

ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY

REPORT BY THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARIAN, 1972-73

The year was a most significant one in the Library's history, marking as it did the move from the Turnbull Building in Bowen Street to the renovated 'temporary' headquarters on the second floor of the Free Lance Building. The Library in 1955-57 had been located for two years in the Colonial Motor Company Building in Courtenay Place to permit strengthening of the Bowen Street home against earthquake damage. Nevertheless, despite significant expenditure on this reconstruction, overloading within the next decade had made alternative accommodation a matter of urgency.

The new premises, when all work has been completed, permit the Pacific collection of printed books and pamphlets (excluding some periodicals and newspapers) to be accommodated on one floor in one building, a considerable working advantage to the staff. Rare books, art, map and manuscript collections are also in the building, although the bulk of the Library's general and special collections—more than half its total bookstock—are in Courtenay Place, and the Photograph Section and Microfilm Unit in the Local Government Building. Basement storage elsewhere is still necessary.

The planning of the move itself was the responsibility of Miss M. Walton, Reference Librarian. The operation, a very considerable one involving the relocation of over 55,000 volumes and other materials, will be completed when the newspaper collection is assembled during May. It is hoped to retain the Bowen Street Building as a display and exhibition centre for some of the Library's paintings and also within an approved concept of limited use as a support-storage area for manuscripts and periodicals still in other buildings. The interest of the Wellington City Council in the retention of the building has been greatly appreciated.

The year also saw the first attempt in the Library's 52 years of history by one of the Library's Chief Librarians to locate and acquire or copy important art and manuscript material in the United Kingdom. With financial support from the Trustees, I was able to spend three months in following up lines of enquiry and making appropriate arrangements. The relative success of the operation has proved the point that in the Turnbull area a permanent London Liaison Officer can be of immense help to the Library's acquisition programme and provide an on-the-spot means of appraising material coming up at auction.

On the completion of my term as Chief Librarian I would like to acknowledge formally the assistance and support given to me on all