

## THE OPERATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

by Graeme Powell, B.A.

Editor's note. A letter from the pen of Mr John Metcalfe, former Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, printed elsewhere in this issue (letters, p. 17) comments on the use of the term "Commonwealth National Library", and takes issue with Mr Powell, the author of this present article, for his use of that term in an article in *Archives and Manuscripts* volume 4, no. 5, November 1971, entitled "Origins of the Australian Joint Copying Project." Though the Editor defers to the wide experience and detailed knowledge of Mr Metcalfe in other matters, he must confess to being unrepentant in this question of the name "Commonwealth National Library" when used in reference to the institution which became the National Library of Australia in 1960. It is true, of course, that "Commonwealth National Library" had no basis in statute. However, the term is justified by usage. Its adoption is consistent with other editorial practices of the journal; for instance, the term "Queensland State Archives" has no statutory justification, but refers to an institution the reality of which can be guaranteed.

Editor

### The Administration of the Project

In the early years of this century the Commonwealth National Library and the Public Library of N.S.W. had taken the initiative in building up strong collections of primary source materials on the history of Australia and also in copying and publishing British records relating to Australia. The common interest of the two libraries in the collecting of historical records was finally recognized when, in October 1945, they drew up an agreement which has formed the basis of the Australian Joint Copying Project up to the present day. The agreement stipulated that the National Library and the Public Library of N.S.W. (PLNSW) would be equal participants in the copying of records of Australian interest in the Public Record Office in London and in other institutions in Britain and Europe.

Many libraries and archives in Australia, New Zealand and other countries have acquired microfilm produced by the Australian Joint Copying Project. Four of the State Libraries in Australia and the National Library of New Zealand have contributed to the cost of the negative film. In 1949, 1953 and 1955 conferences of the National Library and the State Libraries discussed the Joint Copying Project and made a number of decisions on the order of filming and the nature and extent of participation by the various libraries in the Project. In later years AACOBs considered several schemes for describing and indexing the AJCP microfilm. Throughout the twenty seven years of the Project the librarians of State and university libraries in Australia and leading libraries in New Zealand, Malaysia and other countries have frequently written to the National Librarian suggesting classes of official records or private collections that could be filmed. These suggestions have often been adopted.

Nevertheless, the pre-eminent position of the National Library and the PLNSW in the Project has remained unaltered. At conferences of the two libraries in 1945, 1948, 1951, 1958 and 1970, and in regular correspondence and discussions between their senior staff, many of the major decisions have been reached on the participation of other libraries, the geographical area of the Project, the order of filming, and the staffing and financing of the Project. The suggestions of officers in London on these subjects have always been considered jointly by the two libraries. The National Library and the PLNSW bought the camera which was used in the Public Record Office for 22 years, and they have paid the major portion of the cost of the negatives and the salaries of almost all the officers involved in the Project. Moreover, they are the only libraries which hold complete sets of the microfilm.

The 1945 agreement stated that copying would be supervised by the National Library Liaison Officer in London. Until 1960 the Liaison Officer carried out all negotiations with the Public Record Office and other institutions, societies and families which held papers of Australian interest. Most of the decisions about the order of filming in the Public Record Office originated in discussions between the Liaison Officer and the staff of the P.R.O. The Liaison Officer could devote little time to the detailed searching of those classes of records which were filmed selectively and this work was done by his deputy, by temporary searchers, and by the London representatives of the Library of New South Wales (by which name the PLNSW became known in 1969) and the National Library of New Zealand.

In 1958 a conference between the Project's principal partners agreed that an officer should be appointed 'to take charge of the Project in London as his sole duty, his salary to be shared by the two libraries.'<sup>1</sup> The first AJCP Officer began work in July 1960. Although responsible to the National Library Liaison Officer, who remains in charge of the financial and technical aspects of the Project, the AJCP Officer reports directly to the two libraries in Australia. As with the Liaison Officer in the earlier period, the AJCP Officer is allowed a good deal of initiative in negotiating with institutions and individuals and in determining the order of copying. Assistance in searching is provided by officers of the National Library and the Library of New South Wales and by temporary searchers. In 1971 a second full-time officer was appointed to the Project.

#### Participation by Libraries in the Project

In 1939 when the PLNSW and the National Library separately put forward proposals to microfilm historical records in Britain, they each stated that positive copies of all the film would be made available to the State Libraries. Ten years later, shortly after filming commenced, the two libraries agreed that the State Libraries should be encouraged to participate in the Project.<sup>2</sup>

1. Minutes of a meeting of representatives of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales and the Commonwealth National Library Committee, Sydney, 19 Sept. 1958.
2. Minutes of a meeting of representatives of the Commonwealth National Library and the Mitchell Library, Canberra, 1 June, 1949.

At a conference of librarians held in Canberra in June 1949, H.L. White and J.W. Metcalfe outlined the Project and urged the State Libraries to purchase complete sets of the PRO microfilm. They predicted that the pre-1860 filming would be completed in five years. The offer was on an 'all or nothing' basis on the grounds that it would be unfair to a Queensland student, for instance, if only records relating specifically to Queensland were available in Brisbane. This argument was accepted by the State Librarians with the exception of G.H. Pitt, from South Australia, who asserted that his library had to restrict itself to South Australiana. In this field the Project offered at great cost very little that would not already be held by the South Australian Archives. <sup>3</sup>

In the next six months the Victorian, Queensland and Tasmanian State Libraries <sup>4</sup> agreed to become full participants in the Project. <sup>5</sup> In addition to the cost of their positives they would each pay one tenth of the cost of the negative copy. The Library Board of Western Australia considered the Project to be too expensive <sup>6</sup> and the State Library of South Australia, following Pitt's advice, also declined to participate. <sup>7</sup>

The degree of participation by the State Libraries has changed several times over the years. In 1953 Pitt wrote that his library wished to acquire the South Australian portion of the microfilm. His request was considered by a conference of the National and State Libraries later in the year and it was decided that the South Australian and Western Australian State Libraries could obtain the classes relating specifically to those States. <sup>8</sup> In 1956 the State Library in Western Australia decided to become a full participant in the Project <sup>9</sup> and has subsequently paid one tenth of the cost of the negatives. Meanwhile the State Library of Tasmania had withdrawn from the Project with the completion of the pre-1860 filming and it was not until 1969 that it began to acquire some of the post-1860 microfilm.

3. Minutes of a conference of representatives of the Commonwealth National Library, Mitchell Library, and the State Libraries, Canberra, 20-21 June, 1949.
4. To avoid confusion arising from the changes in the names of most of the State Libraries over the past 20 years, I have used in the text the names which they had adopted by 1972. However, the Library of NSW (formerly the Public Library of NSW) enters into the narrative so frequently, I have adopted the abbreviation PLNSW when describing events of the period when this Library had the fuller name, as LNSW would have been a meaningless acronym.
5. J.L. Stapleton (State Librarian, Public Library of Queensland), to H.L. White (National Librarian), 15 Aug., 1949; J.D.A. Collier (State Librarian, State Library of Tasmania) to White, 30 Jan., 1950; C.A. Macallum (Chief Librarian, Public Library of Victoria) to White, 4 April, 1950.
6. J.S. Battye (Principal Librarian, Public Library of Western Australia) to White, 16 Aug. 1949.
7. G.H. Pitt (Principal Librarian, Public Library of South Australia) to White, 13 July, 1949.
8. Minutes of a conference of the Commonwealth National Library and the State Libraries, Canberra, 9-10 Nov., 1953.
9. F.A. Sharr (State Librarian, Library Board of Western Australia) to White, 4 April, 1956.

The 1949 conference resolved that the New Zealand Government should be asked to co-operate in the Project and in 1950 the National Library asked the Department of External Affairs to carry out the negotiations through diplomatic channels. <sup>10</sup> Three years elapsed before the New Zealand Government agreed to participate by purchasing material relating to New Zealand and the Pacific both in the Public Record Office and in other institutions. <sup>11</sup> New Zealand has shared equally with the National Library and the PLNSW the cost of the negatives of the non-Australian portion of the material filmed. Copies of official records have been deposited in the New Zealand National Archives and private papers in the Alexander Turnbull Library. After 1956 officers of both institutions did much of the searching for New Zealand material in the PRO and all of the searching of the Church Missionary Society and Methodist Missionary Society records. In recent years the Alexander Turnbull Library has acquired copies of many of the negatives of New Zealand microfilm and it is increasingly responsible for the distribution of positives to other New Zealand libraries.

A number of other libraries have purchased sections of the Joint Copying Project microfilm. In Australia the largest sets are held by New England University Library and Monash University Library, while other institutions outside Australia which hold some of the microfilm include the University of Papua and New Guinea Library, the Hocken Library at the University of Otago, the Central Archives of Fiji, the University of Hawaii Library, and the Hoover Institute at Stanford, California.

#### The Geographical Scope of the Project.

The scheme proposed by the PLNSW in 1939 had envisaged the filming of records relating to both Australia and the South Pacific. The 1945 agreement referred only to Australian records and the 1949 conference decided that all the Australian records up to 1860 should be filmed before the Project was extended to take in material relating to New Zealand, Fiji and the Western Pacific. It was also agreed that the views of the New Zealand authorities should be ascertained before filming Pacific papers.

By November 1953 most of the pre-1860 Australian records had been filmed and the New Zealand Government had announced that it would participate in the Project. The conference that month therefore decided that the next classes to be copied should be those relating to New Zealand up to 1860. In the years since 1954 Colonial Office classes relating to New Zealand have been filmed at fairly regular intervals. In addition, Admiralty and Foreign Office classes concerning the Pacific were filmed in the late 1950s, while in the early 1960s the Colonial Office Fiji and Western Pacific correspondence was included in the Project. It was also in the late 1950s that the filming took place of the extensive files of the missionary societies, which were predominantly concerned with New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

10. White to J. Burton (Secretary, Department of External Affairs), 1 June, 1950.

11. C.R.H. Taylor (Librarian, Alexander Turnbull Library) to White, 18 May, 1953.

At their 1958 conference the National Library and the PLNSW decided to extend the geographical scope of the Project even further. The Project's area was defined as Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific, Malaya, Borneo, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Eastern Indian Ocean and Antarctica.

In practice this resolution has made little difference to the scope of the Project. In 1960 the National Library Liaison Officer was instructed to arrange the comprehensive filming of the Colonial Office correspondence relating to the Straits Settlements (C.O.273).<sup>12</sup> However, as a number of libraries in other countries also required this class it was filmed on the PRO's own camera and the Office retained the negative. The reels were therefore not included in the Joint Copying Project. In 1965 the University of Singapore Library organized a Malaysia Project in which eight libraries, including the National Library and the Mitchell Library, shared the cost of filming certain Colonial Office and Foreign Office classes relating to Malaysia and South East Asia generally.<sup>13</sup> The PRO again retained the negatives and these classes were excluded from the AJCP. The result has been that no official records dealing specifically with Malaysia, Indonesia or the Philippines have been filmed under the Joint Copying Project.<sup>14</sup>

Other schemes which encroached on the area of the Project in the late 1960s were the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, established at the Australian National University,<sup>15</sup> and the South East Asian Microform Project, based on the Center of Research Libraries at Chicago. In October 1970 a conference of the National Library and the Library of NSW examined these various schemes and decided that, although the 1958 resolution should stand, the Australian Joint Copying Project should concentrate on Australian, New Zealand, Pacific and Antarctic records in Britain and Europe.<sup>16</sup>

### The Size of the Project

Filming under the Australian Joint Copying Project has been fairly consistent, averaging about 200 reels a year. At the height of the Cold War there were calls from Australia to speed up the filming, but a second Australian camera was never placed in the PRO and the diminishing amount of comprehensive copying has led to a slight decline in the number of reels produced in recent years.

12. White to F.W. Torrington (National Library Liaison Officer), 17 June, 1960.
13. P. Lim (Head, Microfilm Services, University of Singapore Library) to White, 18 Nov., 1965.
14. The only large collection of South East Asian material in the Miscellaneous Series are the Straits Settlements factory records of the East India Company, dating from 1769 to 1830.
15. See R. Langdon. The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, a unique project in library co-operation on an international scale. Archives and Manuscripts, v.3, 1969. pp 16-23.
16. Minutes of a conference of representatives of the National Library of Australia and the Library of New South Wales, Canberra, 23 October, 1970.

By January 1972 4,007 reels had been filmed of Public Record Office files. The bulk of this material came from the Colonial Office (2,551 reels), Admiralty (349 reels), War Office (328 reels), Foreign Office (258 reels) and Home Office (243 reels). About 120 collections have been filmed outside the PRO, totalling 814 reels. The largest of these collections are the London Missionary Society (181 reels), Church Missionary Society (71 reels), Methodist Missionary Society (69 reels), East India Company (66 reels), Royal Botanic Gardens (59 reels), German Foreign Ministry (57 reels), German Navy (46 reels) and the Van Diemen's Land Company (35 reels).

### Filming in the Public Record Office

Ever since the days of Bonwick, librarians and historians who advocated the copying of historical records in Britain were predominantly concerned with the official files housed in the Public Record Office in London. The publications *Historical records of New South Wales* and *Historical records of Australia* were based mainly on these official records and the bibliography of the Australian volume of the *Cambridge history of the British Empire*, which appeared in 1933, listed many of the classes which were of particular interest for Australian historians.

The Australian Joint Copying Project agreement of 1945 placed priority on the microfilming of Public Record Office papers. It specified that the order of filming was to take into account the needs of *Historical records of Australia* and other publications of the two libraries, but was otherwise to be chronological, with papers from different record groups and classes taken in parallel.

The Public Record Office photographer was finally able to commence work on the Australian camera in August 1948. It was fortunate that at this time there were two librarians in London who each combined great enthusiasm for the Project with exceptional knowledge of Australian history. The National Library Liaison Officer was C.A. Burmester, who had begun his career as a history lecturer. On reaching London he immediately commenced surveys of the Australian holdings of many institutions, worked out the administrative and technical details connected with filming in the PRO, and selected the early classes to be filmed. He was assisted by Phyllis Mander-Jones, the Mitchell Librarian, who was visiting England and who also surveyed the collections of a number of repositories. Both librarians were to make important contributions to the success of the Project in the next twenty years. As head of the National Library's Reference Division and ultimately as Assistant National Librarian, Burmester was familiar with the needs of Australian historians and he undertook responsibility for much of the correspondence with the London Liaison Officer and the AJCP Officer. As Mitchell Librarian, Miss Mander-Jones also had close contacts with many historians while her work as the Public Library of New South Wales Liaison Officer in London in 1957-1960, as the first AJCP Officer in 1960-1963, and subsequently as the director of a survey of manuscripts of Australasian interest, gave her an unrivalled knowledge of the collections of libraries, record offices, societies and individuals throughout Britain.

The filming of records relating to Australia up to 1860 comprised the first stage of the Project. Burmester quickly saw the weaknesses of a chronological order of copying and favoured filming all the Colonial Office classes of Australian

relevance up to 1860, before turning to the other record groups.<sup>17</sup> However, a meeting of National Library and PLNSW representatives shortly after the commencement of filming decided that the Colonial Office New South Wales correspondence should only be filmed up to 1810, after which two Home Office classes should be copied.<sup>18</sup> This was to be the pattern of copying throughout the Project: in most cases the filming of a given class has taken many years, being interspersed by the copying of numerous other classes from several record groups. For example, the first 500 reels contained material in 20 classes in the Colonial Office, Home Office, War Office, Board of Trade and Privy Council record groups.

Despite the confused order of copying, Burmester and his successors ensured that priority was given to the Colonial Office, and to a lesser extent, Home Office classes which related exclusively to the Australian colonies and which were filmed in their entirety. By 1954 the most valuable records of Australian interest had been filmed. They included the Governors' despatches and their enclosures from the earliest settlement up to the granting of responsible government in the 1850s, the wide range of correspondence which the Colonial Office received from Australia, the New South Wales census of 1828 (Australia's Domesday Book), convict musters and transportation registers, and correspondence, muster books and the monthly returns of the New South Wales Corps. Official British records provide the single most important source on the history of Australia up to 1860, when the country consisted largely of penal settlements ruled by governors with autocratic powers and whose correspondence dealt with almost every aspect of the life and development of the colonies. It is therefore natural that it is the microfilm produced in the first five years of the Project which has received the heaviest use.

By 1954 there were many Colonial Office classes containing small groups of pre-1860 Australian material which had yet to be filmed and little work had been done on the Admiralty and War Office groups. It was decided to film comprehensively the early Colonial Office records on New Zealand and the early Colonial Office and Foreign Office files on the Pacific Islands, while the searchers worked through various Admiralty, War Office and Home Office classes. This proved to be extremely slow, with the searchers frantically trying to keep ahead of the camera and the Liaison Officer appealing for more temporary searchers. The awesome size of some of the Admiralty classes became apparent in this period and, after searching for and filming a number of log books of voyages to Australia and the Pacific, work on the Admiralty classes was suspended.

In 1958, in order to keep the camera supplied with material, filming was commenced of Colonial Office classes relating exclusively to Australia and New Zealand from 1860 to 1900. In 1960 Miss Mander-Jones commenced work as the AJCP Officer and made a detailed survey of the classes remaining to be filmed at the PRO. She concluded that Colonial Office, Audit Office and Home Office classes would keep the camera busy for a few years and she and her successors had completed most of the searching in these record groups by 1965. However, she was

17. C.A. Burmester (National Library Liaison Officer) to White, 11 Aug., 1948.

18. Minutes of a meeting of representatives of the Commonwealth National Library and the Mitchell Library, Sydney, 17 Sept., 1948.

only able to make a limited examination of Admiralty records and stated that the searching and filming of these records provided the greatest task outstanding at the PRO. <sup>19</sup> In particular, she felt that the correspondence of admirals and captains was of exceptional historical importance. Yet the correspondence for the years 1700-1900 took up 2,000 volumes and it was good progress to search 20 volumes in a week. <sup>20</sup> In 1965 the AJCP Officer began working full-time on Admiralty records and was soon faced with the recurring problem of the camera overtaking the searcher. In fact, she recommended that the Australian camera be dispensed with so that searching could be carried on under less pressure, and orders could then be regularly placed with the PRO for filming by its own camera. <sup>21</sup>

The problem which the AJCP Officer outlined in 1966 had worried all those who worked on the Project since 1948. A large number of Colonial Office classes and a few Foreign Office and Home Office classes had been filmed completely. All the other classes were first searched and only those items relating to the area of the Project were marked for filming. Searching was slow and monotonous <sup>22</sup> and yet required a reasonable knowledge of Australian and Pacific history; obviously, relevant items would not always refer explicitly to the Australasian colonies. The bulk of the records to be searched was daunting: several classes occupied over 3,000 volumes and one class (Adm. 53) took up 100,000 volumes.

Many archivists might feel little sympathy for the searchers on the ground that selective filming transgresses a fundamental archival axiom. It is true that selective filming is full of risks, but two points should be made. While correspondence extracted from a file of which it formed an integral part is likely to lose much of its meaning, other record types, such as log books, musters and accounts, are much more self-contained and it is doubtful if the Australian historian would be made more aware of their significance by seeing all the other items in the same volume or bundle. Secondly, it has been assumed, perhaps regrettably, that the users of the microfilm will be students of Australian and Pacific history, who will only marginally be interested in the formulation of imperial policy in London. For instance, general Colonial Office classes dealing with appointments, promotions, leave, honours and the like have been filmed selectively on the assumption that they will be used by readers studying individuals stationed in the Australasian colonies, and not by students who are interested in official British policy on overseas appointments or leave. These points may justify but they do not explain selective filming. The simple reason for it was pinpointed by Miss Mander-Jones when she asserted that, if all the Admiralty classes containing relevant material were filmed in toto, over 50 times as many records would be filmed, it would cost over £ 300,000, and the copying of the one record group would take decades. <sup>23</sup>

19. Report of AJCP Officer, 21 Feb., 1962.
20. P. Mander-Jones (AJCP Officer) to Torrington, 19 April, 1961.
21. Report of AJCP Officer, Sept., 1966.
22. Janet Hine has given a colourful picture of the life of a searcher in her article *The Public Record Office*, Archives and Manuscripts, no. 6, 1959, pp.1-11.
23. Mander-Jones to White, 20 July, 1967.



The librarians concerned with the Project have been aware of the difficulties and dangers of selective filming. In 1948 Burmester reported, rather optimistically, that in the general Colonial Office classes the searchers would include not only material specifically applying to the Australian colonies but also papers on 'general colonial policy and proposals affecting them in a general way'.<sup>24</sup> In 1952 his successor stated that searching was not economical if over 75% of the material had to be copied and he filmed complete criminal books and registers (H.O.13, 26, 27) because it was too difficult to identify those individuals convicted who were actually transported to Australia.<sup>25</sup> The 1958 conference decided that some of the early filming had been too selective and, as a result of that decision, the whole 1861-1900 section of C.O. 323 (Colonies, general, correspondence) was filmed.<sup>26</sup> At the 1970 conference the idea was put forward that correspondence files which contained papers on general imperial policies (which would probably be confined to certain Colonial Office, Dominions Office and Foreign Office classes) should always be filmed comprehensively.

Since 1967 several new factors have emerged in the filming of PRO records. Until that year the searchers had struggled to keep ahead of the camera but since then there has been a growing backlog of material which has been searched but not filmed. For example, a number of Audit Office and Treasury classes which were searched in 1964 have still not been filmed. The backlog has been caused by the breakdown and demise of the Australian camera<sup>27</sup> and by some rapid searching of large classes. The result has been that for the first time the AJCP Officer has been able to devote most of her attention to collections outside the PRO.

A second development has been the increasing tendency for the order of copying in the PRO to be determined by students in Australia rather than by the librarians directing the Project. Occasionally in the 1950s small groups of papers were copied in response to specific requests by readers, but after 1965 the number of such requests increased steadily, reflecting the growth of Australian historical studies in recent years. The four sequences of PRO records which were filmed in 1969-1971, taking up 313 reels, were all in response to urgent requests by students in Australia. The tendency to postpone the regular programme of copying to meet the immediate needs of historians has caused some concern to librarians connected with the Project<sup>28</sup> but there is no ready solution.

24. Burmester to White, 11 Aug., 1948.

25. K. Bernie (National Library Liaison Officer) to White, 2 July, 1952.

26. White to G.D. Richardson (Principal Librarian, Public Library of New South Wales), 26 May, 1960.

27. The camera which had been purchased in 1947 finally broke down in 1970. The conference in October of that year decided not to install another camera but to accept the PRO's offer of fulltime use of one of its own cameras.

28. Richardson to A.P. Fleming (National Librarian), 13 Oct., 1970.

The number of requests from readers increased noticeably after the introduction in Britain of the 30 year closure rule in 1967, in place of the old 50 year rule.<sup>29</sup> British records are now open to 1945 and, despite the weakening ties between Britain and Australia over the last century, the Parkinsonian growth of the British Civil Service<sup>30</sup> has meant that the number of files on such subjects and events as imperial defence, trade, immigration, imperial conferences, the Boer War and the World Wars are greater than ever. The question of twentieth century records was raised at the 1970 conference and it was decided to begin filming twentieth century Colonial Office and Dominions Office records, although the extensive nineteenth century records still to be filmed were not to be neglected.

Finally, the Public Record Office has itself become increasingly involved in filming, both on its own initiative and in response to orders. By 1967 its copying activities had achieved the status of a scheme and any orders for comprehensive filming had to be included in this scheme. In earlier years Malaysian records had been excluded from the Project because they were filmed by the PRO's own camera and the Office retained the negatives. However, it was established in 1971 that the PRO was willing to give a copy negative of records it had filmed to the Project partners and, moreover, that it was prepared to allocate one of its cameras to the Australian orders for comprehensive copying, while the 'Australian' camera was used on selective filming.<sup>31</sup> As it would be unfortunate if PRO microfilm relating to the area of the Project was not listed<sup>32</sup> as part of the AJCP series it was decided to regard all such microfilm as being within the Project, irrespective of whether or not it had been filmed on the 'Australian' camera.<sup>33</sup>

#### Copying outside the Public Record Office

In 1948 Australian librarians knew little about the strength of collections relating to their country in British repositories other than the Public Record Office. The *Cambridge history of the British Empire* had summarized the Australian holdings of the British Museum and the major missionary societies. Bonwick had examined the archives of the missionary societies in the 1890s while Ida Leeson had made a survey of the holdings of the British Museum and a number of learned societies in 1927. In 1948 Burmester prepared lists of the Australian and Pacific files of the missionary societies, and Miss Mander-Jones searched the collections of the British Museum of Natural History, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and the Royal Society.

29. Prior to the passing of the 1958 Public Records Act there had been no uniform closure rule in Britain. For instance, when the Project commenced Colonial Office records were open to 1902, but Treasury records were closed after 1850, War Office records after 1858, Home Office records after 1878, and Admiralty records after 1885.
30. The Colonial Office was actually one of the examples put forward by Parkinson in support of his Law.
31. P. Millward (AJCP Officer) to Fleming, 17 Dec., 1971.
32. Listing of these series will appear in the proposed AJCP Handbook the first parts of which will be published shortly.
33. S. Mourot (Associate Mitchell Librarian) to P. Fanning (Australian Studies Librarian, National Library of Australia), 2 Dec., 1970.

In all the negotiations that led up to the Joint Copying Project and in the subsequent conferences, discussions and correspondence which worked out the details of the Project, attention was centred on the PRO. It was therefore natural that in the early years of the Project no substantial copying was undertaken outside the PRO. A few small collections, such as 43 letters of the Hartwell Family in the Buckinghamshire County Record Office and some papers of J.C. Crawford held by his descendants, were brought to the attention of the National Library Liaison Officer and were copied for the National Library and the Mitchell Library. Small collections such as these were often photocopied, not microfilmed, they were not housed as a distinct series in the two libraries, and they were not offered to other libraries.

Microfilming of collections outside the PRO began on a large scale in 1954. The Liaison Officer had often been reminded of the extensive Pacific records in the archives of the missionary societies and in that year boxes of files of the London Missionary Society were sent to the Photographic Section of Australia House for filming. By 1957 118 reels had been produced, covering the activities of the Society in the Pacific Islands from 1796 to 1906. The Alexander Turnbull Library and the Victorian and Queensland State Libraries all acquired positives. In 1959 the records of the Methodist Missionary Society and the Church Missionary Society, which had been searched by New Zealand librarians, were filmed.

Two other large collections which were filmed in the late 1950s widened considerably the geographical and chronological coverage of the Project. In 1946 the voluminous files of the German Foreign Ministry were brought to England and many of them were microfilmed by the British, United States and French Governments. Later it was agreed that universities could sponsor programmes for filming the files and several American and English universities microfilmed sections of the records. In 1956 an Australian historian found that a number of volumes relating to the Pacific Islands and the German Consulate-General in Sydney had not been covered by any of these projects and they were quickly copied by the Public Library of New South Wales Liaison Officer as part of the AJCP. 47 reels were ultimately filmed of records dating from 1891 to 1944. In 1959 the German Foreign Ministry records were supplemented by some extensive German naval records held temporarily at the Admiralty in London. They consisted mainly of reports from German commanders in Australian and Pacific waters in the 1890s and early 1900s but included log books and other papers of five German raiders operating near Australia in 1939-1942.

In 1957 Miss Mander-Jones arrived in London as the Library of New South Wales Liaison Officer and in the next six years she arranged the filming of many collections held in libraries, societies and in private possession throughout Britain. She surveyed the holdings of such institutions and organizations as the Scott Polar Research Institute, the Royal Greenwich Observatory, Middlesex Record Office, Rhodes House Library, Durham Cathedral, the University of Bristol, the National Library of Scotland, and Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>34</sup> Collections filmed included the records of the Van Diemen's Land Company and the Linnean Society,

34. Report of AJCP Officer, 21 Feb., 1962.

and the papers of famous individuals such as Banks, Marsden, Franklin, Sturt, Lord Grey, Robert Lowe, Owen Stanley and Bishop Hale, as well as the letters and diaries of many early settlers in Australia and New Zealand.

Although several hundred reels of film of private collections had been produced by 1963, the interest of the Australian libraries in this side of the Project tended to be fitful and arrangements for numbering and listing the miscellaneous film were rather haphazard. Practically no instructions or suggestions were sent from Australia about filming outside the PRO. There had been no systematic survey of the holdings of repositories throughout Britain and almost no work had been done on the vast collections of the British Museum and Oxford and Cambridge Universities. In some cases no negatives were acquired and only occasionally did libraries other than the National Library and the PLNSW obtain copies. An example of the informal operation of the miscellaneous copying involved the papers of Sir William Denison: Miss Mander-Jones heard that they had been lent to Rhodes House Library for microfilming and she took the opportunity to purchase positives for the Australian libraries.<sup>35</sup>

Miss Mander-Jones' successors concentrated on searching and filming in the PRO and no large private collections were copied in the next few years. However, Miss Mander-Jones was by then at work on a new project financed by the National Library and the Australian National University. Assisted by a small staff and a number of part-time searchers, she spent five years surveying Australasian and Pacific holdings of over 400 repositories throughout the British Isles.<sup>36</sup> This monumental achievement meant that at last filming outside the PRO could be undertaken systematically.

By 1968 the growing backlog of material awaiting filming at the PRO enabled the AJCP Officer to spend most of her time searching and filming papers in other collections and in private possession. She made detailed searches of the county record offices, large archives such as those of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Lambeth Palace, and important personal collections like those of Thomas Huxley and Sir Timothy Coghlan. The publication of the Mander-Jones survey is expected to cause widespread demands for microfilm and the AJCP Officer is currently seeking to anticipate this demand, by filming many of the small collections described, especially those in private possession.<sup>37</sup>

The growing emphasis on copying collections outside the PRO has been accompanied by a greater formalization of this side of the Project. In 1966 the National Library adopted the term 'M series' to describe the miscellaneous film and segregated this series from its main microfilm run. (The Mitchell Library began to shelve its M series separately in 1971.) Material was not included in the

35. Torrington to White, 13 July, 1960.

36. See P. Mander-Jones. Guide to manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Archives and Manuscripts, v.3, 1967, pp. 23-26.

37. Report of AJCP Officer, Aug., 1971.

M series unless the negative was obtained and unless permission was granted to the principal Project partners to provide positives to the other participants and any interested libraries. The circulation of the draft shelflists to libraries in 1969 publicized the collections that had been filmed and in 1971 the National Library began the practice of notifying the Alexander Turnbull Library and the State Libraries of the programme of filming for the next few months, so that orders for positives could be placed.

Since 1939 it has always been planned to extend the operation of the Project to European archives. Brief surveys of French and Dutch records were made by Miss Mander-Jones in 1948 and 1957 and more intensive surveys have been made by Australian historians in several European archives. A few European collections have been filmed as part of the Project. In England, apart from the captured German documents, transcripts of seventeenth century Dutch records dealing with the East Indies, held in the India Office Library, have been copied. In 1963 some records of the Marist Fathers in the Vatican Archives, filmed some years earlier by a private scholar, were incorporated in the Project. Similarly, through another historian, files relating to Samoa in the Bonn Archives were microfilmed in 1970. The possibility of expanding the Project's activities in Europe was considered by the 1970 conference. It decided that, while advantage should be taken of Australian scholars working in European archives, large-scale filming in Europe would have to wait until the copying of British records was much closer to completion.

The cautious approach shown by the principal partners in considering the expansion of the Project into Europe illustrates the change in their attitude to the Project as a whole over twenty five years. In the 1940s librarians predicted exultantly that within a few years all the official British records of Australian interest would be copied and fears of another European war led them to insist that no time be wasted in completing the filming. It was only gradually that they realized the immensity of the task that they had undertaken. By 1970 they were talking in a somewhat fatalistic way of the decades that it would take to film the bulk of the British records alone. Yet the longevity of the Project (it is believed to be the oldest manuscript microfilming project in the world) should not obscure the facts that searching and filming is at present proceeding at a faster rate than ever before and that some of the collections recently copied are of scarcely less research value than the material filmed in the very early years of the Project. Nor can the more subdued and realistic approach of librarians to the future of the Project, and the very real difficulties encountered by readers of the microfilm,<sup>38</sup> diminish the importance of the Project's contribution to Australian historiography in the post-war years.

38. The various schemes to describe and index the AJCP microfilm will be dealt with in a later article.

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NOTE

Correspondence and other unpublished sources referred to in the article are held in the files of the National Library of Australia.