

during the year was a joint purchase in London with the Hocken Library of the papers of James Courage the novelist. This was made possible by a guarantee from the Endowment Trust.

### *Conserving The Collections*

The Conservation Laboratory, work on which was completed last year, is now operational with a staff of two, a conservation technician and a photographer. The recommendations of the Conservation Officer on future policy will require a substantial investment of manpower in conservation work and it may be necessary to reduce the proportion of staff time available for services to the public in order to find staff to work on the preservation of the collections. Art, photographs, manuscripts and newspapers as well as printed books are areas where a considerable investment is required if the work of collecting and organising is not to be wasted through the progressive deterioration of the materials.

A new position of microfilm coordinator was created during the year to oversee the National Library's microfilming programme. In Wellington the microfilming of unique material on loan to the library continues but the major activity has become the filming of current newspapers. The Government Printer has extended his assistance in Wellington to Dunedin and Hamilton where local newspapers both old and current are being filmed with the assistance of the respective public libraries. In spite of these developments additional staffing will need to be found if real progress on the microfilming of old newspapers is to be achieved before they are lost irretrievably. Newsprint containing unpurified ground wood, as most does, incorporates the seeds of its own destruction since this unstable material oxidises and embrittles the paper quite independently of storage and use. Microfilm provides the only effective and economical method of preservation for such documents. It has been estimated that to film all the newspapers in the National Library's collections would take at least 18 camera years of work. It would be unwise to delay any longer the filming of the worst volumes.

### *The Pictorial Collections*

The Library has three divisions concerned with the development of a pictorial record of places, people and events, namely the Map, Photograph and Art Sections. The map collection continues to grow and there has been greater use made by students this year, but the potential of the collection will not be realised until the scope and aims of the proposed national map collection within the National Library are defined and proper accommodation found in the new National Library