

position made by delegates from the Branch offices in other States to the Annual Meetings of the Society held in Sydney are illuminating and particularly interesting to the economic historian. Of recent years this practice has been discontinued, but the Chairman's yearly address continues to provide a commentary on the current state of affairs. A further indication of the changing economic pattern can be gleaned from a study of the records of the Society's mortgage loans, and from the registers recording loans on policies. The lapsed policy registers are likewise illuminating, for the number of contracts discontinued in any period because of inability to maintain payment of premiums is another reflection of the prevailing condition of the economy.

Investment of the funds entrusted to the Society - representing the savings of many thousands of people - constitutes one of its main responsibilities. A constant assessment of the financial situation is imperative. National calamities such as the depression of the 1930's and the two World Wars have left their mark on the Society. The political life of the community also intrudes, however great the desire to remain aloof for the Society is naturally vitally interested in any legislative measures affecting life companies.

Owing to its involvement in many different sectors of the business world the history of the Society could possibly throw new light on certain spheres which have as yet been little explored. The period 1850-1890 - the so-called 'Dark Age' of Australian history - is covered by the records, if somewhat scantily, and perhaps this is where the Society's experience may prove most valuable. While the processing of the records held at the Head Office is nearing completion, other collections such as the archives of the Society's solicitors, and those at the Branch Offices have yet to be studied in detail. The arrangement of the archival material has been adapted to fit the particular nature of the records. However, in the recording of relevant information, gleaned from an exhaustive study of the individual items, some aspects of the subject cataloguing system used in the Society's Library have been incorporated. And although the writing of a business history is the immediate aim of the project in hand, it is intended that the archival programme and the cataloguing of historical information be continued.

ARCHIVES SECTION

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

The Executive Officers of the Archives Section Committee for 1961 are as follows:

- President and Representative Councillor.- Mr G.L. Fischer, B.A.,
Public Library of South Australia.
- Honorary Secretary.- Mr A.R. Horton, B.A., University of N.S.W.,
P.O. Box 1, Kensington, New South Wales.
- Honorary Treasurer.- Mr R.E. Whalan, City Library, Parramatta,
New South Wales.