

and protracted infancy. True, there had already been at least two outstanding bequests, that of Dr Hocken in Dunedin and Sir George Grey's gift to Auckland whose Library under the competent guidance of a young Scot, John Barr, was perhaps the most impressive of the city services with its Grey and Shaw collections. In Wellington, Herbert Baillie, a student of local history and former bookseller, was in charge at the Wellington Central Library. The reading room contained a surprisingly good general collection pervaded by a characteristic odour blended from stale paper, dust and dried sweat – unique and far removed from Lawrence Clark Powell's nostalgic recollection of Parisian Chanel and coal smoke. With its Newtown and Brooklyn branches it had a staff of about fifteen. The General Assembly Library with its staff of ten was the leading reference collection of national scope under the ministrations of a former journalist and litterateur Charles Wilson.¹ As the Library of Parliament it was obliged to reject implicitly if not overtly the periodic public suggestions that it was and should act as, the National Library.

In Dunedin the city's rate-supported public library was showing the way to New Zealand of the next generation but things were less happy at the University which controlled the Hocken Library, the bequest of Turnbull's old friend. We know that Turnbull was impressed by the public reaction to Dr Hocken's gift. Perhaps he took note of its subsequent history. One local school of thought considered that W. H. Trimble, Hocken's first librarian, had completed his task when he compiled the unorthodox and incomplete but most useful printed catalogue of the collection. Trimble was not amused when the University Council expected that he might take responsibility for the main Library as well as Hocken at half his former salary and word of his resignation may have reached Turnbull who at this time made the codicil² to his will which left the collection to the Crown instead of to Victoria University College. All in all the precedents for a generous staffing of such special collections were not encouraging.

Within a few weeks of Turnbull's death on 28 June 1918 Cabinet, in formally accepting the heritage, decided that the Library be called 'The Turnbull Library', that it be run on the lines of the Mitchell Library in Sydney, its management to be under the 'direct control' of the Chief Librarian of the General Assembly Library and its general supervision to be placed in the hands of the Board of Science and Art and, finally, that an officer be appointed to take charge of the Library who would be given 'the use of the residential quarters until such time as that portion of the building is required for State purposes'.³

The building itself in which Robert Turnbull, Alex's brother, resided for a period after his death, did not form part of the bequest and was purchased as a home for the collection for £9,133 with furniture and