

It was not until June that Wilson managed to visit Dunedin but the report which he made on his return strongly supported publication.

...Arriving in Dunedin on Monday night June 11 I waited upon Dr Hocken on the following morning and was most courteously received.... I spent several hours each day from the Tuesday to the Saturday inclusive, in going through the manuscript, sheet by sheet, and was from the outset greatly impressed with the industry, patience, and perseverance and most scrupulous regard for accuracy which have been displayed by the Doctor.

I compared many scores of entries with the originals of the volumes and pamphlets... in the bibliography. As you are doubtless aware, Dr Hocken possesses what is far and away the most comprehensive collection of works dealing with the early history and literature of this colony that is in existence.... His library, which at a rough estimate, I would say, is worth at least from £6000 to £8000 (actual value in the open book market) consists of thousands of volumes of books, bound pamphlets, broadsheets and proclamations also valuable charts and illustrations, and has thus afforded the bibliographer opportunities, lacking in so many instances to previous workers... for personally comparing, checking, and correcting his entries by reference to first sources.

Wilson compared the work with Collier's and the two other items noted earlier and remarked on the greatly increased number of entries, the detailed biographical information at the Doctor's command, the identification of pseudonyms, the annotations and analysis of the contents of the voyages. 'Were it merely a dry-as-dust record of all that has been written and printed in or about the Colony of New Zealand there might be some reasonable objection to it being printed at the expense of the state. But it is much more.' He proceeded to examine its value from three aspects, its comprehensiveness, its use to the historian and student of New Zealand history and its value to the general public. 'The publication of such a record as that to which the Dr has devoted so many years of patient industry and careful research cannot fail... to be of widespread interest and value. There is nothing like this work in print that in any way approaches it in practical value...'

Repetitive and unnecessarily prolix as was Wilson's report there was no question about his earnest enthusiasm and Hall-Jones authorised printing to proceed on 3 August 1906.⁷

It was almost exactly three years later that the completed work appeared.⁸ Reviews appear to have been mainly confined to the daily press and were in general commendatory and largely uncritical,⁹ seldom showing the perceptive appreciation of the pre-publication article by Stephens. 'Liber' in the *New Zealand Times* thought that the annotations although on the whole commendable showed a tendency to indulge in criticism which reflected the prejudices of the compiler. Hocken's comments on Stout's edition of Wakefields' *Adventure in New Zealand*, he thought 'somewhat discourteous' (and the reader will recollect that Stout was cited by Hocken as one who had commented favourably on his work); 'Liber' thought that if some items were