The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) will sponsor a meeting entitled "The National Periodicals Center Legislation and Implementation: Next Steps" on January 18, 1980, at the Palmer House in Chicago. Among the topics for discussion will be the congressional legislation for a National Periodicals Center (NPC) and the Arthur D. Little, Inc., report on NPC, especially the implications of the System C model described in the Little report.

What is the "System C" NPC, and how does it differ from the technical development plan prepared in 1978 by the Council on Library Resources?

System C is one of the three model systems for the delivery of periodical literature that the consulting firm of Arthur D. Little examined in a report that it prepared for NCLIS last summer. The final version of the report has now been released.

The first model outlined in the report, System A, is the system of periodical access that would exist in the 1980s in the absence of a periodicals center. In this model no NPC is created, and the need for periodical access is filled by improved interlibrary loan and private document delivery systems.

This System A noninterventionist model comes out surprisingly well in Little's analysis. The report concludes that past studies showing the deficiencies of interlibrary loan as compared to a periodicals center "are mainly oriented to the economics and operations of ILL and library operations in the past—rear-view analyses that do not apply to the world of 1985 and beyond."

By 1985, when an NPC would be in full operation, the Little study predicts, the introduction of on-line interlibrary loan technology will have improved the performance, expanded the scope, and reduced the cost of loan activities to an extent not envisioned by past studies. In short, System A would bring about major improvements in access to periodical literature even in the absence of a government-sponsored NPC.

System B, the second model studied in the Little report, follows the general outlines of the Council on Library Resources' technical development plan for a National Periodicals Center. The CLR plan calls for the creation of a centralized, federally subsidized NPC with its own designated collection of both heavily used and less frequently used periodical titles.

System B, according to the report, would provide document delivery services at somewhat lower cost to libraries, would provide better assurance of comprehensive service (as compared to System A), and would make possible a comprehensive preservation program. On the other hand, a centralized NPC, says the report, would offer cost benefits only at a high volume of demand, would be susceptible to technological obsolescence when electronic information delivery becomes available in the 1980s, and, in the worst scenario, would present the danger of a unique "information monopoly."

The last model, System C, envisions the creation of a decentralized National Periodicals Center that would provide location information and network switching services for heavily used periodical titles and would create a central collection and delivery service only for titles not available elsewhere.

System C is presented in the Little study as a compromise between System A and System B and between the interests of libraries on the one hand and the interests of the information community on the other. From the point of view of libraries, says the report, System A is threatening
because it has the potential for separating librari­
ies from their patrons as the technology of direct
electronic information delivery becomes available.

Conversely, System B, a centralized NPC,
would compete directly with private document
delivery services and would have the potential for
taking over some of the distribution functions
traditionally associated with publishing.

System C, on the other hand, while not neces­
sarily the best system in itself, "appears to offer a
suitable political compromise between the stock
holder interests of both groups" (libraries and the
private sector). Under System C, private docu­
ment delivery firms would be able to continue
and expand their services to libraries. Libraries,
for their part, would have reliable access to low­
use as well as high-demand materials, a frame­
work for pursuing the goal of preservation, and
an assured role as the distribution point for the
delivery of documents to users.

COMMENTS WANTED ON
PROPOSAL TO DISSOLVE
ART SECTION

At the ALA Annual Conference in June, Betty
Jo Irvine, chair of the Art Section, presented to the
ACRL Board of Directors on behalf of the Art
Section Executive Committee a recommendation
(1) that the Art Section be dissolved as of January
1981 and (2) that the 1980 section Executive
Committee petition the ALA Council for status as
an Art Round Table.

The ACRL board passed a motion approving
the recommendation at its June 24 meeting but
later rescinded the motion at the request of
Irvine so that ACRL members not at the confer­
ence might have a chance to express their views
about the recommendation.

The report that accompanied the recommenda­
tion gave four principal reasons for dissolving the
Art Section and transforming it into a round ta­
ble: (1) the Art Libraries Society/North America
(ARLIS/NA), with more than 1,000 members, has
become the primary focus for art librarians and
subject specialists; (2) few section members at­
tend the Annual Conference programs sponsored
by the section; (3) an art section limited to
academic librarians in a "type of library" division
cannot represent all librarians interested in the
visual arts; and (4) a round table representing a
cross section of all types of libraries and library
activities in ALA would broaden program atten­
dance and participation by all ALA members hav­
ing an interest in the visual arts.

The proposal to dissolve the Art Section and
create a round table is a serious one. Members of
ACRL and particularly of the Art Section should
make their views known about this proposal. Please
send comments, reactions, or suggestions to Jane Snider, Art Section Chair, Herron School of
Art of Indiana University, 1701 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN 46202.

C&RL NEWS
PUTS ON A NEW FACE

Starting in January, C&RL News will have a
new cover. In subsequent months, the News will
acquire a new typeface and a new body design as
well.

These changes are part of a continuing effort to
make the News more readable, more timely, and
more informative.

In November the News started a "News Brief"
feature for late-breaking stories. By using type­
written, camera-ready copy, we can rush "News
Briefs" to the printer three weeks after the bulk
of the issue has gone to press.

Jim Lockwood, our Washington correspondent,
is now preparing his "Inside Washington" report
especially for the "News Brief" page. Because
this page goes to press at the last minute, he will
be able to keep you up to date on late-breaking
news from Washington.

Please let us know what you think about the
new appearance of the News or about its editorial
content. Any comments, criticisms, or sugges­
tions that you might offer would be most
appreciated.—Ed.