

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Pollard Report on Research Resources in English Literature

Professor Arthur Pollard, Head of the Department of English at the University of Hull, was invited earlier this year to survey the resources of the Alexander Turnbull Library and its potential for the support of advanced research in English literature. Two weeks were spent in the Library in mid-February 1977 as part of Professor Pollard's assignment during a British Council tour of Singapore, New Zealand, Australia and Mauritius during the months of February and March. The report to the Chief Librarian is prefaced by the Professor's comments on the purpose and validity of advanced research in English literature in New Zealand:

It is both true and right that the principal scholarly interests must relate to the local situation within New Zealand and the Pacific, but the danger of excessive concentration in this direction without regard to other areas of possible study lies in the tendency for those outside New Zealand to regard the country as provincial, if not parochial, an attitude which its geography and its comparatively short history within the European context can do nothing to discourage. New Zealand's connexions with the European context are established and sustained through its common heritage with Britain and the accumulated culture contained within English literature. It is therefore appropriate that this should be an area of advanced scholarly research within New Zealand and it is fortunate that the resources of the subject in the country give it not only an appeal to local scholars but the opportunity also of making a proper claim to being able to contribute to the international body of scholarship in English literature and thus of establishing in this regard a reputation for New Zealand that will transcend the natural frontiers.

Professor Pollard then goes on to consider the other resources available in New Zealand to support advanced research in English literature and concludes that the Turnbull, because of its own collections and its 'proximity to the resources of the National Library' is the natural centre for such research. He recommends that the Library in developing these resources should build upon existing strengths and should seek the most economically strategic deployment of its financial resources. Professor Pollard notes the Milton collection and the holdings of English printed books up to 1700 as areas of strength and outlines some strategies for development. He also identifies a strong core of resources in Victorian fiction in Turnbull which can be supplemented by the holdings of the General Assembly Library and the Brancepeth Collection in the Library of Victoria University. A systematic assessment of existing