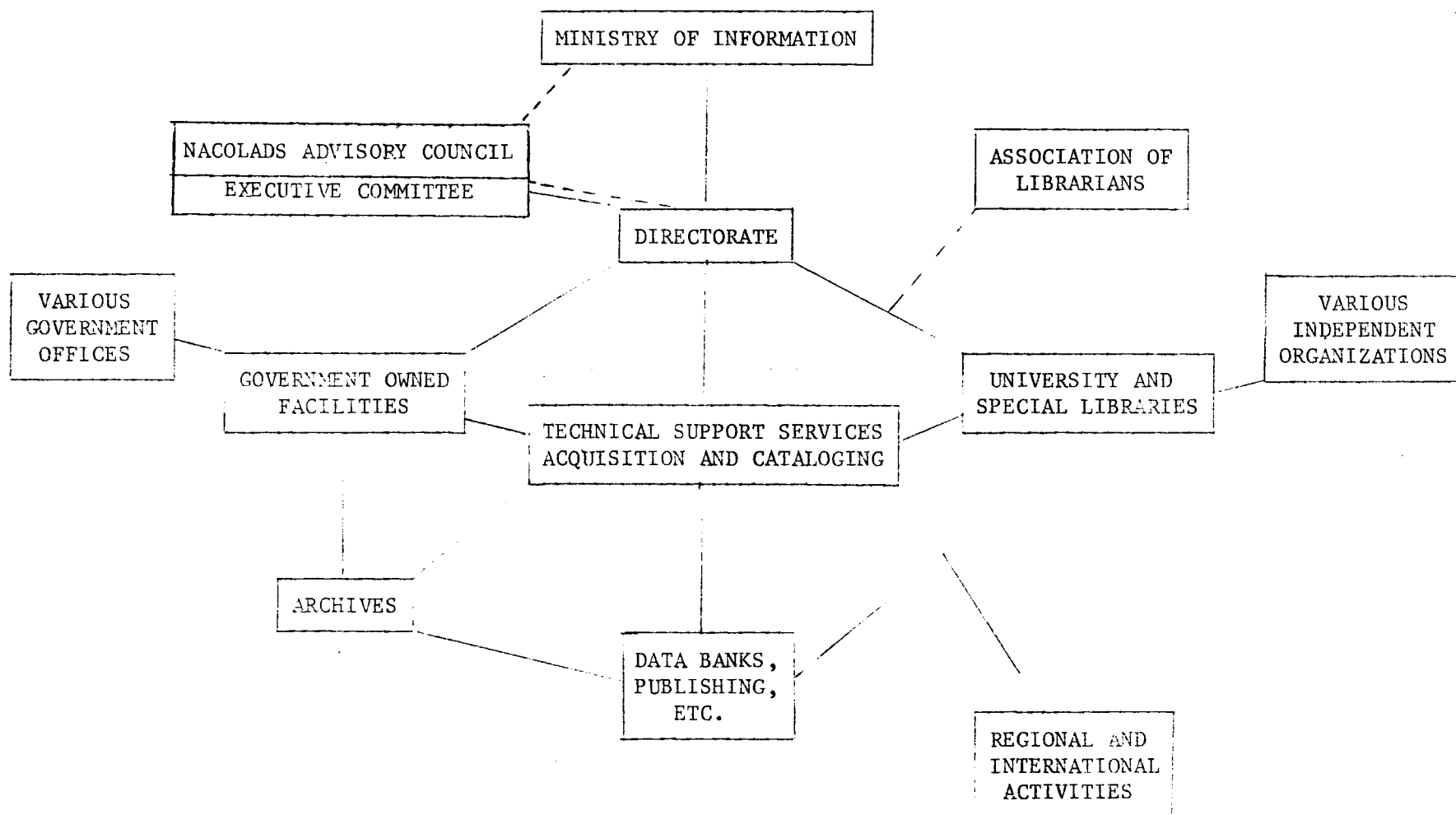
Discussions with representatives of the Ministries of Education, Health and Agriculture, although not conclusive and lacking final authorization, conveyed the impression that these Ministries would prefer to retain some control over the information activities which are within their jurisdiction. They clearly preferred that the operational budgets for their library and information activities should be part of their departmental estimates and that they should be authorized to participate decisively in the setting of their departmental information policy. But all representatives found much merit in a more coherent national library and information system, including some centralized activities (such as acquisition and technical services) and a nation-wide policy for personnel allocation, training, etc. They also favour a national approach to infrastructural problems involving the allocation of resources and authority to make interdisciplinary decisions.

#### An alternative option

An analysis of the advantages and disadvantages inherent to the structure proposed in the NACOLADS interim plan leads me to propose an alternative organizational approach. The proposed option is based on the network concept in which nodes of the network have equal status and responsibilities, with the exception of such activities that serve the network as a whole.

Several networking models exist. The one which is proposed would permit the presentation of groups as network nodes, in order to reduce the number of contact points which have to be managed and also to allow for a variety of hierarchical organizations to participate. Otherwise, all network nodes should participate equally in the system. A schematical outline of the proposed network would be as follows:

BARBADOS LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES SYSTEM (BLISS)



It is proposed to discard the designation "National Library" which the NACOLADS interim plan had used. Neither the NACOLADS plans nor the proposed alternative option aim to the establishment of a national library in the conventional sense of this name. The reasons why such a change of designations is very strongly recommended have been discussed extensively with all concerned and there is no need to reiterate them here. Suffice to restate the opinion that the use of appropriate terminology is of more than purely semantic importance and is bound to ease the establishment of a new structure and its acceptance by all concerned.

It is suggested that the name of the new system expresses the sentiments contained in "Barbados Library and Information Services System (BLISS)", or any appropriate equivalent. The acronym BLISS will be used, for convenience and brevity, throughout the remainder of this report.

#### Principles of BLISS operation

BLISS is to operate on the network principles and its first priority is the development of network capabilities and modes of operation, coordination and cooperation. Principal network nodes are:

1. The Public Library and its branches.
2. Libraries in government offices, institutions, hospitals, etc.
3. School libraries.
4. The national archives.
5. UWI library and other on-campus libraries.
6. Special libraries in banks and private and semi-private institutes.
7. The BLISS directorate.

Network nodes should be free agents in all operations which do not contravene or influence the operations of the national system. For instance, each node decides on its acquisition policy but it may not, unilaterally, change the subscription status of a publication for which it has been assigned a network responsibility. If a change is required, for budgetary or other reasons, it must be coordinated with the network directorate.

Although each network node should be autonomous in its direction and the discharge of its designated duties certain network rules should be developed and enforced. These rules concern:



1. The practice of cooperation and interlending. It is recommended that BLISS develops a coordinated acquisition program, especially for serials, abstract journals and collections of a highly specific nature. Each network node will be responsible for the adequacy of the collections in its assigned field and for putting the documents in that collection at the disposal of other nodes. A precondition for the successful operation of such a scheme is the activation of reporting tools such as union catalogs, etc. Mechanisms for interlending between libraries, including the supply of photocopies, must be developed concurrently.
2. Making collections transparent to all network nodes and, incidentally, to increase specialization of facilities. For example, it seems uneconomical to maintain huge (and often irrelevant) collections of United Nations or World Bank material in each and every library whose parent organization has a working relationship with these international organizations. An efficient reference section in BLISS should be able to know what is available and where, and have the tools to get the information fast.
3. A much closer users-facility relationship must be established. Nodes should make all network resources available to their patrons and not only their internal collections. Users education should therefore be broadly based and staff training must be adequate to respond to wider responsibilities.
4. The design of an economic weeding policy (i.e., removal of superfluous or outdated material and of little used material) is important. Nearly all libraries suffer from congestion and stack room is at a premium. If stacks are cluttered with documents which are never or only rarely used, the demand for new premises soon arises. It is, for instance, frequently wasteful to bind and to store in several libraries duplicate copies of old serials (say 5-7 years old, according to currency required). A network convention which apportions this task in an equitable fashion has many merits. Such a convention would assign the storage of little used material to a single facility which would in turn make it available to any network node in which it is required.

5. Libraries and information services use many different forms, worksheets, etc. BLISS should attempt a far-reaching unification of these working tools in order to cut down on administrative efforts and to enhance cooperation and compatibility. A centralized supply of these forms merits consideration.
6. The introduction of computerized activities into the BLISS environment will certainly occur in the near future. The relatively small size of BLISS and the scarcity of trained personnel should make it mandatory that all such activities should be applicable to the system as a whole and that no network node should be permitted to do "its own thing". The need to cooperate not only nationally but also regionally and internationally put added emphasis on this point.
7. Staff training, professional advancement (and opportunity) and mobility should apply equally to all network personnel. This is the only way through which a professionally adequate work force can be created.

Each network node would continue to be dependent on its parent organization for its current resources and development. BLISS may, through its directorate, support a network node with network resources, principally for two reasons:

1. Creating an activity which has not existed before or which is under-developed and which would be of importance to BLISS as a whole (e.g., building a collection in a specific field).
2. The maintenance of a permanent operational activity which serves the network and its aims as a whole, in an operational environment which can cope with it successfully (e.g., document accession from a certain source or input preparation for international databases, etc.).

The policy implications arising out of this recommendation are:

1. Each parent organization continues to be responsible to the direct funding of the library and information activities which are under its jurisdiction.

2. Activities created newly for BLISS or maintained for it should, whenever possible, be put within existing operational units. Such a policy would probably be more cost-efficient than the creation of separate units and it would also enhance network coherence and cooperation.

The network manager or directorate

BLISS is to be led and coordinated by a network directorate. The directorate would act as a network manager and contain all the functions necessary to discharge this task. However, the directorate is principally seen as a headquarters unit with a very small staff (9-10 persons) and with no direct operational responsibilities, excepting the direction of two centralized units:

1. Document acquisition and cataloging.
2. Technical support services.

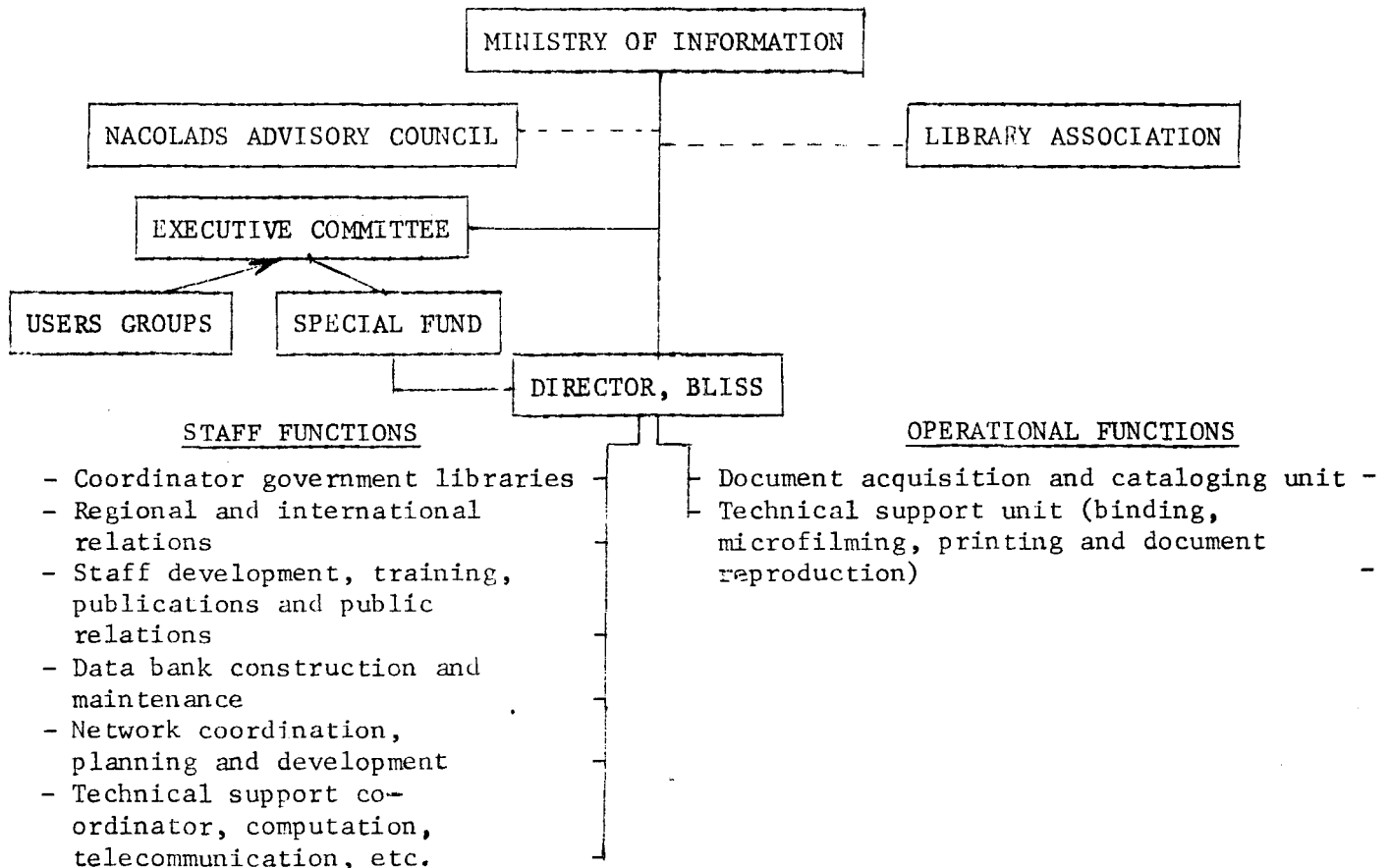
The role of the network manager is seen as follows:

1. It represents network interests externally. It would thus become the national focal point and representative wherever such a designation is appropriate (UNISIST, FID, bilateral and regional agreements, etc.).
2. It represents broad non-institutional interests at a governmental or any other official or semiofficial level. This includes the formulation of the national information policy and its implementation, national budgetary and personnel policy, initiation and implementation of standards and common procedures, initiation and monitoring of training activities, examination requirements, etc.
3. The network manager would ensure that adequate technical support services exist and, if such services need to be operated centrally, for reasons of expertise or economy, would direct their operation. This includes operations where one-of-a-kind (such as online services) can serve the whole network.
4. The manager would be concerned with all aspects which contribute to the smooth operation of the network such as interlibrary lending, weeding

policy, communications, personnel mobility and grading (at a general non-individual level), systems compatibility, acquisition and equipment purchase agreements, construction of union catalogs and databases, acquisition of general information sources, network consultants, etc.

5. Computerization of network activities or of each of its nodes should in all cases be a concern of the network manager (the BLISS directorate), because of the far-reaching implications for network compatibility and operation which are involved. Government may have a good case to ensure, by regulation or otherwise, that this recommendation is unilaterally enforced.
6. Additional responsibilities may be transferred to the systems manager by government or by network consensus.

The composition of the BLISS directorate is suggested in the following section:



The staff functions of the directorate (including the position of the director) should contain 6-7 professionals and 2-3 supporting personnel (secretaries, etc.) at most. Positions need not be filled all at once or be staffed by full-time personnel and the director should have considerable leeway to fill vacancies as need arises and suitably qualified people become available. With few exceptions staff functions can be filled by non-librarians. This is, in fact, desirable in order not to denude existing libraries of trained personnel and also to introduce additional professional qualifications into the Barbadian library and information environment. The proposed organization should be reviewed and, if necessary, readjusted, after a period of about two years.

It is recommended that the directorate and its various functions be accommodated in proximity to or even within existing facilities. Such housing would not only obviate the need for new offices but would also serve to make the new organization part of the facilities it is designed to serve and diminish the need for additional administrative support. The library of the Community College seems to have ample accommodation for the offices of the directorate.

#### A functional description of the BLISS directorate

The proposed directorate is subordinated to the Minister of Information through his permanent secretary. The working relationship which is suggested for each of its functions would be:

1. NACOLADS is to become a permanent body acting as an advisory council which meets 3-4 times annually, in order to receive reports, discuss policies and workplans, and generally act as a "sounding board".
2. An executive committee is elected out of the NACOLADS membership. Additional committee members are users representatives, a representative of the Ministry of Finance and the director of BLISS. The committee should be chaired by the P.S. Ministry of Information. Its total membership should not exceed 7-9 members. The committee meets monthly and it should authorize all decisions which are not of a day-to-day operational character. It should also authorize disbursements out of the special fund.

3. The Library Association should provide professional advisory input into the directorate and find in it support for its activities.
4. The director represents BLISS at the senior level. He administers the directorate and coordinates activities. He submits working plans, budgets, structural suggestions, etc. to the executive committee for decision and review.
5. The coordinator of government libraries will initiate and coordinate the restructure of government owned facilities, including reallocation of personnel and material holdings, building of collections, changes of premises and equipment, etc. He will closely liaise with the directors of each individual facility regarding budgets, personnel training, internal operating procedures, etc. and represent the interests of this sector at the senior BLISS level.
6. The staff member for regional and international cooperation will co-ordinate all activities of the authority with non-Barbadian organizations. He will assist in making arrangements for individual activities needing international contacts and represent B'dos internationally. He will ensure that Barbadian input into regional and international activities is adequate. Management of such activities which exist already will be taken over and additional contacts will be developed.
7. Staff development, training and publications should deal with the large variety of problems coming up with anticipated staff changes, the design of training curricula, the organization of courses, examinations, selection boards for trainees, etc. BLISS will have few publications of its own to attend to, but it should develop a professional capability to advise government and others on how to lay out publications and how to produce them technically. This would be a useful function, especially if the future storage and retrieval aspects are duly considered. More immediate will be the requirement to develop a public relations program for BLISS and the efforts at users education which go along with it.

8. Data bank construction and maintenance is a new field, to be developed on a priority basis. The following data banks are recommended initially:

- a. A data bank of reports, surveys, government publications, etc. About 400-500 items are the anticipated annual input. Worksheets to be prepared should list bibliographical data and a summary and be compatible with regional data banks (such as CARICOM, CARISPLAN, AGRINTER, and others) to which B'dos is party.
- b. The national bibliography should be handled by this staff member and be compatible with the data bank mentioned above.
- c. A union catalog of serials held by BLISS. An input of about 2500 titles is anticipated.
- d. Data banks relating to institutions such as libraries, manufacturing and service firms (of importance to exporters and investors) and similar topics should be encouraged and supported professionally and financially.

The staff member should organize data preparation, collection, dissemination and exchange, and negotiate computerization.

9. Network coordination, planning and development should ensure that throughout BLISS operating procedures, rules and regulations, etc. are compatible and that network activities proceed in a manner which fits the concepts and policies which have been adopted. Library interlending procedures, forms design, weeding and retention policies, allocation of acquisition responsibilities, etc. are a few examples of the activities to be handled by this function. The organization of activities which, for reasons of size or economics or technical complexity should be developed for the whole network, are also in the competence of this function. Online services to external databases, SDI services, etc., are examples for this. As network restructuring proceeds plans need be laid for future development and all achievements should be constantly monitored and evaluated. Statistical and

other measuring tools must be introduced and maintained.

10. Technical support functions should provide within the BLISS directorate and as a service to the system as a whole, a professional capability able to advise on, to judge and possibly also to introduce technological innovation into the network. Computers and telecommunications are obvious examples of the expertise in which BLISS requires some indigenous knowledge but problems related to microforms, printing and binding techniques, photocopying and similar machine-bound systems also require technical knowledge to evaluate library and information services applications and to make informed decisions on acquisitions and use. Additionally, this function should represent the BLISS director as manager of the technical support units which are within his jurisdiction. Some recommendations relating to these units are noted in separate sections.

#### RESOURCES (MANPOWER AND FINANCE)

##### Introduction

In order to develop an adequate library and information services structure in B'dos, significant resources are required. I do not have sufficient details in order to estimate the national total investment which is needed and in any case this investment must be closely related to the development of the national economy, the socioeconomic goals of government, the research and development activity, regional and international relations and several other factors. The annual allocation made to the system is, of course, also dependent on investments made in previous years in buildings, library stock, equipment and the training of staff.

Chandler's survey (2) and some of the figures I have collected during my visits and other (fragmentary) data, lead me to estimate the total annual expenditure on library services in the country at roughly some B\$ 3,500,000 of which government spends directly about 50%. These figures are approximations only and an error rate of 15-20% should be allowed for. A breakdown of available figures reveals that most of the money is spend on salaries and related postings,



or on buildings and maintenance, and only some 20%, on the average is spend on acquisition of material. These figures should be analyzed in the context that international usage indicates in special libraries a division of 40(acquisitions):60(other expenses) as sound practice and in public and academic libraries a relation of about 50:50 or even 55:45 is considered acceptable.

Very little can be gained by analyzing the reasons for the present, rather disturbing, division of resource allocation. Most of such an analysis would be guesswork. Probably it is correct to assume that financial authorities have found it easier, over the years, to contain the growth of the acquisition budget and found it more difficult to adjust available staff positions to constantly shrinking purchases. It is probably also reasonable to assume that a relatively large number of staff never got a fair chance for training and professional advancement and that the "savings" which were effected on this account, resulted in relatively inefficient working methods needing more personnel that would be required otherwise.

To provide indications for the probable resource requirements of an improved national library and information service, would be extremely difficult and inexact at the present time. Most estimates are likely to be eventually misleading. Too many variables are involved which would make resource calculations largely theoretical. For instance:

1. Which recommendations of this report will be accepted and the priority and sequence of implementation.
2. The extent and the speed with which personnel can be upgraded and new types of staff can be recruited and inserted into the system.
3. The extent of cooperation that can be established with information users which alone justifies additional expenditure.
4. The degree of cooperation which can be expected from the administration and the library community in carrying out the reforms needed and the authority which the national library and information services director

and his staff will be able to exert.

5. The amount of funding which government can free for this activity in each of the following years and the quality and quantity of foreign assistance which can be obtained.

Any variation in any of the above factors, and others, is likely to influence planning and priorities, and thereby resource requirements.

#### Recommendations

Future resource allocations should attempt a gradual correction of the balance between material acquisition and the personnel needed for its handling. This could be done by a series of interlocking decisions which would:

1. Restore acquisition budgets to an adequate level.
2. Develop staff capabilities to a degree where all staff can accept and cope with professional challenges and find job satisfaction in them.
3. Make better use of equipment, buildings and technical support services, in order to optimize benefits which result from them.
4. Streamline operating procedures in order to enable existing staff to cope with increasing workloads.
5. Permit the selective introduction of computer assisted systems which would become economically justifiable once manual processes are straightened out.

Additional recommendations are:

1. The recruitment of the director and staff of the Barbados Library and Information Services System. This requires the net addition of about seven professional staff members. It seems that technical and administrative personnel can be transferred, at least initially, from existing units or inserted into jobs which are presently filled by unqualified personnel.

2. The establishment of a special fund, amounting initially to about B\$ 1,000,000, out of which the reorganization of BLISS can be financed. Funds should preferably not be earmarked initially for specific expenditures but be expandable for system needs by a proper authority. The appointment of a committee which includes representatives of the ministries concerned (information and finance), the director of BLISS and the executive committee of NACOLADS could be such an authority. Surplus funds should be transferable to subsequent financial years, in order to optimize expenditures. Exact budget specification should be prepared by the director of BLISS for the period following the reorganization phase, but some form of a flexible fund should always be retained. It should be entirely clear that the special fund is totally additional to present expenditures and that it is not intended to cover current expenses, salaries, maintenance, etc. The fund is intended for capital and reorganization expenses only.
3. Funding of adequate housing for the National Archives and the shelving and equipment necessary for the preservation of the holdings.
4. The allocation of resources for the implementation of other recommendations made in this report and/or the recommendations made by the director of BLISS and his executive committee. This relates to activities which exceed costs allowed for current expenses and are not eligible for special fund allowances.
5. Some additional recommendations concerning the financing of BLISS are:
  - a. The special fund (recommended in (2) above) is intended to cover the restructuring costs of the system over the period which seems to be required for its implementation, i.e., about two years. The sum required (about B\$ 1,000,000) was computed on the strength of the estimate that about 15% of the sum will be required for staff changes and training, an equal sum for physical facilities, furniture and equipment, about 40% for the rebuilding of collections (basic stock) and the remainder of about 30% for a variety of activities such as database creation and maintenance, contract work, users education, etc. These are, however, very rough estimates, to be superseded by more exact figures once BLISS starts to function.

- b. BLISS should devise a pricing policy for the services it provides. Any income which arises out of this policy should revert to BLISS or its network nodes, and not flow as income into the government treasury. Such income should be used, as it is elsewhere, for the development of services to users. A similar policy should apply for any (temporary) income derived from deposits for book loans.
- c. Any savings made by BLISS due to increased efficiency should be made available for systems use. If, for example, manpower can be saved, the salary equivalent should become applicable to acquisitions or to other professional expenditures. The establishment of BLISS and the special funds put at its disposal should not diminish, in any way, the financial resources allocated to various participating network nodes and the obligations of their parent bodies to ensure their adequate funding.

#### Foreign assistance

There seems little doubt that some foreign assistance will be required in order to implement all the recommendations made in this report. Such assistance may be in funds and/or professional services. It is, however, suggested that such assistance should be based on the principle that it is supplemental to a basically indigenous effort and that the establishment of BLISS and its current operation should not be dependent on foreign grants and funding.

On this basis, foreign assistance may be sought for:

1. The provision of an adequate storage place for the National Archives.
2. The financing of a microfilming contract for copying documents representing the historical national heritage.
3. Equipment and personnel training for the technical support section of the national system (binding, catalog card production, microfilming).
4. In-service training for an agricultural information specialist, a medical librarian, a school library consultant. Local short courses (such as online

services, computing in libraries and information services, library management, methods of document accession and sources, elementaries of database construction and maintenance, etc.).

5. Acquisition of some basic library and information material in areas where new specialities are developed or existing facilities are upgraded.  
Current and future maintenance of collections should in all cases be a national responsibility. Areas most likely to qualify are engineering, agriculture, health, administration, and perhaps also trade information services.
6. Initiation of computerized information services, if and when introduced.
7. Special activities related to participation in regional and/or international networks.

#### PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

##### Introduction

It is rightly stated that an information system is as good as the personnel who serve in. Potential BLISS participants employ at present approximately 150 persons, of which about 40 are graduate librarians or staff members who have had an academic training in some field.

Most of the graduates received their degree in the library school of UWI in Mona (Jamaica). Their principal areas of studies were traditional library techniques and some background studies (such as history, geography, etc.), very few have had a substantive subject field education. Most non-graduates who are nowadays employed had no professional training whatsoever, excepting some on-the-job instruction. Non-graduate professionals in government facilities are assigned to libraries by the civil service with a clerical or semi-clerical classification. The librarian in-charge has practically no vote in setting personnel qualifications or selection. Very few of the staff members who are employed at this level see in it a permanent vocation, worth a considerable educational effort or likely to provide the professional and

material rewards they expect. Personnel turnover and job dissatisfaction is therefore very noticeable and one of the main, if not the principal, weakness of the Barbadian library system.

A one-year course (a-day-a-week) in librarianship will shortly be offered for non-graduates. The course will be taught by a teacher from the library school in Mona (Jamaica).

#### Recommendations

1. To establish, at least in government, a professional structure which would include all personnel, graduate and non-graduate alike, who are employed in the library and information field. Within this structure, adequate rules for advancement (by merit and education) should be provided and job mobility be ensured. The salary structure should adequately recompense staff for their professional responsibilities. The BLISS directorate should work out, together with the Civil Service Establishment basic educational requirements, continuous training efforts, examination requirements, grading levels, etc., which are required in order to create this professional structure and to make it effective. They should also design procedures needed for the interim period, i.e., the integration of presently employed staff into the new structure, personnel selection and reallocation, etc.
2. To prepare an inventory of personnel available now and those becoming available in future (presently under training). Immediate training needs should be identified for each person. A projection of personnel requirements for BLISS should also be prepared and their qualifications be noted. Job descriptions can then be written and salary grades be assigned to each.
3. Government supported education and training (especially abroad) should be authorized according to systems needs and not be left entirely to individual initiative. In this connection it is suggested that there is an urgent requirement for personnel having subject knowledge in fields such as health, agriculture, computing and communications, economics, management, engineering, etc. and that library technique qualifications should be added

to basic degrees in these and similar sciences. Personnel ready to engage in such a broader educational effort should be preferred for public assistance.

4. A broadly based training effort should be instituted as soon as possible for BLISS personnel. This training effort should contain short courses (lasting up to one week), as well as very extensive courses (lasting up to one year).

Short courses may deal with subjects such as management, accounting practices, forms control, introduction to computers, methods of users education, etc. The organization of many of these courses could be contracted to outside institutions such as BIMAP, and others.

Extensive courses should be of two types ("A" and "B"):

The "A" type course should be addressed to non-professional staff members and focus on the practical day-to-day techniques which they have to deal with. Principles of librarianship, cataloging and classification systems, lending procedures, etc. are examples of the topics which should be taught.

The "B" type course should be addressed to graduates or to non-graduates who have several years of professional experience. This course would focus on practical aspects of advanced information work such as information services management, information storage and retrieval methods, computer and communication techniques, online services, SDI, production of indexes, methods of document accession, etc.

"A" and "B" courses should each last about one year and each should involve about 4-6 frontal hours a week. Part of class time required should be student's time, part of it on account of working time. Teaching should be done, as far as possible, by local personnel. They know the real problems better than anybody else, but also because class preparation requires study and keeping up with the profession, something which seems to be highly desirable. Curricula design should take note of the excellent guidelines

which have been published by UNESCO/PCI on this subject.

5. Some additional courses have been suggested:

- a. A workshop on information management at the national and regional level with the participation of foreign experts.
- b. An online training seminar for about 6-10 professionals. The seminar should last about two weeks and should be conducted by a foreign expert in this field. Technically, provisions must be made for hands-on experience, i.e., at least two terminals (teletype in preference to CRT's) must be available throughout training.
- c. A course on computer use in information work lasting initially about 2-3 weeks. This course will also have to be conducted by a foreign expert. A precondition to it should also be some hands-on experience, i.e., access to a suitably programmed machine.
- d. In-service training, probably in a developed country, for personnel facing special tasks such as medical librarianship, work in agriculture, document preservation in archives, technical support functions, etc.

6. The suggestions made in the previous paragraphs should only be indications of what can and should be done. It needs, however, be clear to all concerned that unless a serious effort is made in this area, much of the investments in resources and reorganization of facilities are likely to come to nought.

A TECHNICAL SUPPORT UNIT

Introduction

Several libraries in the country maintain small units for binding (or reparation of binding) of books and serials. Other libraries have microfilming apparatus (such as the Archives), still other microfilm and fiche reader-printers. There



is a plethora of photocopying machines, some of them operating with very unfavourable and expensive paper sizes. Quite a few pieces of equipment are not in use, those in the Community College have never been used since they were acquired in the late seventies.

All facilities reported equipment maintenance problems involving frequently waiting times of several months for fault finding and maintenance or even decommissioning. Not only equipment maintenance poses problems. Personnel engaged in technical jobs are often on the lowest range of the salary scale and have little motivation to be trained and to "put their hearts" into the work. Their superiors lack technical knowledge and are unable to direct this part of the work and instruct personnel.

#### Recommendations

In view of this analysis, the following recommendations are made:

1. That technical support facilities of BLISS are centralized and put under the management of a competent technician in the BLISS directorate.
2. Personnel and equipment now installed in BLISS facilities are to be transferred to the new unit and, if necessary, to be reallocated from there. As far as possible, however, activities should be carried out centrally, certainly for jobs such as binding, microfilming and other tasks which are normally done in batch mode.
3. Possibly, an expert in these activities should organize the task of the unit properly, check out existing equipment and advise on necessary purchases. The training of operating personnel should have high priority and after successful training, adequate salary conditions should ensure reasonable production schedules and continuity. It is also suggested that the feasibility of contracting these tasks wholly or partly to specialized firms be investigated. Perhaps the larger scope offered by centralized BLISS activities increases the attractiveness of the work to private enterprises.

4. The BLISS directorate will have to ensure that administratively and operationally the unit operates efficiently and that network nodes which use the service have no reason to withdraw after some time. Preferably, some administrative authority should be assigned to this unit such as authorization of equipment purchases, drawing up of service contracts with suppliers, etc.

## BOOK AND SERIALS ACQUISITION AND CATALOGING

### Introduction

Acquisition of documentary material and cataloging processes require at present an inordinate amount of manpower and time in the various libraries. Professionals in libraries focus most of their attention to this aspect of the work and have therefore little time left to plan library development, to provide adequate users services and to advance professionally.

Most libraries have only relatively small budgets for new acquisitions and are therefore unable to take any advantage of economics of scale, to control the acquisition process adequately and to select literature optimally. There is a wide variety of cataloging and classification systems in use, often precluding compatibility and future computerization.

### Recommendations

1. To establish in the directorate of BLISS a centralized acquisition and cataloging unit.
2. The centralized unit should be staffed by a reallocation of manpower from existing facilities. The utilization of the unit should be immediately mandatory for government facilities, it is hoped that other facilities will join once the cost-efficiency and quality of the operation become apparent. The unit should be housed in rooms vacated through the reorganization of existing libraries. It should operate in assembly-line fashion with considerable attention devoted to staff and cost saving, operating efficiency, work flow and quality control. Factors such as bulk purchasing, supply by tender, time saving (e.g., air freight arrangements), etc.

should rate considerable attention.

3. As long as card catalogs are the mainstay of the operation, suitable equipment for card production should be used. A participating facility should get all the cards it needs, together with the documentary material to which it refers. Material received by participating libraries should be ready for immediate shelving.
4. This will probably be one of the first activities to be computerized once the first phase of the plan (restructuring) has been completed. All processes to be employed in the unit should therefore be designed in such a way that future conversion to machine-readable records becomes as painless as possible. Forms, worksheets, cataloging data, purchase orders, etc. should follow international standards (see IOB publication on information standards). If an OCLC relation is foreseen for the future, operations should be compatible with the procedures used by libraries which participate in that network.
5. A union catalog of serials should be started immediately, to be followed, as soon as feasible, by a union catalog of books. The preparation of a publication(s) of contents pages of broadly used serials may be highly cost-effective.
6. Libraries which utilize this facility should channel all their orders on specially designed forms. In order to minimize accounting procedures, it is suggested that participating libraries establish deposit accounts with the unit and that financial statements are issued on a monthly basis.
7. International document accession agreements such as the one with the British Lending Library or with NTIS and others, should be transferred to the responsibility of this unit.
8. The operational efficiency of this unit and its viability are an acid test of the BLISS concept. It is suggested that prior to full scale operation due thought be given to all the procedural and operational

activities which are involved, that operation manuals be written, forms designed and tested and that the system be tested in trial runs. Haste should be made slowly and carefully.

Ideally, collection cataloging and maintenance procedures of books and other documents should be compatible throughout the network. Practically, however, there seems to be no great urgency to impose universal classification methods, etc. The public library employs Dewey, the UWI uses LC, and other libraries use still different schemes. The small size of the network and the close personal contacts maintained by staff, make the imposition of unified systems at this time, when there is so much else to do, a low level priority. Should UWI, however, go through with its plan to become a partner in the OCLC network, this recommendation would change and it is then advised that UWI acts also as an agent for other libraries. It is, however, recommended to check once more the economics of joining OCLC and to go through with this plan only if the economic advantages can be clearly demonstrated.

SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF DOCUMENT HOLDINGS IN SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIOECONOMIC SUBJECTS

During discussions with users and librarians, the comprehensiveness and timeliness of collections needed for current awareness and for problem-solving was frequently raised. This problem is not so acute for academic needs, there the curriculum and related library requirements are generally known in advance and BLISS facilities can order what they need well in time. All other needs, however, cannot always be foreseen and a small country with a small basic library stock, limited resources, and long delays in supply faces considerable difficulties.

Online services, SDI, and similar services which have arisen as a result of modern information technology provide mainly bibliographical references which have to be followed up by an efficient document accession service. Even when acquisition budgets are plentiful, countries which are far from centers of document production find it very expensive to order all they need by airmail. And anything which is shipped otherwise needs 3-6 months at least, in order

to reach B'dos.

At present, very few, if any, data exist which would permit reasonable decisions. Little, if anything, is known about who the potential users of BLISS facilities are and which are their areas of interest. Nothing is known about which types of information are needed urgently and which can wait. Modern information technology has not yet been employed and users reaction to it is unknown. Even the forerunners of that technology, such as secondary source publications, are practically unavailable and none of the potential users who has been contacted, has complained about their absence.

In view of these observations it would be too early to tender any recommendations on this topic. A few observations may nevertheless be useful.

1. Online services and other services which provide bibliographic data should only be introduced if adequate provision for reasonably timely document delivery has been made. In the B'dos context this is likely to entail ordering by telex and document supply by air. The follow up service is therefore rather expensive but without it, all the rest is questionable.
2. There should be far-reaching coordination within BLISS nodes, in order to eliminate duplication and to increase the utilization of budgets for the broadest possible base of holdings which resources permit.
3. Sources which supply documents on microfiche (which are airmailed economically) should be developed, and an attitude which accepts their use and technology which permits such use should be encouraged.
4. The institution and maintenance of good statistical and reporting systems seems to be a necessary tool in order to gather data for decisions which are vital for a future efficient information system.

## COMPUTERS

### Introduction

As was to be expected, there is much interest in the use of computers for libraries and information work. There is, however, insufficient knowledge of the infrastructure which is needed in order to introduce high-technology equipment successfully.

Available equipment consists of an IBM 360/115 in government which is principally used for administrative and statistical data processing, works in batch mode only and is unable to provide any programming support to users. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is in the process of installing an IBM 4331 with adequate peripheral equipment. I was unable to ascertain the needs for which this system is being installed and which application programs are to run on it. Negotiations are in progress to obtain from UNESCO the ISIS package and to use it for information handling purposes, including the CDB library. Nobody, including the programmer who will take over ISIS, has any knowledge about the capabilities of ISIS or of the steps needed in order to prepare a computerization of the facility. Other machines include a small ICL installation on the UWI Campus (not equipped for textual information work) and the purchase agreement of a PDP 11/34 at the Meteorological Institute (the machine has not yet been delivered).

### Recommendations

1. Of all the computer installations mentioned above, it seems that only the CDB facility offers some prospects of use by BLISS. The potential programming support seems to be minimal and without assurance of adequate and continuous support it is strongly suggested not to install any permanent operational activity, even if ISIS is successfully transferred.
2. CDB should, however, be approached for the following:
  - a. Facilities for the familiarization of BLISS personnel with computerized activities in general and ISIS based operations in particular.

- b. The preparation of databases and their printed outputs. Production of indexes, etc.
  - c. Demonstration and familiarization with various machine-based systems such as SDI, library records, etc.
3. In the long run, the use of mainframe machines for a limited size information environment seems ineffective. An early investigation into a micro-processor or minicomputer based system which is also compatible with regional cooperative activities is strongly recommended.

#### A PROBLEM OF HIGH-TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION AND MAINTENANCE

Wherever equipment of some complexity was installed, problems of maintenance were reported. For example, a Selectric typewriter (IBM) in the BPL worked for a few months and has been out of commission for five years since. KODAC microfilming equipment in the Archives has been out of working condition for months at a time until faults were traced and repairs made. No guarantee for future smooth operation exists. Microfiche (film) reader/printers of various manufacturers and vintage were found in several organizations, none of which have any contract or guarantee for maintenance or repair.

#### Recommendations

In view of the fact that modern information handling requires sophisticated equipment, the following recommendations seem indicated:

1. Any equipment offers are to be accompanied by firm undertakings for long term maintenance. Such undertakings should be supported by proof of trained technicians and secured spare parts supplies. If possible, it is advisable to require long term guarantees to ensure adherence to contract. BLISS should not install any equipment whose maintenance has not been assured.
2. Government might possibly consider with advantage the possibility of centralized purchasing and/or leasing, principally in order to secure

adequate maintenance contracts. The situation in other Caribbean countries is unknown to this consultant, but a joint regional approach to this problem seems reasonable.

3. Alternatively, it may be useful to consider equipment operation by mobile units which are based on countries where adequate maintenance facilities exist. This is especially worth consideration for operations which can be done in batch mode, such as microfilming of documents, etc.
4. The allocation or funding of equipment by international organizations should preferably contain conditions for a satisfactory solution of continuous maintenance.
5. The operation of high technology equipment requires special expertise, training of personnel, knowledge of material acquisition and storage, special electrical and building and air conditioning provisions, etc. Although it is rather convenient to maintain small operational units integral to each operation, it seems that size, workloads, methods of supervision and technical expertise make this a wasteful and impracticable method of operation. Centralization of effort should be investigated and, if feasible, properly organized, preferably with the help of a knowledgeable expert. This would apply to microfilming, binding, printing, and equipment and building maintenance operations and, eventually, also to many data processing tasks.

#### SOME COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC FACILITIES

The previous part of the report dealt mainly with topics applicable to the national library and information system as a whole.

During my visits to the various facilities of which the national system is made up, some comments and suggestions were made on the spot which would, in my opinion, contribute towards performance and efficiency. These "individual" comments are not recorded in the report. I have, however, noted some comments of principles relating to very basic and specific activities, and these are described in the following sections.



### THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The casual and non-expert observer who visits the National Archives is impressed by the beauty of the location and the architecture of the buildings. A closer look, however, conveys the impression that the physical conditions of material storage is totally inadequate. Buildings are old, with wooden floors and ceilings, and badly fitting windows. There is total disregard (nearly) of fire and insect hazards, and the ravages of weather and humidity. It seems hardly conceivable that air conditioning can alleviate the situation substantially. If B'dos wishes to conserve its national heritage, immediate attention to the storage problem is urged.

The collection of the Archives has been made in a very casual manner. The archivist described it as a "garbage collection", i.e., whoever had something to throw away and was not quite sure how to dispose of it, called in the Archives. Sometimes the archivist learned of material due for disposal and wheedled it out before it was too late. The present situation is such, that no new material can be absorbed by the Archives due to lack of personnel and lack of space. The latter is largely due to very uneconomical stacking methods, methods which are perhaps appropriate in an open stack library, certainly not in archives.

The organization of the material seems rather haphazard. Very rare, one-of-an-exemplar, books are stored together with more common documents, handwritten manuscripts of the 17th century are stored with newspapers dated 400 years later. All stacks are of wood and, in spite of regular fumigation, heavy termite damage was observed. Material of historical value is stored not only in the Archives, but also in the Public Library (without adequate safeguards) and elsewhere (for example, in some churches). There are no rules and procedures in government or elsewhere for the organization of records, for eventual transfer to the Archives, nor is such transfer actually effected.

### Recommendations

1. The Archives to be designated as the place where documents relating to the national heritage of the country are collected, safeguarded and made available for research and consultation. To that effect, adequate legal

steps should be taken and administrative rules of procedure be passed. The required legal and administrative background can probably be developed from the laws and rules which have been promulgated in other nations. A policy in this regard should soonest be established and backed up by relevant laws and regulations and policing powers. It is recommended that the Archives should be responsible for the preservation of the national historical records and those records which are of a long-term personal and property/financial importance. The Archives should have a voice in the public records management systems, in order to facilitate the eventual transfer of documents into their safekeeping.

2. Urgent steps to be taken to provide for the adequate and safe storage of documents. Whether the existing buildings can be properly adapted or new premises have to be sought, is not within my field of expertise. That something has to be done as soon as possible is obvious to the most untrained observer. Because an adequate building is likely to be expensive, the introduction of Compactus type stacking (to save more storage space) and thorough repairs to existing buildings are recommended.
3. Laws should also be enacted concerning the preservation of rare books and maps, and similar material and their transfer from existing collections (especially in the public sector) to a central place of safekeeping. The actual implementation of such a law presupposes, of course, that the Archives are properly equipped to deal with additional material.
4. For the Archives to fulfill their historical and administrative role, material kept by the former colonial power should be made available, at least in microfilm form.
5. In order to enable the staff of the Archives to deal successfully with its principal tasks, the maintenance of a library, library staff and library budgets should be discontinued, at least temporarily. The Archives should serve scholars and other users with the collections for which it was set up and any other documents required by the public to

facilitate historic and other research should be available elsewhere. If the Archives' staff needs additional venues of interest and promotion, this should, and could, be brought about by different means. Library holdings should be transferred to UWI or the Public Library, or both.

6. The problem of maintaining a technical section in the Archives needs rethinking. Although the Archives are heavy users of microfilming tasks and need special skills for document preservation, it seems doubtful whether they can, and should, devote considerable attention and resources to basically technical tasks and whether they can maintain these activities efficiently. A centralized effort, which cares properly also to the Archives' requirements, has many merits.
7. The Archives must invest a considerable effort into the microfilming of documents which are in immediate danger of disintegration, or of documents which are one-of-a-kind. In order to cope with the considerable backlog of work, it is suggested to investigate the possibility to contract this part out to a commercial firm, perhaps even to a foreign organization.
8. Personnel advancement, motivation, training and mobility present difficult problems in this small environment. If the foregoing recommendations are accepted, even partly, their implementation should present a considerable challenge to personnel over the next few years and should be properly recompensated. In the long run, an adequate Archives establishment should be attractive to scholars of history and other fields who will find in it a scientific satisfaction, and archivists and technical staff could find some upward advancement and mobility in the information structure which is to be established.

## THE BARBADOS PUBLIC LIBRARY (BPL)

### Introduction

The Public Library holds place of pride on the Barbadian library scene regarding size, number of users served, number of personnel employed, range of services offered and distribution of services throughout the Island. The Public Library is a "Free Library" (as the inscription over its portal proclaims) and through its main facility, several branches and its bookmobiles it extends to all inhabitants of the country a capability to get access to books (children and adults) of many types (fiction as well as reference) and to newspapers and serials. In some respects, the BPL fills functions which in many other countries would be assigned to a national library or to some specialized mission-oriented activities.

BPL is therefore one of the principal cornerstones of BLISS and should be developed accordingly. Regretfully, a rather conservative management system, little support for innovation and rejuvenation, and an inflexible personnel structure and low acquisition budgets have held professional growth at bay. The recommendations which follow are designed to enable BPL to move with the times and to regain the status and fill the role for which it was designed.

### Recommendations

1. To establish a clear cut policy by which BPL activities are governed.

This policy should spell out the BPL role in:

- a. The provision of a capability for the population to have access to books and serials, whatever their economic circumstances and their educational level.
- b. The provision of reference services, either for information required directly or to information-on-information.
- c. To step in and fill any lacunae which other BLISS nodes have left open.

2. To reexamine the BPL role as a supplier of books to educational facilities. The latter should be augmented by BPL services but no more.
3. To improve the use of resources in order to gain budgets for additional acquisitions and other activities. For this purpose, the following suggestions may be of interest:
  - a. Improvement of security in order to diminish pilferage by staff and public alike. According to some estimates, more than a third of the stock, especially new acquisitions, are lost. It is also questionable whether the present open-stack policy should be retained.
  - b. To institute a cash deposit scheme (refundable) in which a deposit is required for each loan. Last year's (1980) losses for loans which were not returned exceeded B\$ 65,000, i.e., 30% of the annual acquisition budget.
  - c. To move to softcover purchases (especially in the adult and reference section) wherever possible.
4. To examine closely the cost-benefits of various operations and to institute appropriate changes. Some suggestions are:
  - a. To organize all processing operations in an assembly line fashion, thus saving space and manpower. Each employee should do his own typing, the method by which the work flow is broken up continuously because some typing job is needed should be discontinued.
  - b. Universal jacketing of all books in plastic covers seems wasteful. Books should be jacketed only when they are checked out.
  - c. Acquisitions, cataloging and binding should be handled by a separate unit, preferably under the directorate of BLISS.

5. To institute some changes in collection policy in order to introduce a dynamic approach to activities:
  - a. To transfer to the Archives or to other appropriate institutions historic and/or rare books and documents which are irreplaceable. The BPL has no provisions whatsoever for the safekeeping of such materials.
  - b. To establish a weeding policy by which material which is no longer required or which is irreplacably damaged can be removed from the shelves and be either transferred to other facilities or be destroyed.
  - c. To establish a serials reading room (properly policed) with an adequate selection in which Barbadian material, including government publications, surveys, reports, etc. are fully represented and which also has a good selection of the West Indies and other publications of general interest.
  - d. To check holdings of branch libraries (and headquarters) as to the relevance of the material they are holding to local needs. For example, if new industries are established in a neighborhood, the advice and material help of industry managers should be sought in the acquisition of relevant literature.
  - e. Acquisitions in general should be decided on by consultation with appropriate experts and users representatives and not only by the administrative decision of the librarian.
  - f. To shift material in branch libraries at intervals in order to recompense for their limited holdings.
  - g. To maintain opening hours up to the early evening.
6. To build up the reference section to a degree where it can fill the central role envisaged for it in the BLISS organization. Suggestions are:

- a. Reference should be able to direct users within BLISS and also to sources abroad relevant to their needs.
  - b. Reference should be properly equipped with encyclopedias, dictionaries, guidebooks, yearbooks, catalogs, etc. and have priority on the BPL budget for its needs.
  - c. Reference should assist users in locating information but should not do extensive bibliographical research for them. If such research is required, the time should be paid for by users.
  - d. Reference should accept prepaid orders for non-conventional material from non-institutional users and route them properly.
  - e. Reference should maintain a coin-operated photocopying machine for public use.
  - f. Reference should develop a capability to respond to a large variety of users' requests in various socioeconomic and technological fields, either directly or by referring the user to an adequate supplier. For that reason, reference must maintain flexibility in staffing and acquisitions.
7. The existing accommodation of the BPL can probably be better used and may be sufficient until money can be found for new construction. Suggestions are:
- a. To rearrange the public sections of BPL in a form that the principal sections of lending, serials and reference are placed in the three wings of the entrance hall.
  - b. To increase stack place by building galleries in the high rooms (nowadays about  $2-2\frac{1}{2}$  meters are wasted). The architects estimate that room capacity can be increased by 40-60%, at about a third of the cost of new buildings.

- c. To store much of the collection in closed stacks which would then need much less room.
  - d. To pay attention to problems of fire hazard and insect damage, both of which could destroy the library (and its branches).
8. To introduce staff training and staff motivation (see relevant section on personal development and training).

### SCHOOL LIBRARIES (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION)

#### Introduction

Several exhaustive reports have been produced on this topic within the last few years (see especially items 12 and 16 in the bibliography). These reports were written by experts in the field of school libraries and it seems inappropriate for a non-expert to "water down" the specific recommendations made in these reports or even to reiterate their findings.

Generally, I found that the conclusions reached in the above mentioned reports coincide largely with my personal observations. The recommendations which follow have principally been formulated with a view towards the proposed BLISS structure and also touch on topics which reflect government policy.

#### Recommendations

1. The responsibility for school libraries should be unambiguously assigned. The present situation where the Public Library (BPL) has assumed some tasks and the Ministry of Education some others, should be resolved soonest. School libraries in this context refers to all non-academic educational establishments at all levels. Responsibility implies policy, operation and funding. Preferably, the responsibility should be transferred to the Ministry of Education.
2. The suggestion by Jenerette (12) that a senior school library supervisor be appointed in the Ministry of Education is fully supported. The development and supervision of the activity should be his responsibility and he would represent the activity in BLISS, including NACOLADS.



3. The budgetary establishment needs examination. The situation whereby each principal gets a book allowance according to his powers of persuasion, is unhealthy. Allocations should preferably be made by the allowance of a certain sum for each student. The allocation of library space, furniture and personnel should also be standardized according to some objective factors.
4. Book selection processes need to be improved. Acquisitions should reflect the curriculum and special goals. Educators should participate in the process. Some services should also operate during vacation periods, always considering that real literacy, and its importance for national development, requires a continuous effort.
5. The need for personnel development and training has been emphasized in the section on that topic. What has been written there is fully applicable in this field.
6. The bookmobiles of the BPL serve nowadays principally the educational establishment. Once the tasks of the BPL and Education have been redefined, this question should be looked into. Ideally, some bookmobiles should serve the educational establishment (for schools unable to maintain permanent libraries) and others the BPL in its tasks to serve the reading needs of the population at large. Until the means can be found to bring about this separation, it seems that more efficient utilization of existing equipment can alleviate some shortcomings.
7. School libraries should not be involved in the textbook scheme. The present practice should be discontinued soonest.

#### AGRICULTURE

An agricultural library and information system seems to be non-existent. Its only trace is an accumulation of books and periodicals in the former location of the Ministry of Agriculture, a location which has been vacated by all operational departments some time ago. The place is now in charge of

an assistant librarian who does not know its contents, the way it is organized, the budget, etc. and whose principal clientele is schoolchildren who wander in during intermissions, in order to leaf through some books.

The situation at the new location of the Ministry, where its principal laboratories are, is not much better. No library exists there at all and it seems that none will be established unless a new building will be erected. Such a building has been applied for but has not yet been authorized. Even if the money for this building is granted (which is uncertain), it will take years to put a new library on stream. The 40-odd researchers at the location are meanwhile obtaining some books and periodicals, each in his speciality and each in a very individual fashion. There is no bibliographical control whatsoever. Agricultural information services in the modern sense do not exist, if they would be offered, it seems doubtful whether they could be used, as researchers seem unaware of a need for them and the use to which they are put. The budgetary information received is rather vague but it seems that the library budget of the Ministry of Agriculture amounts to less than 0.3% of its R&D expenditures (vis some 3-5% at least, which is the usual figure in similar facilities elsewhere).

#### Recommendations

Without going into much detail, the following principal recommendations are made:

1. To close the library in Bridgetown immediately and to safeguard its contents, as best as possible, until the collection can be revived and brought to use. To stop all acquisitions there until reviewed.
2. To appoint a senior professional staff member of the Ministry to take stock of the information needs of R&D personnel and of management, and of extension workers, so that he can provide some guidance to an incoming information worker. This staff member should, at least temporarily, carry the ministerial responsibility for this activity.
3. To transfer a professional librarian to the Ministry, at least on a temporary basis, in order to bring material in the new location under

some bibliographic control. If orderly cataloging, etc. cannot be established, at least some basic lists should be prepared which would allow for professional and financial decisions and control.

4. To start as soon as possible with the rebuilding of the library. The person in charge should preferably be someone who has a first degree in agronomy or a related science and if he lacks library training, this should be added on by special courses and by assistance from a professional librarian. The coordinator of government libraries in BLISS should decide on additional staff positions needed.
5. A suitable room and furniture should be found in the new location of the Ministry to house the collection or at least its operational part (serials, handbooks, reports, etc.). As a new building is as yet doubtful and will in any case not be ready for some time, an existing room should be requisitioned for this purpose. A room of about 25 m<sup>2</sup> can serve, in a pinch, to start activities.
6. According to various figures received, it seems that the Ministry spends at least B\$ 6,500,000 annually on R&D. To make this expenditure meaningful and effective, a library and information section must be adequately operated and funded. In order to build the activity up to an acceptable standard, a sum of at least B\$ 100,000 (including salaries) should be budgeted initially by the Ministry.
7. To justify the expense, the person in charge of the activity, should cultivate close relations with his potential users and appraise them constantly on the services he has to offer. Much of his working time should be spend on these tasks and on the provision of services which are requested in consequence. Professional guidance on how best to perform in such a capacity can probably be obtained from one of the larger agricultural research activities in the U.S.A. and elsewhere and, if possible, some in-service training abroad should be sought.

8. The national library and information system should provide all the assistance needed, in order to build this activity up to an acceptable professional standard. This should be done in close cooperation with the Ministry.

#### HEALTH SERVICES

Two libraries were checked out in this discipline, one at the Ministry of Health and one at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Although these libraries are in close proximity to each other and are serving, potentially, the same clientele, their activities are not coordinated and complimentary. The impression was conveyed that the library at the Ministry proper exists largely in a professional vacuum and the use which is made of its holdings is minimal. Although it is a rather small facility, it still disposes of some budgets and is cared for by a full-time professional librarian.

The library at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has more staff and more extensive holdings and cares for an active (if small) users population of medical personnel and students.

Holdings in both libraries seem to be very limited in scope and basic stock. Considering the geographic isolation of the Island and the extended time needed for the receipt of documentary material, it appears that a much larger basic stock is required in order to give adequate service and to cope with emergencies. To the non-medical observer (such as this consultant), it also appears that future library development should given increased attention to the principal areas the library will have to service such as:

1. Clinical medicine.
2. Preventive medicine and public health.
3. Nursing.
4. Preclinical students.
5. Pharmacology, toxicology, etc.

Very little material was also found in areas such as hospital management, equipment, administration, etc. No information could be traced regarding modern methods of patient records management and related fields. True, there have been

no requests by users in all of these fields, but once users interest can be generated (as it should be) the absence of related documents will become very noticeable.

#### Recommendations

Recommendations can be of a very general nature only, to be checked and readjusted by expert opinion at an early date:

1. To close the Ministry of Health library and to amalgamate it with the library of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
2. The latter library should be directed by, or at least engage in a senior position, a person who is knowledgeable in the medical or one of its allied fields such as biology or biochemistry. The director of the library and possibly all professional staff should acquire, as a priority task, specific medical librarian knowledge.
3. A much closer user-library relationship than exists now should be developed immediately. The library should evolve from a registry and depository of documents (which it is at present) into an essential tool for the medical and paramedical professions. As the Queen Elizabeth Hospital library is likely to be the only medical library on the Island, its services should be available to all qualified users (including non-staff members) and it should be housed and administered in a form which enables it to cope with this task.
4. Building of stock, current acquisitions, range of services provided, etc. should be decided on through close cooperation with the profession served. It seems advisable to recommend that this cooperation should be institutionalized (for instance, through the appointment of appropriate committees) and not be left solely to personal initiatives. (This comment is equally applicable to all mission-oriented activities).

APPENDIX A

LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED AND/OR INTERVIEWED

N. Barrow, Minister of Information.  
M. Bailey, Librarian, Ministry of Agriculture.  
M. Best, Librarian, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.  
K. Blackett, Ministry of Health.  
D. Brathwaite, Ministry of Agriculture.  
B. Carrillo, Barbados Public Library.  
M. Chandler.  
L.A. Chase, BIMAP (Barbados Institute for Management and Productivity).  
G. Clement, UNESCO Consultant to TEU, CDB.  
J. Dellamore, Technology Energy Unit, Caribbean Development Bank.  
W. Depeiza, Erdiston Teachers Training College.  
C. Depradin, Director, Caribbean Meteorological Institute.  
I. Douglas, TEU, CDB.  
W. Estrick, Chief Establishment Officer.  
H. Gibbs, Librarian, Barbados Development Bank.  
M. Gill, Campus Librarian, UWI.  
K. Griffith, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance.  
P.E. Griffith, Barbados Export Promotion Corporation.  
J. Harvey-Ellis, Ministry of Education.  
K. Haynes, Ministry of Education.  
E. Ifill, Barbados Public Library.  
C. Ince, Chief Information Officer.  
K. Ingram, Director, Libraries, UWI (University of the West Indies).  
K. Iniss, Ministry of Education.  
L. Jackson, Barbados Community College.  
D. Jefferts, Ministry of Agriculture.  
R. Leslie, Manager, Barbados Development Bank.  
K. Lewis, Cable and Wireless Ltd., Barbados.  
W. Marshall, Prof., Department of History, UWI.  
G. Medford, Ministry of Education.  
A. Musgrave, Barbados Publishers and Booksellers.  
W. Primus, Trinidad.

R. Reckord, Librarian, Ministry of Health.  
C. Rocheford, Archivist, National Archives.  
M. Rynd, Director, Standards Institute.  
N. St. John, Librarian, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).  
M. Sealy, Librarian, Queen Elizabeth Hospital.  
M. Simmons, Librarian, Barbados Community College.  
Smith, Architect, BPL.  
G. Smith, National Science Council.  
C. Storey, Librarian, Harrison College.  
E. Straughn, Barbados Statistical Service.  
Ch. Thompson, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information.  
W. Trotman, Principal, Ellerslie Secondary School.  
S. Welch, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.  
Willabus, Programmer, TEU, CDB.  
M. Williams, Librarian, Central Bank of Barbados (President, Library Association).  
P.A. Williams, Director, Barbados Export Promotion Corporation.  
D. Worrel, Central Bank of Barbados.

APPENDIX B  
BACKGROUND MATERIAL CONSULTED

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Dr. G. Smith. 1980.
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and Documentation Services (NACOLADS):
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1980.
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Markuson assisted by H. Baker and J. Alexander. Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.A.  
May 1978.
19. Libraries in Barbados. Prepared by H. Gibbs. September 1981.