

In looking at the field of information, cost was a secondary concern. Some of the prices will inevitably be quaint, so should be viewed for comparison purposes only. Over time, the loose-leaf materials will include tables that make some of the single volume paperbacks valuable. At this point, purchase of more than one item may be required to have an adequate collection in this developing field of law.

In an era of limited budgets, each library will need to decide whether they will have enough interest to purchase the more expensive titles. Libraries expecting to use the USCCAN for basic legislative history materials will be unpleasantly surprised when the time comes for a research project. To keep the prices in perspective, a summer associate could easily incur far higher costs in a single online research session.

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Legal Information Management, 5 (2005), pp. 185–188

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doi:10.1017/S1472669605000800

Disaster Planning and Recovery – the Caribbean Experience

Hazel Hewison, BIALL Chair, reports on the CARALL Conference workshop on disaster planning, following the disastrous 2004 Atlantic hurricane season and the devastating Asian tsunami tragedy in December 2004.

Introduction

I wrote about my visit to the 2004 CARALL Conference in the February Newsletter.

The second day of the Conference was devoted to the topic of disaster preparedness which was very timely for the entire region given that the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season was notable as one of the deadliest and costliest seasons on record, with at least 3,132 deaths (mostly in Haiti) and roughly \$42 billion (USD) in damage. The biggest storms were Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne, all of which struck the U.S. state of Florida. Jeanne also wreaked havoc in Haiti, killing approximately 3,000 people, while Ivan raged through Grenada, Jamaica, and the Cayman Islands before striking the U.S. Gulf Coast. Frances and Jeanne both hit the Bahamas at full-force.

John Aarons^{1,2}, the Government Archivist from Jamaica began the day with a paper on disasters and their impact on libraries in the Caribbean. He outlined the geological and meteorological reasons why libraries in the Caribbean needed to ensure they had disaster

preparedness and recovery plans in place to cover all disasters (including terrorism), which were likely to occur.

He explained that the climate and geology of the Caribbean region make it more susceptible to natural disasters such as floods, tidal surges, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions, as some areas lie over the boundary of a tectonic plate giving an increased risk of earthquakes and volcanoes round its edges, whilst the annual hurricane season lasts from June–November each year. These natural phenomena cause significant casualties and damage to property.

Natural phenomena which either impact on libraries, or have the potential to do so are volcanoes, earthquakes, and hurricanes.

- Volcanoes

There are 18 “live” volcanoes in the eastern Caribbean³ and islands such as Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, St. Eustatius and Saba have live volcanic centres. There have been numerous eruptions on Montserrat since the 1995



View from roof of Sir Archibald Law Library, St. Georges, Grenada showing houses with plastic sheeting, but cruise liners Oceania and Delphin returning.

Pictures thanks to John Pethick of Wildys, who has been on several visits to the Caribbean and who will be returning in September 2005 to help rebuild some of the private libraries which were destroyed. Wildys have generously donated over 40 tonnes of books in 2005.



View from Sir Archibald Law Library showing part of roof over courtyard following devastating hurricanes.

eruption of the Soufriere Hills volcano which caused widespread destruction. Other islands such as Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, most of the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago are not volcanic, but are close to volcanic islands and subject to associated hazards such as severe ash fall and volcanically-generated tsunamis.

Currently “Kick ‘em Jenny” a submarine volcano approximately 1300 m high with a summit about 180 m below the surface of the sea, and located 8 km north of Grenada is giving cause for concern. It is the only “live” submarine volcano in the eastern Caribbean and has erupted at least 12 times since it was discovered in 1939. It is currently at alert level yellow, and there is a 1.5 km exclusion zone around it.

- Earthquakes

The region is also very vulnerable to earthquakes, there having been a significant number in the last 20 years.

- Hurricanes

The hurricane season usually lasts from June to November, although hurricanes have been known to occur outside this period. It is usual to run public awareness programmes on disaster preparedness immediately prior to this period to heighten awareness of the potential dangers of hurricanes and associated phenomena. In recent years there has been a trend for hurricanes to become larger and more destructive, with all but two seasons since 1995 being above normal, and causing considerable damage.⁴

However, although weather forecasts can give advance warning of hurricanes their movements cannot be predicted with certainty.

Effects of disasters on libraries

Whatever the cause of the disaster, volcano, earthquake, or hurricane, most damage to collections is usually caused by water.

The experience of the Norman Manley Law School at the University of the West Indies after Hurricane Gilbert in 1988, was used as a case study. The response to the disaster was studied in some detail as an illustration of the difficulties libraries in small countries face in dealing with disasters that affect an entire country.

The Law School is situated on the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies in Kingston and was badly affected as it was in the path of the eye of the hurricane. The library was located on the upper floor of a two storey building which was officially opened in 1975, and most of its wall space consisted of large panes of plate glass which sloped outwards at an angle. At the time of the hurricane, the library had no written disaster preparedness plan. It did have metal hurricane shutters for the windows, which were put up when the hurricane warnings were issued. When the hurricane struck, high winds of over 111 miles an hour dislodged two of the shutters and one of the panes of glass broke. Wind then entered the building causing the internal pressure to build up. This resulted in a whole wall blowing out. It landed on the roof below and a section of the roof was removed. Driving wind blew rain inside and soaked a large part of the collection, scattered books and papers, as well as damaging furniture and soaking the carpet. Fifty to seventy per cent of the collection was exposed to water damage.

Recovery efforts

Standard advice in dealing with wet books and other papers is to freeze them until a carefully controlled drying operation can be mounted. As the electricity supply was completely disrupted, with service being phased in on a priority basis over a four-month period, this was not possible. Storage of essential food and medical supplies took priority.

Although members of the library staff were able to reach the library a day or two after the disaster, they were not sure how to proceed as there was no disaster response and recovery plan. It took ten days for the National Library to learn about the problems because the telephone service took a while to restore. When the National Library sent a team to visit, they found efforts being made to dry some books in the sun. The humidity in the library was high as a result of the heat and the continuous dampness mainly caused by the wet carpet. Windows had not been repaired due to priority being given to the lecture rooms and halls of residence to allow the University to re-open. Rain fell daily and the books were continually getting wet, so that those which had not been damaged initially were now affected. There were few dry areas to move the damaged books to, and there were no commercial restoration services to turn to for help.

Attempts to dry the books were still made. They were interleaved with paper towels and placed outdoors in the shade, then sprayed lightly with a solution of thymol crystals dissolved in ethanol or industrial alcohol. They were then allowed to dry and the mould brushed off.

As a result of the hurricane, the law school was closed for six weeks. Even when it re-opened to students, service was limited. The amount of material lost is still not certain today, as a large amount of material had to be discarded. A fair amount was saved and had to be rebound before being returned to the shelves. There are still some warped and discoloured volumes on the library shelves today- the only reminders of the disaster which occurred over 15 years ago.

Lessons learned

- Prepare for the unexpected. Be aware of the vulnerability of buildings to all types of water (burst pipes etc)
- Have more than one preventive measure in place
- Identify the best way of preserving valuable or irreplaceable items
- Ensure there is a written disaster response and recovery plan which staff are aware of
- The plan should indicate the chain of command for decision making purposes

The problems experienced in Jamaica after Hurricane Gilbert were the same problems experienced after

subsequent hurricanes and show the importance of disaster planning in safeguarding library collections as there is very little time between receipt of a hurricane warning and its arrival.

SOLINET workshop

The workshop run by SOLINET (South Eastern Library Network) which followed dealt in depth with disaster preparedness for libraries. It outlined the various types of disasters that can strike and shared information on the steps that can be taken to minimize its effects and outlined measures to take from the time the first warning is received.

Recovery techniques for material affected by flood and water damage were demonstrated and all participants were given an opportunity to actually carry them out. Preparation of disaster plans was discussed.

This was timely given the serious damage to law libraries in the Cayman Islands and Grenada caused by Hurricane Ivan. In particular, the library of the Cayman Islands Law School suffered an almost total loss of its collection. As part of a project for Caribbean regeneration Wildy's organised donations to help make good these losses.

This was a demonstration of the need for an organisation to co-ordinate donations of library materials in response to requests from libraries seeking to restore their collections whether damaged after natural disasters, or other causes.

International Law Book Facility

In the last issue of the *Newsletter* I mentioned the International Law Book Facility which could have the potential to help law libraries in the Caribbean. The idea of ILBF, to provide recent, superseded editions of core legal texts to developing countries, was mooted after a visit from some overseas judges to Britain a couple of years ago. There is now a Board, chaired by LJ Thomas, with an Operational Committee reporting to them, with representatives from law firms, chambers, legal organisations like The Law Society and other interested parties such as IBA, Wildy's and Lexis on both. Book Aid is very involved in the process as the Facility will be utilising their shipping network to Africa. The ILBF is also developing its own network of deliveries to Caribbean countries.

The ultimate aim is that ILBF will take over from Book Aid the selection of recipients based on criteria such as open access for all, and will provide requested items as well as a core list of materials to these recipients. This means that some key titles (such as the *White Book*) will be subject to a concerted collection effort while guidelines will be introduced for general titles to be sent.

The Board will provide overall direction and co-ordinate fund-raising activities, while the Operational Committee is organising the practical details. It has been

a mammoth task, as all time has been volunteered, and it has taken longer than people had hoped.

The Facility has now been launched and Clifford Chance is likely to be the first (but not permanent)

sorting centre. There will be a website shortly, and further details of where to send items or whether pick-ups can be arranged will be confirmed at the next meeting of the Operational Committee.

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Legal Information Management, 5 (2005), pp. 188–193

© BIALL Printed in the United Kingdom doi:10.1017/S1472669605000812

Accountability and Dismissal in Ireland's Civil Service

As part of a drive to deliver better government, Ireland's Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977–2001 are about to be extended to civil servants. The Civil Service (Regulation) Bill 2004 when enacted will apply the statutory code of unfair dismissal to thousands of officers whose remedies previously lay exclusively in public law. While preserving the principle that civil servants hold office at the will and pleasure of the Government, the Bill provides for the delegation of power in this respect from the Government to Ministers and to Secretaries General. Mary Redmond, Consultant Solicitor at Arthur Cox considers the practical and, above all the legal implications of this stepchange.

Introduction

The Civil Service Regulations (Amendment) Bill 2004 (the Bill) will fundamentally change the employment tenure of civil servants in Ireland. The Bill concerns crucial issues such as appointment and recruitment, performance, discipline and dismissal.

The Bill provides the sanctions of reduction in pay, reduction in rank and suspension without pay for underperformance, after attempts to address the

problem through training or coaching have failed. The present range of disciplinary sanctions will be broadened to include suspension without pay.

My focus will be on the Bill's provisions regarding dismissal, on the practical and in particular on the legal implications of applying its provisions to unfair dismissals law. By "practical" I mean for the employee/civil servant and/or the employer/state. By "legal" I refer to the existing status of civil servants as well as to legal issues inherent in the mechanisms that will be used to apply the statutory code of unfair dismissals law to civil servants.