Parliamentarians and their (often missing) papers

Rags and riches would be a fair description of the Hocken Library’s holdings of New Zealand parliamentarians’ papers. Far too many rags — yet a few surprisingly good holdings for the use of present and future researchers.

The real tragedy is the number of old-time southern New Zealand political heavyweights of whom not a scrap is held. Dunedin’s Vogel and Bracken, Central Otago’s Pyke, Southland’s Joseph Ward, and many others are not there at all. Even Stout is represented only by virtue of his widow’s papers.

Many of the existing scraps are not much better. Imagine Robert Campbell, noted runholder and politician, represented by only a few cheque butts; Hyde Harris by a mere handful of letters; Sir John McKenzie by two notes to his storekeeper; Sir Thomas McKenzie by a single reply to a wellwisher.

Nor does parliamentary material figure much in the papers of such former MPs as W.Cargill (mainly N.Z.Company correspondence), G.M.Thomson (natural history papers), or Sir James Mills (shipping interests).

There are some notable compensations, though. The two biggest local collections to come into the Hocken before 1970 were those of J.T.Paul and W.Downie Stewart. Paul — unionist, Labour member, wartime censor and one-time editor of the Otago Witness — left a valuable selection of personal and party papers. And the 22 metres (about 80 boxes) in the Downie Stewart collection not only represent a different political standpoint, but also cover a diverse range.

The Hocken scored a coup when the significant papers of E.J.Howard (MP for Christchurch South 1919–39) and his politician daughter, Mabel, were unwanted by Christchurch institutions and Michael Hitchings brought them to Dunedin. We may not have Mabel Howard’s famous bloomers, but we do have her handbag!

The modern trend began when archivist Peter Miller, aware of the need for a good set of parliamentary papers, approached Richard Walls when he had lost the Dunedin North seat. He missed by 48 hours. Having no means of bringing the contents of three filing cabinets back to Dunedin, Mr Walls had consigned them to the Wellington tip.

Instead, an approach was immediately made to the new Member for Dunedin North, Stan Rodger, and thus began an annual deposit of parliamentary and constituency papers that continued over the next two decades. When historian Michael Cullen later joined the Labour parliamentary team and learned of the deposit arrangements, he in turn organised an annual deposit of his papers. Between them, these two Dunedin Cabinet Ministers have provided invaluable coverage of their own era. Although some restrictions are to be expected, both are already prepared to allow access to the bulk of the material, allowing more and more political research to be undertaken from Dunedin. The
papers of D.G. and Ethel McMillan have added further strength.

The Hocken Archives contain, of course, other important papers obtained from the various political parties and other sources, but a still wider coverage of parliamentarians’ papers is obviously desirable. National Party Members are not well represented; nor are the Otago-Southland rural constituencies.

When one looks back at the pitiful remnants left behind to represent the hard work and social prominence of the region’s earlier parliamentarians, the desirability of preserving much more informative archives on the contributions of our political representatives is all the more self-evident.

Reference list

A preliminary detailed listing of manuscript archives held by the Hocken from (or relating to) parliamentarians representing past and present constituencies south of the Waitaki River is:

Allen, Sir James (1855–1942); MHR Dunedin East 1887–90, Bruce 1892–1920. Minister.

Bathgate, John (1809–1886); MHR Dunedin Country 1855–59, Taieri 1878–79. MS 1064, Papers 1884–86, 10cm, family letters, speeches to two Otago schools; [Misc. MS 268], Biography of J.L.G. by Colin Lillie Gillies, 1975, 82p.

See Reid, Donald.

Buchanan, Andrew (1806–87); MLC 1862–74. Misc. MS 773, Diaries 20 July 1865 to 10 January 1866; 13 April to 17 May 1873.

Campbell, Robert (1843–89); MHR Oamaru 1866–69, MLC 1870–71. Misc. MS 346, Otekaike Station cheque butts 1865–66, c.250 items, photocopied.

Cargill, E.B. (1823–1903); MHR Bruce 1862–65. MS 172, Notes on family history, 1897, 33p. Copy of original in Auckland Institute and Museum.

Cargill, W.W. (1784–1860); MHR Dunedin Country 1855–59. MS 95, Letterbook 5 May 1848 to 14 August 1851, 105p, official letters; Misc. MS 665, Family tree, 1 large sheet, photocopy, four generations; Misc. MS 724, Letter to Clutha River Board, 31 January 1859.

Cullen, M.J. (1945–); MHR St Kilda 1981–. Minister.
MS 1267, Parliamentary papers, Cabinet and constituency papers; some restrictions; 63 metres.

Cutten, W.H. (1822–83); MHR Dunedin Country 1853–55, Taieri 1878–79. MS 1235, Cutten family papers c.1858–1923, 26cm, land sales, legal documents etc.

Gillies, John L. (1832–97); MHR Waikouaiti 1873–75. MS 1064, Papers 1884–86, 10cm, family letters, speeches to two Otago schools; [Misc. MS 268], Biography of J.L.G. by Colin Lillie Gillies, 1975, 82p.

Gillies, T.B. (1828–89); MHR Dunedin Country 1860, Bruce 1861–65; Mongonui 1870, Auckland City West 1871–75; Minister.
Misc. MS 359, Autobiography for my children, 1885, 9 leaves, photocopy.

Hallenstein, Bendix (1835–1905); MHR Wakatipu 1872–73. UN 139, Hallenstein Bros papers contains Bendix Hallenstein’s letter–books 1866–1904, business and private, permission required; 40cm.

Harris, J.Hyde (1825–86); MLC 1858–64, 1867–68; Minister.
Misc. MS 378, Letters 1874–78, 9 items.


MS 83, Letterbook (Otago) 1846–50, c.450p; MS 211/4b, Provisions or rations served out to
survey parties at New Edinburgh, 24 Feb. to 2 Nov. 1846;
MS 211/4c, Correspondence relating to his position and salary, 1849–53;
Misc. MS 41, Letter to A.W. Shand repurchase of a section near Sawyers Bay, 1853, 4p;
Micro. 77, Instructions … laying out of Dunedin and Port Chalmers, among W.B.D. Mantell, Miscellaneous memoranda 1845–46;

Macandrew, James (1820–87); MHR Dunedin 1853–60, Bruce 1865–66, Clutha 1866–70, Port Chalmers 1871–75, Dunedin 1875–79, Port Chalmers 1879–87; Minister.
Misc. MS 619, Arithmetic book 1832–33;
[T2], Ellis, M.A. ‘James Macandrew and His Times’, 1926, 48 leaves, MA thesis.

McGlashan, Edward (1817–89); MHR Dunedin 1860–62, Roslyn 1871–75.
References only in the John McGlashan papers, no separate holdings.

McKenzie, Sir John (1838–1901); MHR Moeraki 1881–87, Waihemo 1887–90, Waitaki 1890–93, Waihemo 1893–1900; Minister.
MS 532, Letters to James Arkle, storekeeper, Palmerston, June 1878, 2 items;

McKenzie, Sir Thomas (1854–1930); MHR Clutha 1887–96, Waihemo 1900–02, Waikouaiti 1902–08, Taieri 1908–11, Egmont 1911–12; Minister.
Misc. MS 9, Letter thanking Mrs Moore for her congratulations on his knighthood, 1916, 2 leaves.

McMillan, D.G. (1904–1951); MHR Dunedin West 1935-43; Minister.
MS 1269, political and personal papers 1921–50; some restrictions, 90cm.

MS 1268, political and personal papers, c.1938–83; some restrictions; 3.7 metres.

McNab, Robert (1864–1917); MHR Mataura 1893–96, 1898–1908, Hawkes Bay 1914–17; Minister.
MS 608, Papers relating to afforestation, 1895–1902, 1 volume;
[T2], Fleming, M.S. ‘Dr McNab and His Work’, 1930, 71 leaves, MA thesis.

Mantell, W.B.D.; Wallace 1861–66; Minister.
Micro 155/8–16, 18, 124–427, 454–462, Papers 1842–95. Includes official papers relating to land purchases, native affairs, defence, general politics; extensive private inwards correspondence; diaries, notebooks. Copies of originals in the Alexander Turnbull Library. 1.7m;
MS 402 and Misc. MS 424, Names of the Kai-Tahu hapu inhabiting Otago, 1848;
Misc. MS 552, Outline of journey, Kaitapoi to Otago 1848–49, 110p. Copy of original in Turnbull Library;
Misc. MS 726, Correspondence relating to Otago 1852–54, 16p. Copy of original in Turnbull Library.

Misc. MS 420, Diary 1853–57, 42 leaves,
photocopy of a typescript.

Mills, James (1847–1936); MHR Port Chalmers 1887–93.
AG 292, Archives of Union Steam Ship Co., private letter-books and papers, 1841–1930; permission required; 30cm.

Monro, Sir David (1813–77); MHR Waimea 1853–55, 58–60; Picton 1861–66; Cheviot 1866–70; Waikouaiti 1872–73.
MS 509, Journal on the New Zealand coast, 1842, 65 leaves. Copy of original in Turnbull Library;
Misc. MS 307, Notes on the Wakefield system.
Copy of original in Medical Library, Dunedin; see also Reid, Donald.

MS 982, Main body of papers, 1882–1964, 12 metres.
MS 963, McCarthy, A.P. Papers 1912–22 connected with his secretaryship of the United Labour Party, Social Democratic Party and WEA, 50cm. Correspondents include J.T.P.;
Misc. MS 117, Dominion Settlement and Population Assn, Wellington, 2 letters to J.T.P. re his endorsement of a pamphlet and draft of his reply, 1958, 3 leaves.

Pillans, F.S. (1810–99); MLC 1863–73.
MS 616, Diaries 1849, 1850–52, 3 volumes;
Misc. MS 380, Certificate … of allotment of rural land in Otago, 1849; mortgage, 1858.

Prendergast, Sir James (1826–1921); MLC 1865–67; Attorney-General 1866–74.
MS 730, Letters to him as Attorney–General and Chief Justice re appointments and legal matters, including reform of the Privy Council appeals machinery, 1863–1901, 48 items.

Reid, Donald (1833–1919); MHR Taieri 1866–69, 71–78; Minister.
Misc. MS 178, Political correspondence largely concerned with his activities as MP and Minister, and member of the Otago Harbour Board 1869–1910, 13 items. Correspondents include Sir Francis Dillon Bell and Sir David Monro.

Rodger, S.J. (1940– ); MHR Dunedin North 1978–90; Minister.
MS 1236, Parliamentary papers 1978–90,
Cabinet, party and constituency papers, general correspondence, files on local body elections; some restriction on access; 42 metres.

Sidey, Sir Thomas Kay (1863–1933); MHR Caversham 1901–08, Dunedin South 1908–28; Minister.
MS 605, Papers 1884–1931, 3.6cm;
MS 713, Business letterbooks 1889–90, 95–98,
2 volumes:
UN 83, Additional papers 1898–1920s, 3 boxes;
Misc. MS 248, Address book 1920s–30s, c.350p.;

Stewart, W.Downie (1878–1949); MHR Dunedin West 1914–35; Minister.
MS 985, Papers c.1890–1945, 68 boxes;
MS 304, Letter to Helen Longford, October 1937, literary matters;
MS 830, Correspondence with F.L.W.Wood, 1938–41, 30 items;
MS 200, Obituary of M.C.Keane, journalist, 1929, 2 leaves;

[MS 244–278], Stout, Lady Anna. Collection of books, clippings, letters and other material, c.1896v1919, 60cm. Largely on suffrage movement in England;
[MS 283], Bodkin, J.P. Papers collected for a projected thesis on Sir Robert, educationist, 32 items.

Strode, A.R.Chetham (1823–90); MLC 1865–70.
MS 33, Letters from Dunedin 1848–50, c.60p.

Taverner, W.B. (18??–1958); MHR Dunedin South 1928–31; Minister.
MS 760, Instruments of appointment to the Executive Council and as Minister, 1928–30.

Thomson, G.M. (1848–1933); MHR Dunedin North 1908–14; MLC 1918–32.
MS 218, ‘Tongues in Trees…’, a description of the watershed of Otago Harbour, 1901, 32 leaves;
MS 436, Natural history newspaper articles c.1915–21, 163p.;
MS 1090, Papers, 40cm, including scientific notebooks, outward letters, clippings;
Misc. MS 177, Papers relating to a catalogue of fungi, c.40 leaves.

Misc. MS 559, Points raised by a deputation on proposed zoning changes for secondary schools in Dunedin, 1977, 4p, photocopy.