

referred to. However, one enquirer was told by the Librarian that the Library was not one for historical research.

Admitting all the problems and limitations of staff one cannot avoid the conclusion that a chance was missed to involve the Library from its inception in a major responsibility. With the appointment of Dr Scholefield as Chief Librarian of the General Assembly Library in 1926 and shortly afterwards as Controller of Dominion Archives, a new direction was taken.

An interesting glimpse of the Library in 1922 is given by W. H. Ifould, Chief Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, in a report to his trustees following a visit to New Zealand.<sup>32</sup> Alexander Turnbull in his lifetime 'we considered . . . a most serious competitor with your Trustees in the acquisition of Australasian material'. He spoke of the magnificent collection bequeathed to the country now probably worth £100,000. 'The New Zealand Government has decided that the Turnbull Library shall be the archives department of the Dominion and are transferring there important records from all departments . . .' He noted that the Internal Affairs Department provided for the necessary additions to the Library 'but so far the Government has made no definite endowment'.

It was important that he should find out the exact financial position of the institution but after further enquiry concluded 'My visit . . . disclosed that your Trustees are not likely to have to meet for some time competition from New Zealand libraries and collectors in the acquisition of original documents of Australasian interest.' How right he was!

Trans-Tasman satisfaction at a collecting policy of restraint was understandable and of course was privately expressed. Auckland misunderstanding and contempt, however short-sighted, was wounding. Some time in June an article on the Library appeared, allegedly, in the *Auckland Star* (the original article has not so far been traced) stating that 'prominent people in Auckland' had expressed disapproval of the 'proposal to increase the Library' which was itself a 'mistake as it should have been attached to the Parliamentary Library'. The building was quite unsuited for library purposes although it would be most appropriate for a ministerial residence for which purpose it could be freed if the books were transferred to the Parliamentary Library. Auckland people did not think the Library was in the same category as the Grey collection but no one suggested that the cost of the latter should be a 'charge on the Consolidated revenue'.<sup>33</sup>

The Under-Secretary pointed out the obvious answers regarding Turnbull's will, the fact that the building had in part been specially constructed by Turnbull to house the collection, and even had it been possible to keep the Library with that of the General Assembly Library