

WATERCOLOURS
BY GENERAL GOLD & OTHER 19th CENTURY
MILITARY ARTISTS IN NEW ZEALAND

This exhibition, mounted for the issue of the Gold Prints, will remain on display until December. It was prepared by the Art Librarians, Mrs Janet Paul and Mrs Sherrah Francis, assisted by Jeavons Baillie, the Conservation Officer; but, as is standard practice in current exhibitions at the Library, items were drawn from all types of material. Paintings by Gold himself are the main feature, largely drawn from the 34 purchased at auction at Christie's, London, by the Endowment Trust in February 1971 for 890 guineas, but the Library had previously held five works by this artist. Those bought in London were the New Zealand items from a large collection put on the market by his granddaughter-in-law. C. E. Gold (1809-71) served in the 65th Regiment (the Royal Tigers, commemorated by a local tavern) for 32 years and was in command for 15 years. He arrived in New Zealand in 1847, remaining until 1860, taking part in the Taranaki Wars. The 65th was stationed in Wellington from 1846-65 and Gold was here for ten years. He made many attractive watercolours of this area, as well as of Taranaki, and these are well represented, with other studies reflecting the fascination which the New Zealand forests exerted upon him.

A large selection of manuscripts also displayed gives some impressions of Gold and of Wellington in his day. C. W. Richmond writes to his wife: 'The Col. seems a pleasant gentlemanly soldierly fellow, with that air of perfect ease & quiet these men get . . . Mrs Gold a ladylike Canadian—a great many children but looks a young woman—just passing in appearance the culminating point. Dresses very well and is quite a Belle. You would have envied her black velvet.' But not all opinions of either the Colonel or his lady were quite so favourable. The Colonel approved of Wellington and when he was farewelled, with a purse of 150 guineas, he admitted how impressed he had been by 'a society where all the amenities of English life are to be enjoyed . . . where elegance and grace are united with ease and unaffected refinement.'

Much superior to Gold as an artist, much more sophisticated in his technique than Gold's appealing naïveté, was Colonel E. A. Williams, some of whose work is dramatically presented on large perspex panels suspended at the far end of the display area. Some of the very fine watercolours purchased at auction locally by the Endowment Trust in 1974 are shown, highlighted by large photographs blown up from detail of topography and troop movements in Taranaki, with highly