

## NEWS NOTES

### THE ARCHIVES OFFICE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The past twelve months have seen some changes both in staff and in the general organization of the Archives Office of New South Wales.

The staff of the Archives Office is attached for duty from the Public Library of New South Wales. This follows a common pattern in New South Wales and is a convenient administrative arrangement especially in the early stages of development of the Archives Office, for it allows some interchange of appropriate staff between the two institutions. The Archives Authority of New South Wales is a separate statutory corporation, but there is necessarily and desirably the closest co-operation between the Authority on the one hand and the Trustees of the Public Library on the other.

A salaries agreement made in 1962 with the Public Service Board for officers of the Public Library of New South Wales provided, for the first time, for a Senior Archivist among the senior positions on the establishment. Mr. R. F. Doust was appointed to this position.

The total staff establishment of the Archives Office (including also the Government Records Repository which stores semi-current records on behalf of public offices of the State and where five officers are employed full-time) now numbers 19. These are :

- Senior Archivist
- 6 Archives Officers
- 6 Records Attendants
- 2 Junior Clerks
- 2 Junior Attendants
- 1 Stenographer
- 1 Typist

State archives and some semi-current records which are of permanent value are at present stored in a specially equipped wing of the Public Library Building, which is fireproof and provides carefully controlled conditions of temperature and humidity. Most semi-current records stored on behalf of public officers are however in the Government Records Repository which is housed in an unsatisfactory timber building at Alexandria, an industrial suburb.

At a place about 30 miles west of Sydney it is proposed to erect fireproof air-conditioned buildings as needed to store in the first instance semi-current records of departments; it is probable that at some time in the future all but the most valuable and the most used of the State archives will also be housed on this site.

The Public Library building now houses over 12,000 feet of records which have been formally transferred as State archives, together with about 19,000 feet of semi-current records which may be of value for research purposes and which may at some time in the future become State archives. The Records Repository at present contains over 53,000 feet of semi-current records.

The use of State archives has increased considerably in recent years, as has the file reference service for semi-current records of public offices. In 1961, 5,311 archives and 289 archival maps were issued for use; in 1962, 6,307 archives and 364

archival maps were issued for use; and it is clear that these figures will be substantially exceeded in 1963. In the Government Records Repository in 1961 reference was made to 27,253 boxes containing records; the comparable figure for 1962 was 36,778; and in 1963 the figure will be considerably in excess of 40,000.

## QUEENSLAND STATE ARCHIVES

Miss Annette P. Harvey, B.A., has joined the staff of the Queensland State Archives.

The entire holdings of the Queensland State Archives are being re-organised in record groups. There is an article dealing with our re-classification in this issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES

The South Australian Archives reports that Mr. B. S. Baldwin has returned to France, and is proceeding with the microfilm copying of material of interest to South Australian history. Already the Archives has received a small quantity of film relating to Colonel William Light, Captain Matthew Flinders, and Hyacinthe and Louis Antoine de Bougainville. All records in the French National Archives relating to the Baudin expedition are being filmed, and some other material relating to the same expedition as found in other institutions, both in Paris and outside.

An issue of *South Australiana* has appeared in time for the Adelaide Festival of the Arts. There is a Memoir of George Cockburn Henderson, by Mrs. M. R. Casson, a transcript of some of the pages of a diary of James Coutts Crawford, by D. H. Pike, and an article on Colonel William Light's escape from France, by David Elder.

## TASMANIAN ARCHIVES

The case *Eldershaw v. MacGinnis* was heard in the Court of Petty Sessions, Hobart, on 29 October last, before Mr. R. F. Turner, Stipendiary Magistrate. D. A. Burton, of the Crown Law Department was for the plaintiff and W. C. Hodgman, Q.C. for the defendant. The following would I think be a fair outline:

The first case in Australia under a provision existing in the statutes under which three State archival institutions function, was heard in Tasmania in October. The Archives Officer under the Tasmanian Public Records Act, 1943, Mr. P. R. Eldershaw, was attempting to retrieve from the Port Arthur Museum certain documents, in his opinion public records, relating to the Colonial convict and police administration. Seventeen documents were in question; two Police Department items were of the same kind, a volume of proceedings before Courts of Petty Sessions and loose folios from either the same volume or another. One of the Convict Department items bore the "received" stamp of the Probation Department (the 1842 name for the convict administration), and another was a nominal list of convicts, addressed to the

Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania. The other documents related to the shipment of convicts to Tasmania and to penal stations on Tasman's Peninsula.

Counsel for the defence objected to the Crown's attempt to lead evidence as to the provenance of the records, and the Magistrate upheld all such objections. In cross-examination the Archives Officer was unable to prove to the Court's satisfaction that any of the records produced to him in Court (including the one addressed to the Lieutenant-Governor and that bearing a received stamp) were in fact public records, that they bore upon them any mark proving that they had ever been the property of a public authority as defined by the Act. The defence counsel, in his submission that there was no case to answer, asserted that any pre-1855 document could not be shown to be a public record of the State of Tasmania.

The Magistrate dismissed the case. The Tasmanian authorities are now considering the amendment of the Public Records Act.