

for his duties was wisely left somewhat imprecise he could move into any area of the Department where he was likely to be made welcome.

He was already using his talents, and a lot of his time, in persuading the New Zealand Council for Educational Research's printers that the Council's publications deserved the highest possible standards of presentation. He wanted something much more than the rather pedestrian attitude they had shown in earlier commissions and knew that if he were to get a whole-hearted commitment from the printers (nothing less would satisfy him) he would have to set the pace himself. His achievements as a friend of the Council, including the respect of the printers themselves, came only because of his infinite capacity for taking pains over the smallest detail and his willingness to experiment with others' preferences. These experiments, amiably conducted, usually resulted in a confirmation of his own judgment. But this did not mean that he was too innocent to question the printers, sometimes even to scold them, for their practice of charging against the job any time they had spent in learning their true skills from him.

John was drawn to a Department that could discreetly use the excuse of the country's Centennial for an ambitious programme of publishing, attracting to its staff such people as Eric McCormick, Oliver Duff, J. W. Davidson, John Pascoe and David Hall. John was later to recruit from his own students a clutch of officers equally lively but less deferential and, because it was early days for them, less distinguished. In Joe Heenan, the Permanent Head of the Department, he recognised this Branch's point of origin, and thus in more or less spontaneous fashion there began a fruitful partnership that lasted until Sir Joseph Heenan retired. The only interruption was a public disputation over the choice and the method of Anderson Tyrer's appointment to the newly formed N.B.S. orchestra, a rift skilfully healed by John's use of Cromwell's advice to the Scottish divines. Lesser men than Heenan could not have resisted this call for a return to good sense.

So John became Typographical Adviser to the Department and, simultaneously, the Research Adviser to the Alexander Turnbull Library was translated into the unofficial research consultant to the Centennial Branch. The first benefit, a lasting one, was the high standard of production in the Centennial Surveys and *A Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. John had a high regard for 18th century typography and had always preferred unobtrusive simplicity. So he persuaded the printer to buy Aldine Bembo and Baskerville type-faces for these two jobs and now, thirty years later, both series are still a delight to handle. But whatever success they had owed more to the care with which the typographer meticulously planned the spacing and organised the lay-out than it did to the choice of font. Getting the *Dictionary* ready for the printer,