LETTER FROM THE LIBRARIAN

I am grateful to the Editor for her invitation to contribute to this first experimental issue of the Library staff's own magazine. I wish the venture every success.

What will the New Year offer us?

The Library's hope for the not-too-distant future is in Strand House (the nearby headquarters of W.H. Smith) which, if converted to be our Library, will allow the collections to be properly arranged on open access; more extensive and varied accommodation for readers; a reorganization of readers' services on subject divisional lines; more spacious and better working areas for the Acquisitions and Cataloguing departments; and for the first time, good lounges for staff and users alike.

This cannot come into being until 1975 or 1976; and it will not come at all unless the School raises a great deal of money. Though the Government has promised nearly £2 million towards the cost, we have to raise another £1.8 million to acquire the building at all; and then the conversion will cost at least £700,000 - mostly for heating and lighting.

The immediate task for 1972, therefore, is to raise the money. How can we help?

A group of influential members of the School is hard at work; and we can best help them, not only by supplying them with ammunition in the way of information - has anyone a tame millionaire at hand? - but by proving to all users and all enquirers that the Library is important for their work, is thoroughly helpful, and should be supported. The best way to get support for the new building is to give a first-rate service (in spite of all the difficulties) in our present one.

Just now work on the design of the new building is mainly in the hands of the engineering consultants rather than the architects. I hope, however, that it will not be many months before we are able to get down to the detailed planning of individual areas; and at that stage each Department will be asked to set up a group to see that nothing is overlooked in the design and equipment of its working area. Meanwhile, any suggestion of points which should be borne in mind in planning the new building will be most welcome to me.

But what of 1972 in the present Library?

We have an exceptionally large book grant; and anyone who has found important gaps in the collection should point them out. We do not have funds for making additional staff appointments; but any suggestions for improving our effectiveness within our present numbers will, again, be most welcome to me.

A happy Christmas and a successful New Year to all in the Library.

D.A.C.