

*National Register of Archives and Manuscripts in New Zealand*. Compiled and edited at the Alexander Turnbull Library and the National Archives, Wellington, 1979. Volume 1, Part 1, viii, 250 entries, 31pp., index. N.Z. price: \$5.00 (\$8.00 with binder).

MOST historians working in New Zealand history waited the arrival of Volume 1, Part 1, of the *National Register of Archives and Manuscripts* with keen interest. The *Register* was first mooted in 1975 and planned through 1976 and 1977. It was designed to provide researchers with a listing of all manuscripts and archives held in New Zealand libraries, archive collections, museums and other repositories, both public and private. From 1977 the original organizing committee and the subsequent editorial group have been setting standards, collecting and collating entries. The first fruits of their works have now been presented in Volume 1, Part 1.

When this volume arrived (glossy blue binder, neat package of loose leaf entries), its contents were puzzling. I should imagine that the first thing most purchasers did, after wrestling the pages on to their binder rings, was consult the index for an entry on a person or subject which interested them. In my case this was the politician Julius Vogel. No entry. So I turned to another interest—women. No entry. I began at the beginning to see what the volume contained. Even after reading the preface, introduction, and 'Notes on Subject Headings' I was not enlightened. Since then my attention has been drawn to an article by one of the editors, Michael E. Hoare, 'The New "National Register of Archives and Manuscripts in New Zealand"', *National Library Bulletin*, No. 4, June 1979. Although this considerably expanded my knowledge of the background to the *Register* it did not help a great deal in identifying the concerns of Volume 1, Part 1.

I write this because I think the *Register* is a splendid idea and that a continuing project of this sort can only benefit from friendly criticism. Let me say that historians will find the *Register* of enormous use. But the editors need to help us to use it. Volume 1, Part 1 seems an almost totally random collection of entries. It covers items in institutions from Tauranga to Dunedin but there is no way of telling whether the coverage of any of the institutions is total (which it clearly is not for, say, the Turnbull but may be for the Bank of New Zealand Archives) or only partial. A serial number is given for each entry but all the entries for one institution do not appear in one block (the Taranaki Museum has entries A 96-122 and A 206-211). An early page entitled 'Notes on Subject Headings' seems to bear no relation to the entries—they are certainly not grouped according to subject. There is no chronological order, no alphabetical order. My main plea, then, is for some rationale to each part. Preferably it would be for a subject arrangement (papers of politicians, missionaries, sporting organizations, business firms and so on); if this is not possible perhaps a chronological arrangement. This would have the incidental virtue for the individual purchaser of enabling him or her to buy volumes he or she is interested in. At the moment the New Zealand buyer has paid \$5.00 (plus \$3.00 for a binder) but has no idea of the ultimate cost of the venture embarked upon.

Turning to the individual entries, the information presented is clear, and, in the entries I have consulted, very full and useful. No complaints. One query, however. How seriously is the 'name entries' section to be taken? It would be

impossible to make full entries for many of the collections of papers I have looked at—literally hundreds of names would be involved.

Finally, it is to be hoped that all the institutions and individuals holding records open to the public will contribute to the *Register* and that the editors receive all assistance possible to continue their work. Only if they do, can the *Register* be the really worthwhile aid to research that is needed.

RAEWYN DALZIEL

*University of Auckland*

*Mesengers of Grace: Evangelical missionaries in the South Seas 1797-1860.* By Niel Gunson. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1978. 437pp. Aust. price: \$25.

*God's Gentlemen: A history of the Melanesian Mission 1849-1942.* By David Hilliard. University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1979. 342pp. Aust. price: \$14.95.

BOTH these books, in different ways, make major contributions to Pacific history. Mastery of sources, ability to ask new questions of well-known material, and clarity of argument mean that both authors shed fresh light on the form which Pacific Island Christianity has taken. Both rightly scrutinise not only the missionaries and the policies of missionary societies, but also the needs and patterns of island societies, in order to assess how Christianity was accepted and how it changed Pacific patterns of life and thought. Their successful use of difficult and scattered sources underlines the need for similar studies on other missions and missionaries.

Gunson's appendices and bibliographies made his book a valuable reference tool. So many have benefited from reading his doctoral thesis, or from his supervision and generous advice, that the originality of his research has become dulled by familiarity. His study of missionaries and their environment as a clue to their work in the Pacific is a forceful reminder of the power even of subcultures to shape personality though he does not explore the reasons why some missionaries adapted so well to Pacific cultures. Hilliard uses the same method, but not in the same detail, so that the ethos which shaped 'God's gentlemen' is not illuminated with the same clarity as the evangelicalism of the London and Wesleyan Missionary societies. For example, it would have been interesting to know why C.E. Fox so dramatically identified himself with Melanesians. Was being a New Zealander a partial explanation?

Neither Gunson nor Hilliard attempts to ignore the flaws in the missionaries they discuss. The result is a satisfying credibility about their analyses, where the reader can assess the impact of devotion, greatness, mediocrity, stupidity and pettiness. Considering the limitations imposed by cultural barriers in both missionary and islander minds, the reader is constantly struck by the extent of change. More attention could have been paid to the effect of island societies and mores on the missionaries. Hilliard hints at major change in W.G. Fallowes of the