

ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

THE resources of the Alexander Turnbull Library are outstanding in the field of Pacific literature, and the first duty of the Reference Department is to see that students of the Pacific area are given all the assistance that the staff can provide. The Library's reputation rests perhaps equally on its collections of rare and early printed books, and on its English literature section, but it is with the New Zealand and Pacific material that the day-to-day work of the Reference Department lies.

Although we are a public library in the sense that all citizens have the right to make use of our resources, we nevertheless feel justified in referring enquirers to another library if their question is likely to be answered more quickly and adequately elsewhere. By concentrating on New Zealand and the Pacific, we hope to render a sound service in that field of scholarship for which the Library is uniquely fitted.

The Library's public does in fact extend beyond Wellington and New Zealand, throughout the world. Enquiries which come to us over the telephone or in person are often of a routine nature and can be answered within a few minutes, but we are also called upon to assist a Government department in carrying out a survey, and the reference work involved can be considerable. The Library made its contribution to the Parliamentary Historian's investigations into the liquor question in the King Country, and to the assembling of descriptions of previous floods in the Wangaehu river, following the Tangiwai disaster of Christmas 1953.

Apart from local enquirers, users of the Library fall into two groups: those who work in the reading room on lengthy research projects, and those who write for information either from within New Zealand or from overseas. Among those who spend days, and even months, in the reading room during the Library's working hours are Fulbright students,