

## HENRY BAXTER FLECK 1905-1971

On 19 May the Chairman of Trustees, Mr A. D. McIntosh, announced that the late H. B. Fleck, a senior architect in the Ministry of Works, had left his entire estate to the Alexander Turnbull Library Endowment Trust. In expressing his appreciation of this most generous and public spirited action, Mr McIntosh said that the value of the bequest was expected to be about \$30,000. In fact after duty and administration expenses had been paid the Trust will receive about \$45,000.

Henry Baxter Fleck was born in Gloucester, England, on 21 November 1905, and came to New Zealand with his parents at the age of seven. He was educated at the Otago Boys' High School, passing his matriculation examination in 1921 and later taking up draughting work as a career. From 1928 until 1932 he worked as an architectural draughtsman with Messrs Gray, Young, Morton & Young in Wellington. He returned to England in 1932 for some seven years working for private architects in the Cotswold district and then as a member of the architectural staff of the London Metropolitan Police. While in England he passed his RIBA Intermediate Examination and on his return to Wellington, just before the outbreak of war, rejoined the staff of Messrs Gray, Young.

He was on active service in the Pacific from November 1941 until July 1944 in the RNZAF, after which he joined the Housing Construction Department as a Senior Draughtsman. In 1947 he was appointed to the permanent staff of the PWD and in 1963 he was promoted to the position of Senior Architect obtaining his Registration in 1965.

During his service in the Architectural Division he was engaged on a number of important projects such as the design for the buildings at Laucala Bay, Fiji, in 1955, the drawings for Scott Base, Antarctica, and more recently he was engaged in studies for airport control towers and terminal buildings. He retired from the Ministry of Works in September 1970 because of ill-health – he had already undergone operations for cancer of the tongue with great fortitude and cheerfulness – and died on 3 February 1971.

Colleagues speak of his retiring disposition, his modesty and his conscientious dedication to his work which was of a very high standard. His shyness, for many, made him a difficult person to get to know although he had good friends in New Zealand and overseas. For much of his life he lived in Kelburn with his mother, who predeceased him only by six months, and whom he looked after and at times nursed with conscientious devotion.

I was privileged to have met Mr Fleck at the Library and at his home