

# Alexander Turnbull Library

*Report by the Chief Librarian for the year 1980/81*

The Alexander Turnbull Library is responsible for developing, maintaining, and encouraging the most appropriate use of the National Library's research collections of materials relating to New Zealand, the Pacific, early printed books, John Milton and his times, English literature, and the development of the art of printing. It is responsible for the long-term preservation of the national collection of library materials relating to New Zealand and for the bibliographic control of New Zealand publications.

## THE USE OF THE COLLECTIONS

Despite the emphasis being placed on the Turnbull's primary function as a library for historical research, demand on the collections continues to increase and excessive use is still being made of the New Zealand collections. Further measures will have to be adopted to persuade potential general reference users to exhaust the resources of their local libraries first and to use the Turnbull's New Zealand collections only as a last resort. Consideration is being given to making copies of heavily used materials (especially those in demand for family history) available in other libraries to reduce demand on the originals.

The Library is continuing to encourage publication based on the collections as the most appropriate and effective means of making its rich resources available for the widest public use. Unlike some art galleries which measure success by the number of persons viewing the collections, or a lending library which measures volumes borrowed, a research library measures its success by the number of publications which draw on its resources to add to the public stock of knowledge. The Research Endowment Fund made several small grants to assist research for publication based substantially on the Library's collections. The Fund acknowledges the continuing support of the Todd Foundation and the Ilott Trust, and is indebted to the Minister of Internal Affairs for a further grant of \$10,000. During the year the Fund also received income from sales of the Cooper prints, published by the Fund in association with the New Zealand Wool Board.

Two major scholarly works based on the Library's collections were published during the year. In June the long-awaited first volume of the retrospective national bibliography, covering books and pamphlets relating to New Zealand published up to 1889, was issued by the Government Printer. The project, to provide bibliographic descriptions of monographs relating to New Zealand published before 1960, under the editorship of Dr A.G. Bagnall, OBE, will be completed in 1983 with the issue of an index volume containing addenda and corrigenda. In November *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Milton Collection in the Alexander Turnbull Library . . . Describing Works Printed Before 1801 . . .* compiled by Miss K.A. Coleridge to document the importance of the Turnbull's