

of Spain forming a head. Broad and lengthy lowlands stretch from the north of France across Russia like a grey-green garment hemmed by the Ural Mountains and the glistening Arctic Ocean.

The point of view then sinks downwards through space and draws near to the surface of the perturbed countries, where the peoples, distressed by events they did not cause, are seen writhing, crawling, heaving, and vibrating in their various cities and nationalities.

THOMAS HARDY
("The Dynasts,"
1904).



Burke on India

ENGLAND has erected no churches, no hospitals, no palaces, no schools; England has built no bridges, made no high roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs. Every other conqueror of every other description has left some monument, either of state or beneficence behind him. Were we to be driven out of India this day nothing would remain to tell that it had been possessed during the inglorious period of our domination by anything better than the ourang-outang or the tiger.

(From a speech on Fox's India Bill, 1783).

THOUGH my life, like the lives of my contemporaries, covers a period of more material advance in the world than any of the same length can have done in other centuries, I do not find that real civilisation has advanced equally. People are not more humane, so far as I can see, than they were in the year of my birth. Disinterested kindness is less. The spontaneous goodwill that used to characterise manual workers seems to have departed. One day of late a railway porter said to a feeble old lady, a friend of ours, "See to your luggage yourself." Human nature had not sunk so low as that in 1840.

If, as has been lately asserted, only the young and feeble League of Nations stands between us and the utter destruction of Civilisation, it makes one feel he would rather be old than young. For a person whose chief interest in life has been the literary art—poetry in particular—the thought is depressing that, should such an overturn arrive, poetry will be the first thing to go, probably not to revive again for many centuries. Anyhow, it behoves young poets and other writers to endeavour to stave off such a catastrophe.

—THOMAS HARDY (on his eightieth birthday, 1920).

Milton and His Hour

METHINKS I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an Eagle, mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam, purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

(John Milton, Areopagitica, 1664.)

TWO DECADES AND 180,000 BOOKS

Dr. Scholefield's Work in the General Assembly Library

WHEN he retires at the end of November this year, Dr.

Guy H. Scholefield, journalist and author, and Chief Librarian, General Assembly Library (see front cover), will give up a lot of his time to writing. For one thing, he will compile another edition of *Who's Who in New Zealand*, and attend to the launching of his *History of the New Zealand Press* which is ready for publication. But although he will no longer be a library official, it is inconceivable that he will not often be found among some of the 182,000 books that have been his daily companions for 21 years.

Over the last 20 years he told *The Listener*, in an interview last week, the volume of serious reading done by Parliamentarians had greatly increased. He could not mention individual Members by name—that might be a breach of privilege—but he knew of one who studied everything he could find about economics. Despite that preoccupation, however, the same man also took home, every night, a one-act play or read an act from a larger play. In the general reading done by members of the House, great emphasis to-day lay on sociological and kindred subjects, and there was a very special interest in economics.

A Literary Revolution

What did he think of what might be called the new attitude towards libraries?

"There has been a tremendous development in the whole library movement in this country—a complete revolution," he said. "Not very long ago, every library was separate and independent, having its own collection. Now all libraries work together through the inter-loan system which enables almost any book of importance (of which, perhaps, there are only one or two copies in the country) to be made available to whoever wants it. That (he added) is useful and real co-operation."

Through the Union Catalogue the whereabouts in New Zealand of any book could be found. When he took over the post of Chief Librarian in 1926, the library was a purely Parliamentary institution. Now it was a research establishment for the whole Dominion.

Hundreds of students from the colleges and schools used it when working on their theses. Many visitors from overseas—mainly professors from Great Britain, the United States, and Australia—consulted its books on a great variety of topics. Visitors from America had spent many hours studying the life and work of Katherine Mansfield who in her time was a privileged visitor, and worked in the reading-room both in and out of recess.

"Gentlemen's Library"

When the General Assembly Library opened in 1856, it was known as a "gentlemen's library," where classical scholars could study. It still had something of that character, according to Dr.

Scholefield, but it had developed very largely on the general side. The first librarian was Alfred Domett, the poet; other notable incumbents were James Collier (one of Herbert Spencer's research helpers), H. L. James, who acted as librarian through the 'nineties, and who was a man of great technical efficiency, and Charles Wilson, whose specialities were Charles Dickens and French literature.

The reference library to-day is open to everybody, and Dr. Scholefield thinks its facilities should be more widely known. Students may use it all the year round and it is never closed to anyone making serious inquiries. But the recess privilege of borrowing books is suspended while the House is in session.

What Students Seek

"What," he was asked, "is the main attraction for students?"

"Probably the international exchange, for which we are the agent. This contains a vast number of official publica-



WILLIAM S. WAUCHOP (above) will succeed Dr. Scholefield at the end of November next. He joined the staff of the General Assembly Library in 1924

tions from all the British Dominions, the United States, and other countries," said Dr. Scholefield. "We are now developing facsimile reproductions by means of photography and microfilm. We have 8,500 volumes of newspapers in the basement, and these must be microfilmed before they perish. As well as preserving their contents we shall save 90 per cent storage space. The newspaper collection has been one of my specialities, for it represents a picture of the country."

There are newspapers going right back to the beginnings of each province, and there is *The Times* (London) from 1844 onwards, with its official index. In the last few weeks the library has received 200 volumes (covering the history of Poverty Bay) through the Pov-

erty Bay Herald, the Gisborne Times, the Woodville Examiner and the Patea Press.

The Copyright Act

"Does everything published in New Zealand eventually reach your shelves?"

"One of our regular jobs is to read the lists of every publication—every book, pamphlet and paper put out in this country is delivered to us under the Copyright Act. Our binding department does a lot of work on the premises, its main job being to bind New Zealand publications."

"What are researchers using the Library principally interested in?"

"I should say biological and genealogical study. *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* is compiled here; so is the *Pioneer Roll*; and we co-operate in producing local histories.

"What branch of library work has interested you most?"

"All phases of New Zealand history, including the collection of private manuscripts. Among these are the Richmond and the Atkinson papers, the Rolleston, Dr. Andrew Sinclair, Dr. Featherston, and Sir John Hall papers. I have been archivist and my work in that capacity has been mainly the salvaging or finding of papers derelict or lost."

Among other interesting papers are those of the New Zealand Company. They are of high value, as they contain ships' lists of early immigrants and many manuscripts in draft form by Edward Gibbon Wakefield.

London Kept the Best

Dr. Scholefield told us that in the search for material for the archives Dr. Hocken had examined many valuable papers at the Public Record Office, London, and had marked what he thought worth keeping. A ton or so of them eventually arrived in New Zealand. In his autobiography, Hocken congratulated himself on his selection, but what actually arrived in New Zealand were the papers he had marked as useless.

"This was rather a 'have' for us, for, naturally, the Public Record Office had decided to keep all the good stuff. Still, a lot of what we received is of historical value. And we hope to get, on microfilm, all the material held in London."

The main concern of the library in the last few years, Dr. Scholefield replied to another question, was to get its books more widely known. The ideal researcher was a man who believed, as an article of faith, that every question that could be asked could be answered by the library.

Dr. Scholefield will be succeeded by William S. Wauchop, who joined the staff as assistant-librarian in 1924. Mr. Wauchop graduated M.A. in Political Science at Canterbury College in 1912. He went to Europe in 1934, visiting libraries and art galleries at the invitation of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

In 1939 he was seconded to the Department of Internal Affairs as National Director of Centennial Pageantry, arranging script and producing pageants at Waitangi and Akaroa in 1940. He has been actively connected with the repertory movement in Wellington for the last 18 years.