

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### *F. A. Bett Collection*

When Dr F. A. Bett died in Nelson in 1957 he left one of the finest local collections to be found in New Zealand. For over 40 years he had gathered a variety of material relating to his city and province—over 2,000 manuscripts, some 500 paintings and sketches, and many hundreds of books, maps and photographs. The Bett Collection was bequeathed to Nelson by the Doctor, on condition that its Trustees should house it at the Alexander Turnbull Library until such time as they were satisfied that Nelson had provided adequate accommodation that was fireproof, waterproof and large enough for the collection to be suitably displayed. It was not expected that Turnbull would have custody for more than five years.

On 25 February the Minister of Internal Affairs (Mr May), opened the recently completed Nelson Provincial Museum at Isel Park in Stoke, a few miles from the centre of Nelson city. The Bett Trustees having accepted this building as suitable, the Bett Collection was returned by Turnbull to Nelson. The first consignment, consisting of virtually the entire art collection and a selection of the more interesting MSS., was taken to Nelson by Mr R. F. Grover, Assistant Chief Librarian, in time for the opening. The balance of the Collection was sent in early May.

Almost all the published material is duplicated in the Turnbull, but original items, more particularly MSS. and pictures, by permission of the Trustees, have been photo-copied to provide a record and to make them to some degree more readily accessible for research.

The Bett Collection is an admirable example of what can be done by one man, dedicated and informed. And it is still possible to form such invaluable specialised collections devoted to local history. But the fact that it has taken Nelson 16 years to provide safe accommodation for the Bett Collection shows that such collections do engender problems, and that collecting alone is not enough: the value of such material must be fully appreciated by the authorities and the general public, locally.

While it is with reluctance that the Turnbull surrenders many items, more particularly some of the very fine and important paintings, the completion of the long and sometimes embarrassing Bett stewardship is a relief to the Turnbull and its staff. At least a little more room becomes available for its permanent collections.

### *"A House is Not a Home"*

The "core collections" and staff, except Photo Section and the Conservation Officer, are now fully in occupation of the "temporary" home in the Free Lance Building, 44 The Terrace. The move began on Wednesday 27 December and was virtually completed to the capacity of