

even greater problems than previously. Acute shortage of space has precluded full implementation of improvements in the housing, treatment, and use of pictures as suggested by the conservation officer; and a small proportion of the collection has had to be moved out of the Art Room. There will be a considerable improvement at the end of the year.

Greatly increased demands are being made upon the art librarian, especially in the identification and attribution of original works for other institutions and for the public. Whenever possible, photographs are taken for record and comparison. The many photographs and lists obtained by Mr Grover when in Australia have emphasised the need for a closer study at first hand of New Zealand pictures there and in Britain.

Much more research is now being done on early New Zealand art by both historians and art historians. Local and overseas publishers, advertising agencies, film and television producers have all stepped up calls on the art collection, which has also been in demand for commercial reproduction in a variety of fields.

During the year approximately 290 written inquiries (230 last year) and over 400 verbal inquiries related to the art collection. Acquisitions totalled some 155 original works and 226 prints (81 and 95 respectively last year). Donations have been maintained at a good level. As with other material, the price of pictures has risen rapidly and the Endowment Trust Fund has been called upon to assist in purchases.

The most exciting acquisition, by private purchase in Paris after lengthy negotiations, was the 1851-56 scrapbook of John Pearse, a lawyer who lived for those years in Wellington. Many of his pen sketches and 75 watercolours give vivid and valuable impressions of shipboard life and the early settlement. Other substantial purchases were some 60 Swainson pencil drawings; important watercolours by E. A. Williams, Brees, Barraud, W. M. Hodgkins; further charcoal drawings by Sandys; seven significant Hogan lithographs and pencil drawings by Alfred Domett. All these added to work previously held by these artists.

Part of the H. B. Fleck bequest consisted of modern English etchings, Chinese colour-prints, and wood engravings by E. Mervyn Taylor. Several other bequests contributed a number of useful oils and watercolours. Mr Rex Nan Kivell presented an unusual set of Heaphy lithographs. The Hocken Library and Avon Fine Prints Ltd. donated the many prints published by them last year.

The inestimable value of the very large collection of historical and topographical art built up by Alexander Turnbull, greatly augmented by gift and purchase subsequently, is only now becoming appreciated. It is the most comprehensive collection of New Zealand pictures of this nature. Much research remains to be done, but the true value of the