

NOTES AND COMMENTARY

As a part of the National Library the Alexander Turnbull Library is responsible for the preparation and publication of the New Zealand National Bibliography both current and retrospective. The current issues are produced monthly and cumulated annually. The retrospective New Zealand National Bibliography, a special project of the editor, was commenced over twenty years ago when he was Librarian, National Library Centre. With the setting up of the National Library the National Librarian agreed that the Bibliography should appropriately be maintained henceforward in Turnbull which houses the national collection of New Zealand books and pamphlets and whose staff have a special interest in this material. The first volume of the major work covering entries for the letters A to H for the years 1890-1960 was published by the Government Printer this month. The work is to be completed in five volumes over the next few years, the 1890-1960 section being completed in three volumes. Volume I will list entries for the period to 1889 and there will be a final index volume and supplement. Mr P. L. Barton who has been working on the bibliography since 1964 has been heavily involved in seeing the first volume through the press. From the beginning of 1970 an increase in establishment has also meant an intensification of work on the pre-1890 section where are to be found many of the bibliographically and historically most interesting titles.

It is pleasing to note in passing that through the good offices of Mr M. G. Hitchings, Hocken Librarian, the extensive private collection of New Plymouth research material assembled by Mr F. B. Butler has been secured for that city. A part of the archive consists of a formidable assemblage of newspaper clippings which are normally a problem for librarians even of specialist New Zealand and local collections. The systematic indexing for over twenty years by the General Assembly Library of the current metropolitan daily papers is an indirect formal approach to one small part of the whole which will be increasingly useful as time goes on. Turnbull has also started the selective indexing of mid to late nineteenth century Wellington papers but there will always be a place for a carefully formed systematically organised private collection of clippings. What any Library can do is clearly limited and it is here that the regional historian or private enthusiast can serve not merely his own interests but future research by building up a comprehensive and well-arranged and indexed clippings collection. There are several of these in Turnbull as well as some inherited mountains of unsorted clippings which are awaiting a more leisurely age.

The purchase at Sotheby's in London on 17 and 18 November of three large lots of manuscripts and three small groups of maps and