

Government of New Zealand to do something about the bounty that had fallen so prematurely into its lap, they were seen to have come down on the side of Mr Johannes C. Andersen. Well: one could hardly be surprised at that. Anyway, by then I had read H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, that first electrifying edition in parts, and I was off in a fresh direction. Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, to be young, to be reading the *Outline of History* in weekly parts. Mr Andersen could have the Turnbull Library.

Let me now clearly announce that in celebrating this fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the public function of the Turnbull Library I should not be taking the lead. I know of only one man who should be doing that, apart from the Turnbull's own officers, and I have neither the intimacy nor the breadth of Dr McCormick's scholarship. I really know very little about Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull or the history of his library, either while he was building it up or since it came into the hands of the State. I have been a hanger-on, an outsider – though taken in with enormous hospitality and allowed a free run by the staff, even when some of my opinions on the destiny of the library differed from theirs; I have been a sort of profiteer; I have tended to regard the place as a private preserve of my own, to which I have been willing to allow a few other people access; I have been not at all pleased to find, once or twice, all the seats taken. You can be an outsider and still feel all that. I do hold it up as a virtue in myself that I never robbed the library. For when I came into it first I felt like Robert Clive confronted by the treasury of Bengal. You know that he stood astonished at his own moderation. I stand astonished at my total abstinence. There I was, hit between wind and water, once again, by a salvo of romance, practically sunk. I had only to fill my pockets with the most delectable pieces of figured gold, fantastic jewellery, and walk out. I could be gloating over them at home now. The confounded puritan upbringing that dogs so many of us! There is strong reason for thinking that in that early time there were visitors less restrained by the rules of an immoderate morality. Still, there were plenty of books left. You could hardly emerge from the front door with the Kelmscott Chaucer or Johnson's Dictionary under your arm, unwrapped, without being noticed by somebody; and there was a rule, I think, against taking in suitcases or cabin-trunks.

Mr Andersen was, also, as you are no doubt well aware, an author; and on a larger scale than Mr Wilson. He wrote a large book on the history of Canterbury, and another on Polynesian myths and legends; he had written verse of a rather embarrassing nature and was about to publish, I think, on English prosody; he wrote, at length, on Maori string figures and on place names; he was the Polynesian Society's editor, and had a large volume coming up on Polynesian music; he