

Photograph Section

Because of change in accommodation and shortages of staff elsewhere in the Library the statistics of Photograph Section for 1973-74 reveal a decline in some of the basic activities of the Section. Chief of these is the reduction of the accessioning and cataloguing of new stock which is down by half of what was done in 1972-73 and three-quarters of 1971-72. Orders are down by a third from last year. These figures are disquieting because there is abundant evidence from elsewhere in the Library and from other institutions holding pictorial materials that the demands for illustrative material for research, publication, and broadcasting purposes has been increasing year by year.

Gateway House is a mile from the Library and our major processors, National Publicity Studios. It has greater space for housing the collection but its distance has resulted in a significant loss of staff time. Lack of staff in the Library's Reference Section and in the National Library's Microfilm Unit has resulted in the effective reduction of the Section's staff by a third.

Conservation

Work on the fitting out of ground and first floor rooms in Mayfair Chambers for the conservation laboratory, begun in May 1973, was completed in January. The ground floor workshop houses a comprehensive range of equipment for document restoration, and the first floor provides office accommodation and a small photographic studio with a dark room. The lamination machine, modified by the Physics and Engineering Laboratory of the D.S.I.R. to convert plastic laminate from roll to sheet form, is now under test. As soon as staff are appointed the long planned programme of conservation of documents and photographic recording of pictorial materials will be set in motion.

With the detailed planning of the National Library building under way the Conservation Officer's specialised knowledge is being increasingly drawn on by librarians and architects.

The transfer of microfilming activities from the Terrace to Gateway House in Dixon Street has exacerbated the already difficult staffing situation. Some additional staffing is essential if the microfilming programme, a matter not just of Turnbull but of national importance, is to continue at an acceptable standard. A National Library Microfilm Unit is being created to deal with all microfilming, and the General Assembly Library camera has already been transferred to Gateway House. The co-operation of the Government Printer in extending staffing assistance to the programme is greatly appreciated.