

PAPERS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The Alexander Turnbull Library has been given the political papers of the Rt. Hon. Sir John Marshall, former Prime Minister and recently retired Member of Parliament for Karori, and those of the Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Holyoake his predecessor, at present member for Pahiataua and Minister of State. These papers are a major acquisition for the Library's collection of the papers of parliamentarians and with Sir Sidney Holland's papers in the Parliamentary Library give the National Library a strong collection covering the post war National Party administrations. Sir John's collection of papers is nearly perfect, covering the period from his entry into Parliament in 1946 up to his retirement, and will in due course be a major resource for historians, economists and political scientists researching into the period 1949-1972, a significant transitional period in New Zealand's history.

The papers will not be available for general use for some time. They are closed during Sir John's lifetime, except with his permission, and access will be limited for five years after his death. A group of trustees has been appointed to control access during this period and thereafter access will be granted to serious researchers by the Chief Librarian.

The Cabinet papers in the collection will be specially protected. The agreement made by the Library with Sir John is that Cabinet papers will be treated in the same way as the archival set of Cabinet papers destined for the National Archives and will be restricted for 25 years.

Sir Keith's papers have been transferred from the General Assembly Library where they were deposited some years ago and are under restrictions similar to those applying to the Marshall papers.

The Alexander Turnbull Library has been collecting the personal and political papers of Members of Parliament for many years and now has the most representative collection of such papers in New Zealand. They range from the more than 200 ft of the Marshall and Holyoake papers through the 60-70 feet of Sir Donald McLean's (MP 1866-1877), Sir Harry Atkinson (MP 1861-1891, 4 ft) and Richard John Seddon (MP 1879-1906, 8 ft plus 37 volumes of scrapbooks) to the six inches or so of James Edward FitzGerald's papers. In all the Turnbull has papers relating to 15 Prime Ministers, 41 Members of the Lower House, and 11 Members of the Legislative Council, but unfortunately very few match the completeness of the Marshall, Holyoake and McLean papers. In general only a small percentage of the papers of New Zealand's Members of Parliament has been preserved and serious students of New Zealand politics are becoming increasingly aware of the deficiencies of the historical record. In an attempt to remedy this situation the Turnbull Library has been making approaches to the descendants of MPs and to some MPs living in