

years back, which was deposited at the city dump and covered over); some have been sold as scrap metal, to merchants with more money on hand than those persons or agencies who could use the presses. If anyone wants to print with a handpress for the rest of his working life, it's my guess that he or she will have to acquire a lifetime's ancillary equipment within the next 4 to 5 years. Very little letterpress equipment is now being manufactured here or imported. One major ink manufacturer has deleted a large number of colours from its basic list, but will make up special quantities at extra cost. A representative of that same firm has told me how interesting it is that some letterpress printers have found their high-speed presses will take offset inks very well. High-speed presses take 'soupy' inks that will run freely and easily. Low-speed presswork such as that done on a handpress requires thick spongy ink. We are now seeking ways to make our own inks.

I mention these matters because I don't see how handpress printing can take place in New Zealand outside of a specific concern for conservation in the letterpress area. Ten years from now it is probable that no new letterpress ancillary equipment will be able to be purchased in this country. The task of collection and conservation has to be rationalised now, and in my view it has to include the co-operation of official trade organisations and the universities, and have active links with small and private presses whose activities will more than likely keep the sense of the thing alive better than any other circumstance.

*Function, i.e. what to do with it*

It will be readily grasped that handpress printing is not an appropriate method of multiplying raffle tickets, invoice books, 'romance' paperbacks, or any such matter. On the other hand, there are many excellent manuscripts published by trade and university presses which also are not suitable for hand-printing. Further, many hand-printed books are far from serious in their intent and much hand-printing is done by part-time printers as something like a 'hobby'. Many hand-printed books are very conservative in design, typeface used, and binding, as well as in content. Many have been highly experimental in every facet of their making, eschewing almost every conventional practice except in having pages follow one another in succession. The tradition of handpress printing extends back in time *from the present moment*, and is more various and interesting than any sense of 'purism' can possibly allow.

What I'm saying here is that there is no way of asserting that *only* such and such a manuscript is a proper candidate for handpress printing; there is no mode of design, allusive or experimental,