

Librarian criticizes fund cuts

In a speech given in honor of Carl Hintz, retiring University library dean, Robert Vosper, UCLA librarian, outlined the growth of academic libraries in America and called upon his audience to not allow the Nixon administration to "dim the lights in American libraries."

Vosper was speaking on scholarly libraries and the threat posed to them by proposed Nixon administration cuts. In his speech, he outlined the growth of the scholarly libraries in America and then went on to criticize the Nixon administration.

Vosper cited the growth of American libraries in three distinct spheres: the municipal libraries, the imaginative children's libraries and the scholarly libraries.

He stated that in the 1850's there were "no libraries in the US for ancient study." He said that even though the situation had improved by the 1920's, "it was still necessary for researchers to go abroad for intense study in a field."

The 1920's and 1930's saw the first real growth of American scholarly libraries, and Vosper contends that it was "connected to growth of graduate studies in America."

During this period private collections also became a major contributing factor to the growth of libraries. By 1966, Vosper claimed there was an "unfaltering growth of US libraries." He attributes this to the high number of US college libraries which excelled in their "qualities, breadth and width." Vosper mentioned the libraries of UCLA, Michigan, Cornell and Illinois as examples of this growth.

Vosper said that one essential difference between US and European library collections has been the "gross and accumulative policies of US libraries compared with the rigorous review of scholarship in Europe." But, he said, "American libraries have their good points in that they have used a competitive collection system, favored aggressive library growth, used local control and autonomy, and have had diversity and variety and have been experimental and imaginative."

In concluding, Vosper asserted that the present administration is trying everything possible to erase the efforts of the Johnson administration's Higher Education Act of 1965 whereby some semblance of a national American library system was created. The Library of Congress was empowered at that time to catalog every publication on a world-wide basis. It has since set up regional offices globally and has done a "fantastic job." But the Nixon administration budget cuts in the area of higher education will necessarily curb these activities of the Library of Congress. And, according to Vosper, the cuts "would dim the lights of the American libraries."

Vosper urged upon his audience to seek "open support from the friends and users of libraries." He said that if vocalism will bring action, the librarians should not hesitate to vocalize their demands for continued government support.

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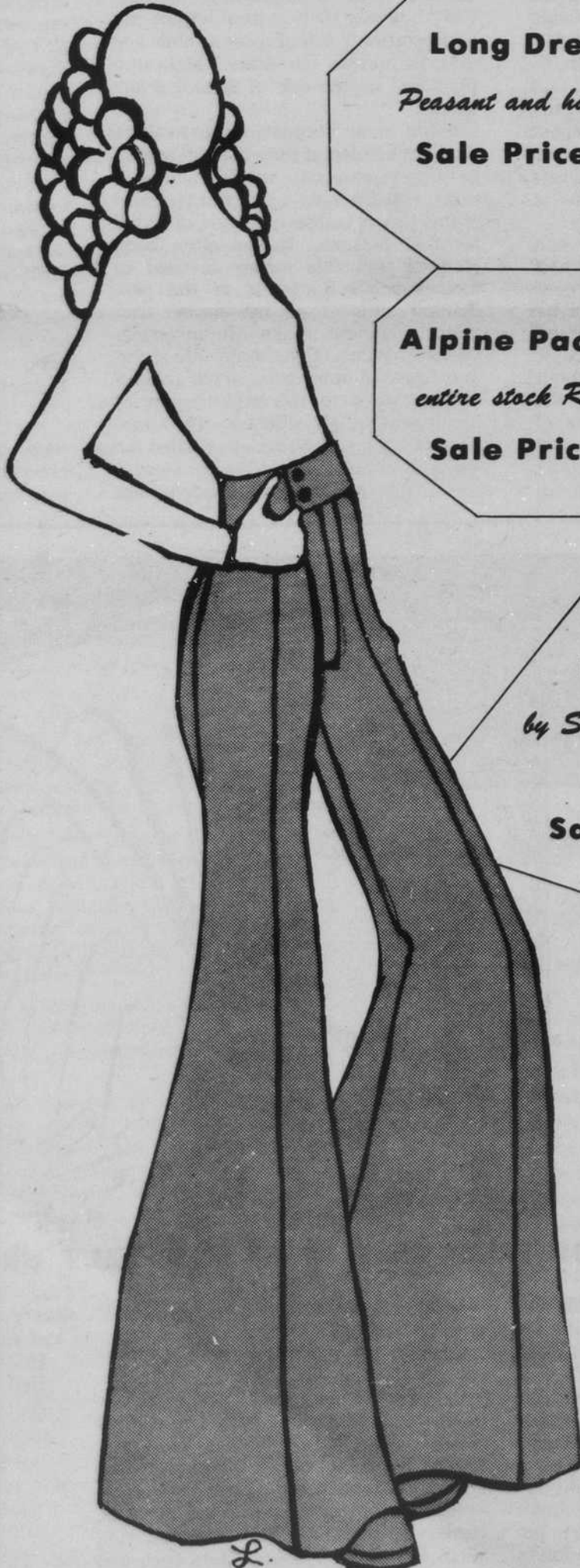
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