

ALA Executive Board Warns Against Access to Circulation Lists

"Irreparable damage to the educational and social value of the libraries of this country" will be done if the action of U.S. Treasury Department agents in seeking access to circulation lists in public libraries is permitted to continue, according to the American Library Association.

This warning was sounded in a sharply worded advisory statement by the Association to United States libraries. The statement was issued by David H. Clift, Executive Director of the American Library Association, on behalf of the Executive Board of the ALA.

Noting that reports showed "the Internal Revenue Service of the Treasury Department has requested access to the circulation records of public libraries in Atlanta, Georgia, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the purpose of determining the identity of persons reading matter pertaining to the construction of explosive devices," the Association also was informed that "such requests were not based on any process, order or subpoena authorized by federal, civil, criminal or administrative discovery procedures." The ALA Executive Board's advisory statement recommends that U.S. libraries: (1) consider their circulation records to be confidential; (2) that such records not be made available to state, federal, or local government agents unless a "process, order or subpoena" is issued; (3) resist the issuance or enforcement of such an order or subpoena until a "proper showing of good cause has been made in a court of competent jurisdiction."

The substance of these recommendations will be presented to the Council of the ALA for adoption as the official policy of the Association.

The full text of the advisory statement reads as follows:

ADVISORY STATEMENT TO U.S. LIBRARIES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The American Library Association has been advised that the Internal Revenue Service of the Treasury Department has requested access to the circulation records of public libraries in Atlanta, Georgia, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the purpose of determining the identity of persons reading matter pertaining to the construction of explosive devices. The Association is further advised that such requests were not based on any process, order or subpoena authorized by federal, civil, criminal or administrative discovery procedures.

The Executive Board of the ALA believes that the efforts of the federal government to

convert library circulation records into "suspect lists," constitute an unconscionable and unconstitutional invasion of the right of privacy of library patrons and, if permitted to continue, will do irreparable damage to the educational and social value of the libraries of this country.

Accordingly, the Executive Board of the American Library Association strongly recommends that the responsible officers of each U.S. library:

1. Formally adopt a policy which specifically recognizes its circulation records to be confidential in nature.
2. Advise all librarians and library employees that such records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power.
3. Resist the issuance or enforcement of any such process, order or subpoena until such time as a proper showing of good cause has been made in a court of competent jurisdiction.

David H. Clift, Executive Director
American Library Association
for ALA Executive Board ■■

SALARY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A Salary Survey questionnaire will be distributed to all ALA personal members in October 1970. The Salary Survey is designed to ascertain salary information and to relate salary data to such factors as type of library, length of library experience, education of the librarian, type of position, and sex of librarian.

All questionnaires are to be unsigned; no library or librarian is to be identified.

All ALA personal members who are employed by a library or by a library related organization (as a library school or a library association) are urged to complete their questionnaires promptly.

Participation by a large percentage of members will aid greatly in the completion of meaningful library salary data. ■■