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Museum Services Act (1984): Correspondence 11

Peter H. Raven

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Missouri
Botanical
Garden



June 8, 1979

Mr. George C. Seybolt, Chairman
National Museum Services Board
One Red Devil Lane
Westwood, Massachusetts 02090

Dear George:

I have in hand your letter of June 4, 1979 to Lee Kimche and thought it appropriate to comment on it and some of its possible implications. As far as I can see, the votes that we took at Bozeman on budget level, excepted personnel, and aid to museum associations and the vote we took in San Antonio on multi-year funding, were accurately reflected in the positions taken by Lee Kimche in the internal HEW document that was circulated. In taking these votes, we based our discussion on what I would consider full documentation, which was prepared and circulated well in advance of the respective meetings by the IMS staff. I mention this because it seemed possible to me that someone not as familiar as we are with the situation could possibly conclude that the staff might not have been keeping us fully enough informed about these important issues or giving us adequate opportunity to discuss them.

It is certainly true that the memorandum as circulated did bring in a few new issues, such as the role of the NMSB itself, but it is my belief that they came as much a surprise to the staff of the IMS as they did to the members of the NMSB. In other words, the circulation of the memorandum was basically the first chance that any of us had to comment on these matters, and they were brought to our attention promptly.

As far as I could understand the HEW document that was circulated, it did not imply that there was any agreement between the various divisions that were represented and the IMS staff on any of the issues that were discussed. In each case, the opinion of the IMS Director seemed to me to reflect clearly and accurately positions on which the NMSB had had adequate prior discussion and on which it had in fact reached the formal conclusions that are reflected in our minutes. I believe this document is a precursor of the kind of full presentation you mentioned, which could be formulated only after the decisions were made by the Secretary.

Mr. George Seybolt
June 8, 1979

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As a rapidly evolving institution in a field that is changing on an almost daily basis, I believe that we are bound to be confronted with many decisions in what may seem at the time to be a rather precipitous manner. Despite this, I have been very impressed by the way in which a staff that has been severely limited in number has functioned to provide us with full and complete information on which to base our decisions. I am sure that with our support they will continue to do this as efficiently in the future as they have in the past.

Yours sincerely,



Peter H. Raven
Director

PHR:mv

cc: Mr. Joseph Califano, Secretary, Department of HEW
Mr. Hale Champion, Under Secretary, Department of HEW
Dr. Mary F. Berry, Assistant Secretary for Education, Department
of HEW
Members of the National Museum Services Board
Mrs. Lee Kimche, Director, Institute of Museum Services