

FACE TO FACE ACROSS THE COUNTER Archivists and Historians in New Zealand

by THOMAS WILSTED

I N *The Practice of History* G. R. Elton warned that 'The historian must not go against the first conditions of his call: his knowledge of the past is governed by the evidence of that past . . .'¹ Elton's evidence was rather wide-ranging and included documents, artifacts and the physical environment in which man lives. Here we will be concerned only with the documentary evidence which forms today's archives, as the link between the historian who uses this evidence and the archivist who selects and preserves it.

Until the first quarter of the twentieth century New Zealand archives survived by what I call natural selection. It was not 'natural selection' as Darwin defined it, where only the best or the strongest survived. Survival was arbitrary and chancy. It was decided instead by place: whether records were stored in a wooden or a brick building; or by temperament: whether their keeper tended to hoard records or wanted a tidy cupboard with only his most recent files. This 'natural selection' changed with the coming of the librarian and then the professional archivist. The archivist looked at records from a rational viewpoint, keeping those of historical or administrative value and destroying others without lasting importance.

This change from 'natural selection' is a revolutionary concept if we define history as an interpretation of past events based on those documents known to survive. In that sense, at least, the archivist is determining the scope of historical research. For this reason it is important to look at the past relationship between archivist and historian and reflect on what this might mean for the future of historical research.

Before going further I must admit that after coming from the United States I found the relationship between historians and archivists somewhat different in New Zealand. This is attributable no doubt to the difference between the two countries' historical development; but it is perhaps worth finding out how the relationship developed in each country.

One way is to look at the National Archives as a government agency and examine the role which historians played in supporting archives legislation. In both countries the National Archives came rather late in the country's history. Until an archives act was promulgated little could be done towards the preservation of government archives, one of the largest and the most important research tools in writing administrative history. First, I would like to examine the movement to create the National Archives of the United States. I will look specifically at the period from the formation of the Public Archives Commission of the American Historical Association in 1895 to the appointment of R. D. W. Connor as the first National Archivist in 1934. Afterwards I will turn to the movement for a National Archives

in New Zealand which began after World War II and resulted in the Archives Act of 1957.

The preservation of archives in the United States begins with the professionalization of the historian. Soon after the American Civil War there emerged a group of historians who were to form the 'scientific school of history'. This group emphasized the critical use of primary sources and the seminar method of instruction. Many were trained in Germany where they were introduced to European archives and methods of preservation. The spread of this movement led researchers into institutional history and increased the demand for archival material upon which to base such research.² As the historians worked they discovered the inadequate conditions under which most American archives were stored and loss of documentation created by numerous fires and administrative destruction. In 1899 the American Historical Association established the Public Archives Commission 'to investigate and report, from the point of view of historical study, upon the character, contents, functions of our public repositories of manuscript records'.³ The Commission sought out the records of various States 'investigating the extent, conditions, character, and availability of the (records) . . . in the hope that it would arouse interest in the better care of archives'.⁴ This activity by the American Historical Association soon produced results. The State of Alabama established its Department of Archives and History in 1901 and many other States followed during the next decade.⁵

While there were a number of successes in establishing State archives there was continuing concern about the archives of the Federal Government. Claude H. Van Tyne and Waldo Gifford Leland's *Guide to the Archives of the United States*, published in 1904, indicated the amount of scattered material in Washington needing proper care and storage.⁶ For nearly a quarter of a century a Hall of Records had been discussed. This plan did not go beyond setting up a large fireproof warehouse to store the voluminous records which continued to accumulate in various government departments in Washington. By 1908 there was still no sign that a Hall of Records would be built and the A.H.A. appointed a committee of three to promote the establishment of an archives building. The Chairman of the committee was J. Franklin Jamieson an active A.H.A. member who was Director of the Bureau of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution at Washington, D.C.⁷

Jamieson had been a major force behind the establishment of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Association's first standing committee, and was editor of the *American Historical Review*.⁸ With his central position in Washington, Jamieson was able to use his connection with the A.H.A. and the Bureau of Historical Research to agitate for the better preservation of government archives. Because the Hall of Records concept had received some governmental support in the past he focussed his attention first on legislation which would create a building rather than concentrate on an overall archives programme. This was probably wise since it took nearly a quarter of a century before the cornerstone for the National Archives Building was laid, and a year later an Archives Act was passed.

During the next several years Jamieson discussed the subject with Presidents, Congressmen, Senators and government departments using his power to persuade and educate them about the importance of archives. In President William Howard Taft's message to Congress in 1912 he made a strong statement recommending the passage of legislation.⁹ An archives building and the drafting of plans was authorized in the Public Buildings Act of 1913. While there was an authorization no money had been appropriated either for the purchase of a building site or a building and this plan lapsed with the onset of the First World War. After the war Jamieson and the Historical Association took up the fight and gained support from such diverse groups as the American Legion, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Hearst newspaper chain. With the elevation of Calvin Coolidge to the Presidency, the historians found in 'Silent Cal' a new champion of archives. In 1924 he specifically recommended an archives building as part of a general building programme later embodied in the Public Building Act of 1926.¹⁰

Even with this success the fight was not over. Jamieson and the historians had come a long way from the concept of a Hall of Records and realized that a strong archives act with sufficient staff was needed to cope with the responsibility ahead. By the 1920s Federal records were calculated in millions of cubic feet and could not just flood into the new archives building without proper control or planning. The drafting of an archives bill began in 1930 with the final Act passed in 1934, just in time for the completion of the National Archives Building. The bill created an independent National Archives with the Archivist of the United States appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate and an advisory National Archives Council.

Even at this crucial juncture the historians had one further role. Even before the passage of the Act the executive committee of the American Historical Association was considering possible candidates for the position of National Archivist. In this they consulted Jamieson for his recommendation. Jamieson favoured Waldo G. Leland, executive secretary of the American Council of Learned Societies, long active in archival affairs and a close friend and protégé of Jamieson in earlier years. However, Leland did not want the job. Jamieson's next choice was Robert D. W. Connor, chairman of the Department of History at the University of North Carolina. Connor had been involved in archives as the secretary of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History developing it into one of the leading State archival agencies before going to teach at the University. This support swayed the Historical Association and Connor became their official candidate. Jamieson campaigned actively with Congressmen and Senators as well as writing to Franklin D. Roosevelt and on 10 October 1934 the President appointed Connor as Archivist of the United States.¹¹

With this appointment the struggle of Jamieson and the historians for the creation of a National Archives came to an end and a new era in archival development was beginning. While historians played a major role in the passage of this archives legislation there had been the slow development of the archival profession during the same time which was to accelerate with the development of the National Archives.

This began with the first Conference of Archivists held in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the A.H.A. in 1909 and was promoted by Waldo G. Leland. The meeting differed from those previously sponsored by the Public Archives Commission in that it discussed many of the technical problems now facing those administering archival agencies at the State level.¹² The Conference of Archivists continued as a part of the A.H.A. Conference but there was some debate over how far it ought to go in the area of technical matters since most meetings were mainly attended by historians rather than archivists.¹³ While there was only a slow growth of professional archivists this debate also reflects the historian's interest in archives as a useful research tool. This attitude was questioned in a paper by Margaret Norton, superintendent of the Archives Division of the Illinois State Library given at the 1929 Conference of Historians. In this paper she emphasized the importance archival agencies should place on their value as an administrative arm of their respective government, and attributed the slow development of archives to the 'popular misconception of archives as historical documents, a fallacy arising out of the efforts of scientific historians to encourage their preservation'.¹⁴ This was an important change in emphasis. While most historians were not yet ready to accept this, archivists saw the value of this concept when dealing with government administrators and this European concept soon took root in American archival theory.

With the passage of the National Archives Bill in 1934 the archives profession began to multiply in size and by 1936 there was sufficient interest and enthusiasm to form the Society of American Archivists. The emergence of this professional body was no doubt inevitable but the shaping of both the State and National archives by historians has meant a continuously close relationship between the two professions. Certainly there has been a greater interest taken by archivists in some of the technical aspects of their profession in recent years. But it is also true that a large majority of the archival profession have come from the ranks of the historians or have some historical training, which has meant a concern as well as an empathy for those doing research. While the concern for records management and for gaining government support for archives has grown, the long-standing relationship with historians has balanced this concern and made archivists responsive to the researchers' needs. In addition to this informal relationship there have also been the formalities of joint archives-history committees in areas of mutual interest.

It can be argued that the influence of the 'scientific school of history' had the strongest effect on the development of American Archives. A look at the New Zealand situation will bring out some quite different influences.

The New Zealand archival world in 1945 was little different from that of 1926 when G. H. Scholefield had been appointed Dominion Archivist. Scholefield's appointment must be considered an accident rather than good government planning or a response to a pressure group with an interest in archives. This is not to say that some of the work which Scholefield accomplished in the area of preserving records or publicising archives was not of value. However, because there was

no pressure group or strong government policy, archives was still in the wilderness in 1945 with no archives act or building to provide adequate storage space.

While the archival establishment had not changed in this twenty-year period probably the same could be said for the historical profession and its active involvement in New Zealand historical research. The historian was still part of a university structure which emphasized the passing of examinations, faculty were still required to teach a broad spectrum of subjects and there was little encouragement of primary research by either students or faculty members. The Centennial had increased the interest of New Zealanders in their history. During that period a great deal of research was carried on both privately and through the Centennial Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs. Certainly there was some research being carried on by the rather small history staffs employed by the University of New Zealand in 1945 but again only a small proportion was concerned with New Zealand topics using archival sources.

Although professional historians had little stake in archives and little could be expected in the way of support for staff, accommodation or an archives act at the end of World War II, archives had received help from the War History project conceived shortly after the start of World War II. Dr Eric H. McCormick, previously editor of the Centennial Histories of New Zealand, had been appointed in 1941 to collect and collate archives generated by New Zealand forces fighting in the Middle East and had been appointed Chief War Archivist in 1944.¹⁵

During 1944 and 1945 McCormick spent much of his time compiling and arranging the war archives as well as searching out materials of interest on the war effort at home. At the end of 1945 a meeting was held to discuss the microfilming of archival records in New Zealand and overseas. The impetus for the meeting came from the development of the Australian plan to microfilm records of historical interest held in the Public Record Office in London. Attending the meeting were the chairman, Dr G. H. Scholefield, Dr J. C. Beaglehole, Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, Eric McCormick, C. R. H. Taylor, Librarian, Alexander Turnbull Library and other representatives of the War History Branch and the Department of Internal Affairs. While most of the discussion centred around the issue of microfilming the recommendations of the meeting were much more far-reaching. The first resolution called for the establishment of a National Archives and for an Act of Parliament to be passed 'providing for the staffing and housing of such an organization and for the collection, custody and control of all records of archival importance'.¹⁶ The report also called for the use of microfilm as part of the archival programme, for an archives officer to be sent abroad to study archival and microfilm techniques, and finally that the Chief War Archivist should prepare a plan for future archival work.

The recommendations were passed on to the Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs, J. W. Heenan, and McCormick's plan and recommendations were submitted on 23 August 1946. It called for the establishment of a National Archives Branch which would list and describe records already held in the General Assembly Library, survey

non-current government records, microfilm records of New Zealand interest overseas and records in New Zealand in danger of deterioration, formulate principles for arranging and describing archives and train archives staff, records officers and librarians. To complete these tasks would require the services of a

Chief Archivist, Assistant Archivist (temporarily seconded for special duties in War History Branch), three or four field archivists, photographic officer and one or two assistants, a chief cataloguer and two or three assistants and a small clerical and typing staff.¹⁷

McCormick suggested that the archives branch could move into the quarters of the War History Branch when these were vacated to provide adequate space and projected an annual budget of £7,000 of which £6,000 would be spent on salaries. In addition McCormick asked that negotiations be opened with the Australians with a view to New Zealand participation in their microfilming project and that a suitable officer be sent to the United States to study archival and microfilm techniques.

A meeting was called for 12 September to discuss the report. It was discussed in general terms, with J. W. Heenan, Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs, advocating the need for greater training of records clerks and advising against any archival advisory body which would include members outside the public service as McCormick had suggested. The proposal received general approval and the meeting resolved that the recommendation made by McCormick 'receive the immediate consideration of the government'.¹⁸ The Under-Secretary indicated that this resolution would be passed on to the Minister of Internal Affairs and to the Public Service Commission.

While McCormick's plan was perhaps overly optimistic from the point of view of staffing it was nonetheless an excellent blueprint for New Zealand archival development. It seems reasonable to assume that some of the aims could have been achieved during the next three to five years had not the plan's architect left to become senior lecturer in English at The University of Auckland. This, taken in conjunction with the retirement of G. H. Scholefield as Dominion Archivist in 1947, left no veteran of archival affairs to lead the deserted and almost non-existent ship of archives.

During 1947 Michael Standish, who had been working with war archives in the War History Branch, had been appointed archives officer in the government archives section. During this period Standish worked on the records already brought into the General Assembly Library and made contact with departments holding archival material, but lack of staff and space for expansion made the job difficult bordering on the impossible. In 1948 archives was put under the Historical Branch supervised by J. C. Beaglehole. During 1949 the archives received a slight boost with the addition of a research assistant and a cadet to the staff as well as additional storage space allocated in a shed at Seaview in Petone.¹⁹

While the archives was making only slow progress towards better quarters and appropriate legal status, it received some positive publicity and support from the academic community in the form of an address to the Senate of the University of New Zealand in January 1950 by

the Chancellor, Sir David Smith. In the speech Smith called for a definite government policy on archives, the preservation of records and the publication of archival lists.²⁰ The speech received good press coverage and there was widespread reaction to Smith's address in the form of letters to the editor and editorials, and the *Listener* featured a two page article in an issue of 10 March 1950. The *Listener* stressed the need for an archives act as the first step along with field officers to search the country for material worthy of preservation. While the article was followed by a series of letters between historians discussing if or how many archives ought to be preserved, a history conference was held in Wellington in May 1950, which took an official position. The meeting, chaired by Professor James Rutherford of Auckland University College, called for the immediate passage of an archives act, the acquisition of copies of material of New Zealand interest held abroad, the appointment of an officer in charge of archives with sufficient departmental status and an expanded staff.²¹ The meeting appointed a sub-committee consisting of Professors W. P. Morrell, F. L. W. Wood and J. Rutherford to discuss the matter with the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of the University and to bring the matter to the attention of government.

After some consultation it was decided that the professors would try to gain a meeting with the Prime Minister, S. G. Holland, to state their case. Before this was arranged J. C. Beaglehole suggested that any deputation be put off because

Anything that involves expense will be tough going with this Government, and my own feeling is that any deputation in this matter would be better left until after the present session of Parliament.²²

Beaglehole was hopeful that a senior person from the War History Branch with archives experience would soon take the helm at archives and that members of the Department of Internal Affairs were aware of the importance of establishing the section on a proper basis. Thus ended the one official attempt by professional historians to encourage the New Zealand government to support archives. Hereafter the initiative fell to those inside the Department of Internal Affairs and the New Zealand Library Association.

The Library Association was aware of the plight of the archives through the recent publicity as well as correspondence with Eric McCormick and scheduled an Archives Seminar at its annual conference held in May 1950, in Wellington. The meeting was chaired by G. H. Scholefield with about twenty persons in attendance. Discussion centred on the upgrading of the National Archives and improving preservation of historical records in local areas. The meeting recommended that the Council of the Library Association approach government urging that 'National Archives be placed on a sound foundation' and that a seminar on local historical records be held at the next annual conference.²³

In response to a letter written by T. K. Sidey, President of the New Zealand Library Association, the Minister of Internal Affairs said that preliminary investigation into archival legislation was being made but emphasized that the greatest obstacle to archival development was the lack of accommodation. He went on to say that 'plans are in train

which I hope will surmount this obstacle to the development of the National Archives and a marked improvement may be looked for in the near future'.²⁴

The N.Z.L.A. moved to aid the preservation of local archives by circularising libraries listing important groups of material which needed preservation and urging librarians to make efforts to save material of historical significance. At the 1951 Conference the archives seminar resolved to form an Archives Committee to 'enquire into the care and preservation of [archives] in New Zealand'.²⁵ The chairman, F. H. Rogers, Librarian at the University of Otago, called for investigation in six areas: archives legislation, the present status of the Dominion Archives, a public relations effort to inform various bodies of the value of archives, the establishment of regional repositories to house local body and government office archives of local interest, the training of New Zealand Library School students in archives and the setting up of a 'Dominion Register of Archives'.

Before the librarians were able to make much progress there were two events in 1952 which were to change the course of history in the Dominion Archives. The first was that Michael Standish went to France, Great Britain and Australia to study archival methods being used abroad. While he paid for the trip himself, he went on half salary with a second imperative to search for material of interest to New Zealand for copying by microfilm. The effect of the trip was two-fold. First, it gave Standish greater knowledge with which to plan for New Zealand archival development and gave him greater confidence in his own abilities. A second effect of this training was to emphasize the close relationship between an archives and the government administration. In both France and England one of the main tenets of archival practice was the value and the need for this close relationship. This was not to the detriment of the scholarly community because of the strength of these professions in those countries and proper attention was paid to serving the researcher. However, with the relative weakness of the historical profession in New Zealand it is possible to see in Standish's training the seeds of an overemphasis on the administrative function.

The second event of 1952 which made a lasting impression on the Dominion Archives was the fire which broke out in the Hope Gibbons building in Wellington on 30 July. The fire which caused extensive damage to the building also damaged government files stored on the fifth floor by the Public Works, Lands and Survey, Labour and Employment, and Marine Departments and the D.S.I.R. The day after the fire the main concern was for the £8,000 of new maps which had been stored by the Geological Survey, and a newspaper report mentioned in passing that the records of the Immigration Division of the Department of Labour and Employment had been lost and this might cause 'slight inconvenience' but they were mainly 'dead files'.²⁶

Historians Ruth Allan and John Beaglehole reacted to the destruction caused by the damage. Allan was particularly concerned since she had used some of the files in her research and like Beaglehole was well aware of archival deficiencies. Soon after the fire they released a press statement alerting people to the magnitude of the

disaster, which was carried in most of the major New Zealand newspapers. The article described the importance of the records and the need for a suitable building and Beaglehole went on to say, 'It is a national disgrace that there is no Archives Act, no fireproof archives building, no official anxiety, and no seat of real responsibility anywhere'.²⁷ As a result many newspapers carried supporting editorials and individuals wrote to the Department of Internal Affairs and the Prime Minister. In Parliament the National M.P. for Parnell, D. M. Rae, asked the Minister of Internal Affairs what had been done to put the archives on a proper basis. The Minister, Mr Bodkin, said that the department had been gathering information for some time but felt that any future plans should await the return of Mr Standish who was still overseas.

While this disaster was to bring about an Archives Act in the long term there was no immediate change in the status of the archives. In November 1952, C. R. H. Taylor, Chief Librarian of the Alexander Turnbull Library and by this time administrator in charge of the Dominion Archives, drew up a report on archives recommendations to improve its position. This was circulated within the department and revised as a draft cabinet paper. It was then circulated to the Public Service Commission who recommended that a Chief Archivist be appointed, that suitable accommodation totalling 2,500 square feet be made available and the emphasis in the near future should be on a records disposal programme.²⁸

Although these recommendations went before Cabinet during 1953 it was to be 1954 before the Dominion Archives moved into better accommodation in the Employers Federation Building at 12 The Terrace. During 1953 the Library Association continued to exert pressure on the Department and a delegation met with the Minister of Internal Affairs on 1 May. Mr W. S. Wauchop, President of the N.Z.L.A., was particularly concerned that the archives staff were still working in the attic of the General Assembly Library since renovation of the roof had started which would put records in jeopardy and possibly impair the health of archives staff. The delegation put forward three recommendations calling for the immediate provision of better facilities for the National Archives and researchers using their materials, the setting up of regional records repositories and provision for inviting a suitable overseas archivist to visit New Zealand to make recommendations on future archival development. The Minister showed the delegation the report which had been prepared for Cabinet which covered all the points raised except the invitation to an overseas archivist and was optimistic that accommodation would soon be available for the archives.²⁹

While the National Archives' move to new quarters on The Terrace in 1954 blunted much of the intensity of the criticism from the Library Association, their other activities showed that their interest was more than just in the National Archives *per se*. In 1953 the Archives Committee began a survey of local body records on a geographical basis as well as appointing regional consultants to give advice to authorities who might be concerned about their records. During 1954 the Archives Committee laid plans for a union catalogue of manuscripts

and in 1955 published *An Elementary Guide to Archives Practice* edited by F. H. Rogers.

As in Australia librarians were allies to whom archivists could turn for support and an enduring relationship developed. But for the archivist it was a marriage of convenience. There was always the danger of becoming a poor relation rather than being considered as a separate profession and also that parliamentarians might consider archives in the same breath with libraries and thereby lose what stature archives had already attained. This was a danger which had been present since the joint appointment of Guy Scholefield as Dominion Archivist and Parliamentary Librarian in 1926. However, there had been little danger of being taken over by the General Assembly Library since it was a part of the Legislative Department and the archives function came under the Department of Internal Affairs. It was instead the Alexander Turnbull Library which posed the greatest threat to an independent National Archives during the development stage. Founded in 1920 the Turnbull had a long history of collecting manuscript material and serving the research community. Both the first and second Chief Librarians argued the value of having the National Archives either within the same building or administratively linked and pointed to the example of the Mitchell Library and the State Archives of New South Wales.³⁰ During the early 1950s the Dominion Archives were transferred from the supervision of the Historical Section of the Department of Internal Affairs to C. R. H. Taylor, The Turnbull Librarian. In many respects this situation was similar to that faced by the new National Archives of the United States when coming face to face with a strong and entrenched Library of Congress but in the United States the archives had the staunch support of the historians on which to depend. It is perhaps surprising that the National Archives retains its independence from its stronger and better endowed rival.

By 1955 preliminary drafting of an archives act began. On 21 February 1955 Michael Standish submitted a draft based on the 1953 South African Archives Act to the Secretary of Internal Affairs. This contained many of the clauses which can be found in the final act or which were embroidered upon or expanded in later drafts. It called for the appointment of a Chief Archivist, outlined the duties of the position, defined the terms contained within the bill, outlined the means of the destruction or distribution of archives not required by the National Archives and called for archives of permanent value over twenty-five years old (except in exceptional cases) to be transferred to the archives and be available to the public. A further suggestion in this draft called for the appointment of an Archives Commission which would authorize the destruction of 'valueless archives', recommend the publication of materials from the archives and make any general recommendations useful to the Minister of Internal Affairs.³¹

A year later the Archives Act of 1955 had become the Archives Act of 1956 but had now come under the care of one of the rising stars of the Department, Patrick J. O'Dea. Standish submitted a revised bill to O'Dea in February and a further revision in July. Two important changes at this time were the deletion of the Archives Commission, an

area of interest to historians, and the additional power to accept non-public archives into the National Archives Collection, a potential yet to be exploited. The loss of the provision of an Archives Advisory Council was regrettable from the point of view of the archivist-historian relationship. If it had followed the South African model the membership could have included a number of historians and academics which would have given them some influence within the archives institution and benefitted the National Archives by educating the academic community about some of the problems faced by archivists as well as providing a built-in pressure group.³²

Several more drafts were written and revised before L.D.O. 14/3, the third revised draft of the Archives Act of 1957, was circulated to government departments in May 1957. There appears to have been little if any consultation with interested parties outside the public service and even the Library Association did not make representations to government although it requested a meeting with the Minister of Internal Affairs in August.³³ The bill received its first reading on 11 July 1957, and during its second reading on 30 August it received the unqualified approval of those parliamentarians who spoke on the bill. The bill had its third reading on 5 October and was signed by the Governor-General on 10 October 1957.

The passage of the Archives Act put this important agency on a proper footing. Much of its energy in the next few years was devoted to records management and in 1962 the National Archives was able to acquire suitable storage for inactive records which were not of permanent historical or administrative value. However, because of lack of space this also had to be used for permanent archives even though archives moved into Borthwick House in 1966. It is only during 1977 that the National Archives has moved into a building of suitable size and quality that it had long deserved but not received.

When comparing the movements for the establishment of a National Archives Act in the United States and New Zealand the difference between the two historical professions is quite distinct. In America historians became activists, providing necessary tools for their livelihood; in New Zealand historians gave only modest support and might even be considered until recent years to have displayed a policy of benign neglect.

The cause of the American historians' involvement in archival affairs can be attributed to the confluence of a 'scientific school of history' and a growing sense of nationhood which required answers to historical questions about the forces which shaped American democracy. These, taken with the availability of the organization of the American Historical Association and leadership provided by J. Franklin Jamieson, were the impetus in the movement for a National Archives.

The opposite situation in New Zealand can be attributed first to its small historical profession and second to its still strong connection with the British Commonwealth even during the 1950s. Purely New Zealand subjects were outside the interest of the majority of professional historians and those trained to the Ph.D. level were expected to receive their training in Great Britain. While professional historians

could see that New Zealand government archives were a 'good thing', few used them and there was no vested interest in supporting this institution. What leadership there was came from Professor J. C. Beaglehole. From the time of the Hope Gibbons fire he wrote numerous letters to the editor, an article in the *Public Service Journal* and in other periodicals. However, this interest never coalesced into any organized activity and indeed Beaglehole argued for archives on their general cultural value rather than arguing on behalf of the historian interested in the tools of his craft.

Even with the increased number of historians in history departments since 1957 as well as the increasing amount of research into New Zealand history, archivists and historians still rarely meet or communicate except when the historian requests archives at the counter for his or her research. The result for the National Archives, has been to re-emphasize their administrative role in records management and services to government agencies rather than a duty to provide more published guides to their collection or to publish collections of documents. While this option is available for a government archives the lack of involvement by historians causes more serious problems for institutions like the Hocken and Alexander Turnbull Libraries since without historians (using the word in a very wide sense) there would be no manuscript repositories.³⁴

What then do archivists want of historians besides their continued patronage as readers and researchers? One area of common interest is the question of what type of records ought to be preserved. There has been wide-ranging discussion abroad concerning researchers' interests and the correlation between these and the records which will be available in fifty or one hundred years' time. Most New Zealand archivists have received their training abroad and one wonders how it suits New Zealand archival conditions. Unless there is a large increase in the output of New Zealand history in the future it is possible that archivists are preserving too many records, creating a dross of paper which will never see the light of day in any history.

The obverse of this coin is that archivists are not keeping enough of, or even the right type of, research material. One way of keeping ahead of the future historians demands is to keep abreast of current historical research. However, this can be a dangerous practice because as one American historian has noted,

We [historians] cannot operate on the assumption that what we wrote five years ago represents our current interests . . . Works now being published represent a researcher's interest 5 or 10 years ago not his current interest.³⁵

While we can assume that historical interests and trends in New Zealand will not change as rapidly as those in the United States a dialogue must be opened on this subject between the archivist and the historian.

Another concern is the still relatively small use being made of New Zealand archival resources. While there were only twenty historians at the University of New Zealand during the 1950s, the staff of today's universities now total more than eighty. This increase, more than 300 per cent, must raise the question of whether there has been an equal increase in the amount of research being done and in

the output of historical articles and monographs. Certainly this question is bound up with the emergence of a New Zealand national culture. There will, no doubt, be a demand for a wider and deeper interpretation of the New Zealand experience in the future but archivists are already asking if greater effort cannot be made by history departments to develop wider programmes in research and to channel more funds and, indeed, positions in history departments into New Zealand history.

Related to this, but of particular concern to both the National Archives and the Alexander Turnbull Library, is the lack of research being done at Victoria University of Wellington. This is of even greater concern because of the depth of resources available at these institutions. In this situation the thought of an institution in Wellington similar to the Australian National University with its research faculties has an appeal which is not lost on their two staffs.

Yet another area of concern for archivists, historians and librarians is the way in which archival resources will be preserved; whether in regional repositories or in central archival institutions. This regional-central dichotomy is of primary interest to historians. One result of the developing interest by historians in New Zealand research has been the development by archives collections at the University of Auckland and more recently at the University of Canterbury. While the archivist can appreciate the impetus of the historian in trying to build a research collection in his own institution, the result has been three archival institutions in both Auckland and Christchurch, each competing for limited archival funds, space and staff. Whatever is ultimately done about the central-regional dichotomy must take into account the limited resources available for archives but must involve historians, archives' most important clientele.

Historians will soon have a chance to make some of their concerns known when the current Archives Act is revised. Work on the Archives Act began under the third Labour Government and it is unknown whether legislation will be introduced in this, or the next session of Parliament. While at present the law only affects public archives there has been growing concern about the preservation of local body archives. While it is only an educated guess, I suspect that the new Act may be expanded to cover this type of record.

Other aspects of the Act which need detailed examination are the access conditions which cover government archives. The 1957 act calls for all archives of permanent value over twenty-five years old to be transferred to the National Archives and in another clause states that 'all archives deposited in the National Archives shall be available for public reference in accordance with regulations made under this Act'.³⁶

While this may seem quite a liberal law compared to those countries with the 'thirty year' and 'fifty year' rules, the fine print points in a rather different direction. First, the Act excludes records from the Inland Revenue Department, Department of Statistics, Public and Maori Trustees, and Post and Telegraph Department where these records would affect the privacy of individuals. While the exclusion of these records can be justified on privacy grounds the exclusion of census records from archival preservation, indeed their destruction

except for the last two censuses, is a situation which should concern historians, particularly in view of the wide ranging research being done with census records overseas. There are means of protecting individual privacy but it is important for historians to point out the value of such records and make the machinery available for their use.

Even more dangerous than these exceptions is a clause which allows government departments to withhold the deposit of their records which were of a secret or confidential nature from the National Archives regardless of their age. In addition to this guarantee the Act allows the department head to place restrictions on access agreed to by the Chief Archivist. While the Chief Archivist can appeal to the Minister of Internal Affairs regarding an access restriction, there is no appeal authorized by the bill over a department withholding records.³⁷

The area of access should be discussed by historians in consultation with archivists to discover ways in which the widest possible access can be available which is consistent with efficient government administration. Whatever time period is decided upon, it might be wise to have a tribunal to arbitrate cases where researchers wanted to use records but where the National Archives or a government department refused access. A tribunal comprising a member of the judiciary, a researcher and a senior public servant could discuss the researcher's case, evaluate the records and then make a binding decision. Certainly this area should not be overlooked by historians any more than the whole area of the National Archives' stature within the Department of Internal Affairs.

Though all of this has been asking historians to support archives, no doubt you as historians are wondering what these archivists are going to do for you. Certainly there are archivists who:

would perhaps be surprised to learn that there is a great deal of resentment of archivists and archives institutions generally expressed by the historical research worker . . . (However) Historians had too keen an appreciation of their own interests to blaze abroad their discontent, but it is clear that they believed that too many archivists shared the phobia that Peter Eldershaw referred to: 'They (the archivists) would rather see the records sealed up behind bars than have to expose them to the light, let alone to the tender mercies of students'.³⁸

If there are archivists within your acquaintance who feel this way about their collection it is about time that historians made them aware of their responsibilities.³⁹ While the archivist can always offer the excuse of the backlog of unprocessed collections as the historian can of the heavy teaching load this is not a valid reason for offering poor service to the researcher. Future archival planning should not just include budgeting for storage space, shelving and boxes but provision for better finding aides, the processing of incoming collections and ultimately either the publishing or microfilming of collections of national importance.

All of this requires communication. For too long archivists and historians have been doing their assigned tasks with little thought of the intimate relationship involved in the gathering and preserving of archives and the analyzing of the documents and writing of history. For too long the archivist and historian in New Zealand have been like a

husband and wife who have been sleeping in separate beds. Perhaps the time has now come for them to buy a double bed and cuddle up.

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