

in sympathy, who simply likes delving for its own sake quite purposively and sincerely, but who is seized with paralysis at the thought of so gross a breach of taste as to write for publication. Perhaps he cannot make the effort; perhaps more positively, it is the purpose of Mr Gardner's paper² to lead him to a productive conclusion.

As Finberg spells out in the essay to which I earlier referred, presentation is of the highest importance. We are, of course, aware that in another place in general history the ability to write or even an attempt to cultivate a style is suspect. In certain quarters the historian who does so is under suspicion. The pendulum has swung a little our way on this matter and even some American scholars are trying to make their prose intelligible. But in local history, as in any history, there must be a narrative with its theme, argument, point of view and above all continuity. Extensive quotation, yes, but in a frame of reference. Undigestible assemblages of facts, if the historian can't bear to part with them or to let the gastric juices of his reflection and style play over them, may be salvaged in the appendices but no more.

It is an interesting speculation, on this theme, to cast ourselves into the twenty-first century and to presuppose an 'ideal' state of total organisation when librarians (there need to be many of them) and computers (they will need to be cheaper than librarians) will have had all the facts in the manuscript collections throughout the country, in National Archives and in all the surviving newspapers encapsulated in the crystal core of a vast data bank. The researcher having paid his dues—and they will be heavy—merely arranges for the programmer to work out the appropriate recall codes for, say, Maori-European relations 1975-2025 or Palmerston North 1870-1970 and at fantastic speed all the programmed facts will pour out over the floor or more likely into neat page sized sheets. There may be three people who are prepared to pay \$2,000 for the Palmerston North code. They take the facts away and there is a race from scratch to see who can produce the least readable book first. In other words there is a separate discipline of presentation of material irrespective of what the material is: and simply because the tasks of research are so heavy and prolonged—in normal circumstances—composition tends to be the last lap of an already heavy and lengthy race. The end result if seen in the beginning may normally be a printed book of from 40,000 to 80,000 words or roughly one to two hundred pages of text. There will of course be the Bushes, McLintocks, Mays and Gardners, who with good reason exceed this but for ordinary mortals, the resources of the promoters, the expectations of what the public can be charged or again simply time will dictate a more modest length. This is perhaps a rather idealised picture. In some situations a local committee will be appointed to produce a history. It will faithfully muster the modest local resources—someone may