

## ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY

REPORT BY THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN, TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARIAN

The year may be viewed as one of consolidation within the limits of available resources. Service to readers and scholars has continued to be provided while the acquisition and processing of the wide range of materials which make up the collections is noted in sectional outline below. The Trustees Committee for the library has met twice and considered administrative and accommodation problems within its responsibility and sphere of interest. The committee shares the anxiety of the trustees that adequate accommodation within a national library building should be provided at the earliest possible date. The move to the Free Lance building at the end of the year, while providing more secure working space, will not significantly increase the total available and still fragmented area in which the invaluable books, manuscripts, and paintings will continue to be housed for some years.

The strength of a research collection such as that of Turnbull comes not merely from its printed literature but chiefly from the original manuscripts it may acquire which throw new light on historical and other problems. The location and acquisition of these is a continuing process often involving prolonged negotiation and liaison with owners which may extend over many years. The library, quite properly, tends to be assessed in public estimation by the service it gives but its strength in resources as well as the quality of its information and help lies in a regular intake of 'raw material' for future investigation on aspects of New Zealand social, political, and literary history. For much of the last century the most significant manuscripts still to be found are in the United Kingdom. Direct and indirect search for such records is a continuing process. The annual report last year mentioned the need for a liaison officer in London to follow up these lines of investigation as is done by other Commonwealth countries. The fact that the Manuscripts Librarian in the current year was able to do a little in England and America, although on a private scholarship, and that the trustees and the Endowment Trust are supporting a visit of the Chief Librarian to England later this year is not an adequate alternative to a regular appointment.

The full implementation of the planned conservation policy is still awaiting provision of the necessary accommodation for the conservation officer although essential equipment has been ordered.

The staff has continued to provide loyal and efficient service. In a number of cases staff members are authorities of national standing whom the library is fortunate to have on its strength.