Reference.....

Mr Lowdall

I'll see attd. letter & drawing. I am very much in sympathy with the proposal but I think the estimate of cost is wildly optimistic. and I don't think H.Q. would wear it.

My suggestion is that the proceeds of a social function such as a dance might be given over to this purpose and the work done by a private contractor.

May I have your views please?

H. J. P.

14.10.49

C.S.E.R.D.E.

I agree that it would be hopeless approaching H.Q. for financial cover, and at the same time the pressure of work in B.W.D. would not allow this work to be put in hand without embarassing more urgent work in the Est.t. If voluntary labour is available from within the Institute it would be possible to assist by supplying some of the materials, but the provision of time for the floor is not.

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possible. A social function or functions might be organised to provide funds to purchase lino.

At the present time our only avenue for placing contracts is thro' H.Q. (C.B.37).

I, personally, feel dubious that the improvement of environment alone will foster greater interest in the Institute and suggest that some evidence of ~~interest~~ improvement in patronage be apparent before much money is expended.

Lawsell
21.10.49.

Dr Cavanagh.

Pl see foregoing notes.

H.J.L
26.10.49

L.H. 88 S.P.

3688

Tel. No.—Waltham Cross 3301

Any further communication on the subject of this letter should be addressed to :
THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT
and the following reference quoted

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Your Ref.....

BM.

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY
EXPLOSIVES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ESTABLISHMENT
WALTHAM ABBEY
ESSEX

October, 1949.

Dear Dr. Poole,

The Central Committee of the Library and Sports Institute has been aware for some time now of a marked loss of interest on the part of members - particularly in regard to the use of the Institute's premises.

The membership as you know is large, and while it is true that some of the sectional activities, Cricket, Badminton, Dramatics, etc., are actively supported by groups of members, there is comparatively little patronage of the bar and reading room, which should normally be the focus of the social life of the Institute.

It has been felt and freely expressed that this is largely due to the unattractive and indeed depressing character of the premises and in particular of the reading room. It is realised that the present is not the time to expect lavish expenditure on new premises commensurate with the size and importance of the Establishment, but the suggestion has been made, and approved by the Central Committee, that a considerable improvement in the attractiveness and comfort of the reading room might be achieved at modest cost in labour and materials. A scheme of alteration and redecoration drawn up by some of the more active

/members

Dr. H.J. Poole,
C.S./E.R.D.E.

members, is described and illustrated in the accompanying drawing, which I am sure you will agree shows how pleasantly the present reading room might be transformed.

The submission of this plan to the Committee was accompanied by the offer of an almost unlimited (and certainly sufficient) supply of voluntary labour for the carrying out of such part of the scheme as might be within its powers and skill. As a preliminary, and earnest of their good will, a group of members have, with the permission of the Committee, sorted out all the books (some 3 to 4,000), separated out some thousand volumes which after careful supervision by members of the Central Committee are considered useless to the library, and now commenced the task of cataloguing the remainder. This work was seen to be an essential preliminary to the plan of redecoration which would involve an appreciable reduction of the book shelf space.

At the request of the Committee I have discussed the plan with Mr. Lowdell who has suggested certain modifications.

In the first place the flooring is not in good condition and would not in his opinion be suitable for smoothing and staining. He suggests that a hard wearing linoleum (cost about £30) would be best.

In the second place he considers that the removal of the book cases should be approached with caution since most of them are fixed to the wall and their removal might necessitate considerable wall repairs. He suggests the experimental removal of the small book-case between door and fireplace before deciding upon that of the larger ones.

In the third place he considers stripping of the wall paper would be rash and suggests that a light stone colour could be applied over the present paper. This with light brown paint (light oak) for the wood work

/and

and whitening for the ceiling would brighten up the whole room at small cost.

The hatchway to the bar, shown in the drawing, is an alteration previously and independently approved by the Central Committee and is not in itself essential to the brightening up of the room. Inasmuch as it would involve more serious structural work, you might perhaps consider that this should be omitted from the scheme for the present, or at least should await the decision about the removal of the book cases to be based upon the experimental removal of the small one near the door.

The modified scheme would then be as follows :-

1. Floor covered with linoleum.
2. Ceiling whitened.
3. Wall paper coloured light stone.
4. Woodwork painted light oak.
5. Small book case between door and fireplace removed experimentally.

If the experiment (5) were successful, showing that no extensive damage to the wall resulted, then the scheme shown in the drawing, apart from the flooring (and perhaps omitting the hatchway for the present) might be completed.

It is felt that a moderate scheme of improvement which could be given a high priority would be preferable to a more extensive scheme if the execution of the latter would have to be long delayed.

The Central Committee therefore, relying upon your interest in the welfare of the Institute of which you are the President, appeals to you to give authority for the carrying out of this modified

/scheme

scheme of alteration as early as possible so that members may be attracted to use the institute premises during the winter months and make it effectively the social centre which it ought to be.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard McCavanagh

Chairman,
L.S.I. Central Committee.