

Notes

Unpublished Parliamentary Papers

A COMMENT ON UNTAPPED SOURCE MATERIAL ON NEW ZEALAND HISTORY

SCARCELY any research workers in New Zealand history will be unaware of the vast amount of useful material readily available in the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (A.J.H.R.), although some may not realise that a number of useful returns are also to be found in the *Appendices to the Journals of the Legislative Council* (A.J.L.C.). All of this material derives from reports or returns from government departments, parliamentary committees, Royal Commissions or, occasionally, private sources. In order to find their way into A.J.H.R. or A.J.L.C. these returns have had to be called for in one or other of the Houses of the General Assembly, laid upon the table of the House, and ordered to be printed.

This last prerequisite recently led the writer to make enquiries about what happened to returns called for, laid upon the tables of the General Assembly, but *not* ordered to be printed. It had become apparent from a reading of correspondence of the Native (now Maori Affairs) Department that there must have been a great many returns in this category.

The advice and assistance of Miss J. Hornabrook and Miss P. Cocks of National Archives, and Mr Littlejohn, senior assistant to the Clerk of the House of Representatives, led to the unlocking of certain cellars under Parliamentary Buildings and the exposing of a vast store of records, well begrimed with the dust of years, and in the memory of Mr Littlejohn untapped by historians.

The material falls into two categories:

- (a) *Returns laid on the table of the House of Representatives and not printed.* These are bound in bundles for each year since 1860 and numbered in the order in which they were presented in the House. The bundles are labelled 'Papers'.
- (b) *The minute books of parliamentary select and standing committees.* In many cases these include the minutes of evidence of the hearings of the committees as well as the proceedings of the committees themselves. They are, for the early years, bound in bundles labelled 'Committees', but by about 1875, as parliamentary business increased, each of the major committees merited a bundle on its own. Thus, for example, there are substantial bundles containing the records of the Native Affairs Committee alone, and labelled accordingly.

It is possible to gain some idea of the existence and approximate location (year, and position in the bundle) of a parliamentary paper, by reference to the Journals of the House of Representatives, but the only way to assess

the material fully is to work through the bundles one by one. The process is laborious, but the results can be extremely rewarding. Among the records the writer found, and used in his Ph.D. thesis on Maori policy and administration, are the following:

1. Details of supposedly non-existent efforts to control the liquor trade in the Waikato before 1861.
2. New details (ministerial and Governor's minutes) on the separation of the Native Land Purchase and Native Secretary's Departments in 1861.
3. Details of frustrated attempts to implement the Native Land Purchase Ordinance, 1841, against squatters in Hawkes Bay in 1862.
4. Handwritten copies (in Maori with English translation) of *Te Hokioi*, the King movement's newspaper in 1862-3, and of *Te Pihoihoi Moke-moke*, the Government-sponsored rival to *Te Hokioi*, edited by John Gorst. This return contained numbers of both papers not held in any library. (By arrangement with Mr Littlejohn, for the Clerk of the House, and the General Assembly Library, the writer had microfilm copies of the papers made for the Department of Pacific History at the Australian National University, the General Assembly Library retaining a copy of the microfilm.)
5. Detailed reports—not published in A.J.H.R.—of the visit to the King movement leaders at Ngaruawahia in May 1863, of the Government official, John Rogan, on the occasion of the revival of war in Taranaki.
6. Intelligence reports to the Native Minister, by a half-caste Government agent, R. S. Thompson, of the meetings of Te Whiti, the prophet of Parihaka, during the period August 1878 to October 1880, the period of the 'ploughing' crisis on the Waimate plains.
7. A sequence of official telegrams to August 1879 showing Grey's and Sheehan's attempt to resist the determination of the Taranaki settlers to make a *casus belli* out of the 'ploughing' question, and their partial surrender to that pressure.
8. Very revealing evidence, about an enormous variety of questions and people, in the minutes of evidence given before the Native Affairs Committee. Most of this evidence relates to Maori land questions and proposed legislation on Maori affairs. The minutes of meetings of the Native Affairs Committee itself show something of the inner workings of a quite important part of the constitutional machinery of New Zealand.

Historians working on New Zealand subjects would be likely to find much of value in the unpublished parliamentary papers. Access to them may be sought through the staff of National Archives and Mr Littlejohn, in the office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

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