

my remaining years as a researcher there are going to be exciting discoveries still to be made.

A surprising amount of material still turns up overseas, apart from Sotheby's auction rooms where we have to meet the market price. Recent minor examples were the discovery in Canada of the letter book of a Palmerston North land agent at the turn of the century, J. Copeland, and a large collection of West Coast legal papers from 1869 until the 1880s which came to light in Tasmania, formed by J. Perkins a Grey-mouth solicitor. In local history quite minor documents can be of use. We recently took custody of the surviving records of Messrs Levin and Co. Most of the papers are fairly recent and hence subject to access restrictions. The nature and complexity of others will mean that some years will elapse before sorting is fully completed. Among the minor categories were insurance policies over a century old and a number of trustee papers. I was dubious about the insurance policies but was smitten with remorse that I had even hesitated when I came to look through the dust-coated tin trunk. Among the policies issued in 1859, for example, by the Liverpool and London Fire and Life Insurance Company was an application from one Harry Albert Atkinson who described himself as a 'yeoman', was said to be 5 ft 8 ins. in height and of fair complexion; he had for a time suffered from asthma. Again the Wanganui agent's reports seemed to reveal aspects of commercial life in the river city that might be overlooked in a perusal of merely standard sources. Some important references for Eastern Bays, Port Nicholson and Wairarapa history came from a Levins tin trunk that hadn't been opened for 108 years. Levins was of course very much a family firm managed initially by William and Nathaniel Levin and then by the Pearces and Duncans. A most helpful member of the Pearce family put me on to a further small group of papers which he had rescued from an earlier purging of the firms records. What had survived are perhaps fortuitous crumbs but one of these gave what was to me an unknown insight into the kauri trade from Kaipara in the mid 1870s. But talking of kauri brings me to Mr Grover's discovery in the archives of the University of Melbourne, of the records of the Kauri Timber Company, Australian based commercial giant which absorbed a number of New Zealand enterprises. In the course of a visit to Melbourne last September I was able to have a quick look at this impressive series which contains much of New Zealand interest, and have since corresponded with the University Archivist about the possibility of microfilming.

Occasionally one makes the odd find simply by working out that there *should* be some surviving records. I was intrigued many years ago to discover in newspaper searching of the visit to Taupo and Ruapehu in early 1875 of the Swedish botanist Sven Berggren. After enquiries