

preparation of preliminary inventories, no matter how small a percentage this may be.

2. These inventories should be designed as far as possible along the lines set down in the "Instructions for the Preparation of Inventories".
3. The inventories should be issued irrespective of whether they will eventually form the basis of a Guide to Pre-Federation Archives.
4. Consideration of the Guide, should be shelved until 1970 or such other time, be it earlier or later, when sufficient inventories are published to justify extensive work commencing on such an ambitious project.

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THE COLLECTION OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL RECORDS;

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The title of this talk is wide enough to cover a variety of treatments of a broad subject. It will be as well, therefore, that I begin by setting a limit and giving some indication of my intentions.

In the first place, the only kinds of Australian historical records with which I will deal are those that may be termed unique: manuscripts and original works.

In the second place I propose to make some reference to the Conference on Source Material for Australian Studies held in Canberra on 12th July. I believe that no discussion of the collecting of Australian records can be pursued usefully at this stage without reference to this conference. However, I should make it clear that although I was Secretary to the Conference I am in no sense a spokesman for the Conference or for the Library Association which was a participating authority. Anything that I may say that goes beyond the circulated minutes of the Conference must be regarded as a personal observation. Finally I propose to give some account of the collecting activity of the National Library in some fields at least.

The Conference on Source Material for Australian Studies was

convened by the Chairman of the Council of the National Library of Australia to discuss the general question of the collecting of Australian records, some aspects of which were of special concern to a number of Australian libraries. The conference was attended by delegates or delegations from the National Library, all of the six State Public Libraries, all of the ten Universities, the Australian Academy of Science, Australian Humanities Research Council, the Business Archives Council of Australia, New South Wales and Victorian Branches, the Commonwealth Archives Office, the Library Association of Australia and the Social Science Research Council of Australia.

No such representative conference of Australian institutions had ever before come together to discuss questions relating to the collection of Australian records. It must be emphasised, however, that this conference met to explore these questions and not to decide them. The conference had no plenary power. This was in a sense an advantage because it permitted and encouraged a free and frank discussion, without commitment on the part of delegations, of all aspects of the collection of Australian records. It enabled the representatives of a variety of interests to appreciate the point of view of other interests which might not otherwise have been so clear.

The agenda of the Conference included:

Review of Current Activities,

Future Collecting Activity:

- (a) Need for development of collecting activity.
- (b) Need to avoid financial competition in collecting.
- (c) Co-operation and division of labour between institutions in discovering and collecting of records.
- (d) Ultimate location of such records.

Use of Source Material:

- (a) Description, including especially a union catalogue.
- (b) Copying, interchange of copies and other measures to facilitate access.
- (c) Copyright and other restrictions on access.
- (d) Publication programme and policy, including resumption of Historical Records of Australia.

Participating bodies had been invited to supply to the Conference brief statements of collecting and use policies. Eleven institutions furnished written and others verbal statements, these providing a foundation on which the discussions of this Conference and future conferences could be based. This definition of policies was, in itself, a valuable

achievement. It did much, I believe, to clarify attitudes of institutions engaging in the collection of Australian records. If I may make a personal comment on this, it is to say that one of the aspects which has at this time come very prominently into consideration has been the growth in collecting of original records by Universities, a comparatively new departure in Australia but a normal situation in many countries overseas. This apparently new element in the collecting of Australian records is, in fact, a natural result of increased University research in the field of Australian studies. Obviously a University or any other institution engaged upon a research programme cannot confine such a programme within the limits of the records already available in existing collections. Beyond this the tracing and the discovery of records is in many cases an essential part of the research process.

One result of the increase of research in Australian studies has been an appreciation of the gaps and insufficiencies in many sections of existing Australian collections and consequent upon this a realisation that systematic collecting is a matter of urgency. It is urgent because the records are needed for current studies and because valuable records are lost everyday through the failure of their owners to appreciate the significance of particular kinds of records.

The period since Australia was first settled is so short that its history may be more fully documented than that of most countries. If the records are preserved systematically on a sufficient scale Australian history may be studied, if not in a laboratory, at least in conditions not available to historians of many other countries.

Nevertheless, and perhaps because our history is so short, little public awareness of the importance of records or of the value of particular kinds of records has yet developed. Academic interest in Australian history also has only grown to significant proportions in a comparatively recent period.

Consequently, the effort has lagged far behind the opportunity for systematic collection. Many records have been destroyed and many which still exist are vulnerable to unknowing or accidental destruction or to deterioration in unsuitable accommodation. Many of the records preserved have come to institutions haphazardly and by fortuitous circumstances.

If, therefore, Australian history is to realise the opportunity that exists, a planned programme for the discovery and collection of records and for the promotion of a "records sense" amongst records makers appears to be essential.

If these elements of urgency and planning in collecting are not yet fully realised in Australia I believe they will be before long. As records of types which a few years ago were not present in any quantity in any Australian collection become daily more relevant to

current research the researchers themselves are going out to find them: the records of business large and small, the records of trade unions, of farms and stations, of cultural, political and social organisations as well as the papers of individuals and families and of municipalities and governments. The need now is to preserve, if not the total record, at least a representative record on a sufficient scale to be scientifically intelligible. Whilst many of us, as librarians, have waited for such records to come to us, papers of great value have been thrown out with "poor old Dad's junk" or to make room for the latest installation of a streamlined business efficiency system. To our shame we have not even wept about it. Whilst we have competed with one another to pay high prices at auction for the spectacular item or for the collector's item, records often of greater historical research value have moved quietly to the paper merchant or to the incinerator.

This is the background against which the Conference met at Canberra, and, as one would expect, devoted its attention to the question of future collecting policy. The draft minutes of the Conference have been circulated to the authorities, including the Library Association which participated. It would be improper for me to quote from those minutes at this stage but I do not think that any participant will object if I emphasise the feeling of the Conference that collecting should proceed energetically, immediately and continuously, and that institutions and organisations of all kinds, local, state and national, should participate.

How such collecting activity may be co-ordinated and the other questions raised in the operation of a vigorous collecting programme remain for the various collecting institutions to consider. A sub-committee of the Conference examined some of these questions and prepared a report which participating institutions will examine with a view to discussion at a future conference.

One point of interest which may be mentioned at this stage is the growing appreciation amongst collecting institutions in Australia that separate principles apply to discovery and collection on the one hand and to ultimate deposit on the other: in short, the institution which collects and holds the records for immediate use is not necessarily the institution which retains them for permanent preservation. This is a concept which pre-dated the Conference and naturally influenced its discussions.

The question that immediately arises from the energetic collection of records by a multiplicity of agencies is how best to render these records quickly and effectively available for use. This also is the subject of a report from a sub-committee of the Conference. I think it is no secret that its recommendation was that a guide to Australian collections be compiled on a co-operative basis and published as soon as possible.

This is a proposal which must receive the warmest welcome both from research workers and from all librarians who are concerned with either the use or the collecting of records. Its advantages are so obvious that there is no point in my elaborating them to an audience of archivists and librarians.

To sum up this section of my address I suggest that we are now at the beginning of an exciting period which will see the development of Australian collecting of historical records on a scale beyond anything we have known previously. It seems to me of tremendous significance that this development has already been the subject of such a widely representative conference as that held in Canberra on 12th July. It is an indication that development may proceed systematically as well as energetically.

There are two reasons that make some reference in this paper to the collecting of the National Library appropriate. They are:

Firstly, the proclamation early this year of the National Library of Australia Act.

Secondly, the place which the National Library may be expected to have in the future collecting of Australian historical records.

During the 60 years since Federation the National Library's policies and activities in this field, as in others, have been a modest reflection of those of its model - the Library of Congress at Washington, the unofficial national library of the United States. The Congressional Library had adopted from Europe the well-established idea that a national library was an appropriate place to collect systematically a substantial record of the life and achievements of its people and to make it widely known and available for use. This policy was clearly accepted by 1911 when publication of the Historical Records of Australia was undertaken. However it developed until 1960 without statutory authority or support, except for the Copyright Act of 1912 with its provision for copyright deposit and the Petherick Act of 1911 for the acquisition of the first substantial collection of 16,500 books, pamphlets, pictures, manuscripts, maps and prints relating to Australia. The Act of 1960 which formally established the National Library of Australia confirmed the policy but added support and increased its responsibility in the following statement of functions -

- "6. (a) to maintain and develop a national collection of library material, including a comprehensive collection of library material relating to Australia and the Australian people;
- (b) to make library material in the national collection available to such persons and institutions, and in such manner and subject to such conditions, as the Council determines with a view to the most advantageous

use of that collection in the national interest."

The collecting policy of the National Library under this authority and as it has been pursued in the past may be defined in the following terms:

"to collect and preserve manuscripts and other source material relating to Australia and the Australian people, as a first priority those of national figures and organizations and of developments on a national scale or affecting national policies."

In implementing such a policy there are certain categories of records for the collection of which the National Library has a special responsibility. Amongst these are the private papers of the Governors-General, the Prime Ministers, the Ministers and Officials of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia and of the Members and Senators of the Parliament of the Commonwealth.

The Library has been, and is now, actively engaged upon the systematic collection of these papers although many of them must, as you will appreciate remain closed to access for some time.

The families of the former Governors-General have been approached, some papers have been transferred and others are expected to be deposited with the Library at some time in the future. The papers of the first Governor-General, the Earl of Hopetoun, are not available for transfer but are in the keeping of a family trust. Microfilming of the Australian papers will be permitted. Those of the second Governor-General, Lord Tennyson, have been placed with the Library on indefinite loan since, as family heirlooms, they cannot be disposed of outside of the family. These are open to access and constitute a particularly rich source of reference on the early history of the Commonwealth. Some of the papers of the third Governor-General, Lord Northcote, have been transferred and the deposit of others, including those of Lord Denman (1911-1914), are expected. An extremely important collection received this year is that of Viscount Novar, who, as Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, occupied the position of Governor-General from 1914 to 1920. These papers are not yet open to access.

Of the Prime Ministers, Sir Edmund Barton's papers are in the Library, those of Alfred Deakin will eventually be placed there, those of the first Labour Prime Minister, J.C. Watson, have been transferred. A very large collection of the papers of Andrew Fisher is in course of transfer and those of W.M. Hughes are in the Library possession, although not yet open to general access. The papers of Sir George Reid have not been located.

Of Commonwealth Ministers the papers of Sir William Lyne relating to the formation of the first Commonwealth Ministry are in the Library as are those of Sir Littleton Groom, Sir George Pearce, Patrick McMahon Glynn, Sir George Turner, J.A. Perkins, E.L. Batchelor and King O'Malley, with some others in course of transfer.

Of private Members of the Commonwealth Parliament may be mentioned the papers of J.N.H. Hume Cook, Samuel Mauger and J.H. Catts. Of Government Officers there are, to mention a few, the personal papers of Attlee Hunt, the first Secretary of the Department of Home and Territories, Henry Deane, a Commissioner for Commonwealth Railways and J.H.L. Cumpston, the first Director-General of Health.

This is not intended to be a full catalogue because there are other papers in all of the above categories of a later date which have been promised or are in course of transfer to the Library. My purpose is merely to indicate the nature of the National Library's acquisition activity in collecting records in these categories and to produce evidence of, at least, some success. There are, as you will appreciate many problems and many disappointments in collecting such records. Too often the collector finds that he has arrived too late and that the papers he seeks were destroyed last week, last month or last year. All of us must realise the need to develop what might be termed "records sense" amongst the people who create records. Far too often the collector finds that the records which have been kept by the family are of far less value than those which have been discarded because "those old letters" were thought to be of no value to anyone: such records sense in the community will take a long time to develop. We should do our best to cultivate it.

So far I have referred only to a segment of the National Library's collecting within the terms quoted a little earlier. It is necessary to say something of national figures in other fields than those we have discussed. What is a national figure? Is Xavier Herbert a Western Australian, because he was born there? Is he a Northern Territorian because he lived there? Does his writing make him a national figure? Did Daisy Bates belong to Western Australia, South Australia or Australia? Was H.V. McKay a national figure or a Victorian? The names could be multiplied but the answer would be no clearer. No two judgements would be the same. Most people whose activities are not confined by constitutional limitations one way or another are making a contribution to Australian development. Sometimes that contribution is of more significance than that to their state or local community. Sometimes the reverse is the case. This is clearly the kind of field in which the responsibility of collecting must be shared between all institutions and it is one in which there is scope for co-operation.

When we speak of national movements the position is rather less complicated because there is a constitutional basis which makes some organisations national and others State or local in their activities. Even so some problems arise. Take for example the Federation Movement where there were such bodies as the Australasian Federation League (N.S.W. Branch); the Federal League (Coolgardie Branch) and the Southern Tasmanian Federal League. In Western Australia there was the "Separate to Federate" movement of the Goldfields, a movement of great

significance to Western Australia as to Federation in general.

Brief as these references are they illustrate the problems of collecting in a defined field. No matter how you look at it and no matter how you may allocate fields there will be papers to which more than one institution may make claims of some substance. This points to the need for some system of frequent, if not continuous, consultation between collecting institutions. Whilst it is desirable that such consultations should be on a national scale, it is important that there should be discussion between the libraries immediately concerned as particular cases arise. This happens now of course, but I would hesitate to say that we have yet achieved that degree of goodwill and co-operation that all of us would desire.

One suggestion that has been made which would, in my opinion, assist the co-operative effort or even become a basis of co-operation. This is a register or registry, of declared interest. By this it is meant that collecting institutions, particularly research institutions, should register in a central record their particular collecting interests at the time. Such information would be circulated regularly to all collecting authorities. The sort of declared interest to be registered would not be "All Australiana" or "All material relating to Western Australia" but rather "The papers of X.Y. Smith, botanist". The implications of the suggestion and the methods by which it could be implemented have not been worked out. In the end the suggestion may not be practical. I believe, however, that it is one that should be given careful examination.

Some of the aspects of collecting Australian historical records have been reviewed in this paper. There are many others that command our attention. The exploration of them this afternoon, although neither exhaustive nor complete, does draw attention to some points which are of general relevance in relation to the collecting of Australian records.

If I may summarise them they are the following:

1. There is a great need to develop the scale of our collecting, both to serve research and to ensure the survival of valuable historical material.
2. Increased collecting activity and, above all, the development of "records sense" is a matter of urgency.
3. The effort should be shared by as many agencies as possible, local, state, national and academic.
4. Such effort should be systematic and, wherever possible, should be planned ahead.
5. Above all, good will and co-operation between the collecting authorities should aid and inspire the vigorous collecting activity upon which we are embarking.