

(d) *Price of book*

As paper-backs, each would be purchasable for a few shillings.

(e) *Whether any person is likely to be corrupted by reading the books and whether other persons are likely to benefit therefrom*

We have already expressed the view that no person could derive any benefit from reading any of these books. Whether any person is likely to be corrupted by reading them is more difficult. The descriptions of sexual acts and of violence are not any more bold, detailed, or realistic, nor is the language used more objectionable, than in some books already allowed by this tribunal. Moreover, it is difficult to hold in respect of any of these books that its contents offend against the standard current in the community so far as that elusive concept can be assessed. To impose a ban on these books might well be an unwarranted restriction on the freedom of the adult to read what he chooses. But it is a relevant consideration that these books would be displayed in places frequented particularly by young persons whose attentions might be attracted to them by suggestive cover or title, e.g., *Adultery in Suburbia*. Price would be no deterrent against purchase. Mentally and emotionally immature minors form a considerable portion of the public, and though it is difficult to assess what the effect might be on adolescents—and it would of course vary widely—we are prepared to hold that these books could be injurious to young persons, and would on the other hand be of no compensating value or benefit to mature readers.

(f) *Whether any of these books displays an honest purpose and an honest thread of thought or whether its content is merely camouflage designed to render acceptable any indecent parts of the book*

We are quite unable to discover any honest purpose other than a mercenary one. Our view is that each book is designed to pander to prurient appetites—a conclusion which seems well warranted by the fact that each has a kind of frontispiece inside the cover carrying in large type a passage that blatantly draws attention to indecent episodes in the book. While there is nothing in itself decent or indecent in sex, nudity, or earthy language, there is considerable significance in the way in which these things are handled and the values they are given. Their treatment in these books is offensive to say the least.

On an overall consideration of all the features, these books warrant a finding that each is indecent. In spite of our doubt as to whether a reading could fairly be said to deprave or corrupt an adult reader, we think a general ban is called for. It is our opinion that young persons at least would be injuriously affected. The general get up of each book is likely to excite the curiosity of minors, most of whom lack maturity of judgment. We have already (in our decision regarding *Lolita*) alluded to the difficulty of imposing a restriction on sale or distribution to persons below a certain age. In respect of books intended to be offered for sale on book-stalls and the like, such a restriction would prove impracticable. We think therefore, that the cumulative features we have referred to—the nature of the covers, the prominence each book gives to the frontispiece, the flaunting of sexual episodes, and the general contents of each book, all three quite devoid of any sort of merit, justify us in classifying them as indecent and we so decide. We accordingly classify each book as indecent within the meaning of the Indecent Publications Act 1963.

K. M. GRESSON, Chairman.

15 December 1964.

The Indecent Publications Act 1963

THE Indecent Publications Tribunal having considered the application by the Director of the National Library Service in respect of the book *Dead Fingers Talk* by William Burroughs has decided that the said book is not indecent within the meaning of the Indecent Publications Act 1963.

Dated this 21st day of December 1964.

E. M. Smith, Secretary.

DECISION OF THE TRIBUNAL

THE tribunal has considered an application made by the Director of the National Library Service (with the consent of the Minister of Justice) for a decision in respect of the above-named book—whether it is indecent, or alternatively a decision as to its classification.

The Director of the National Library Service appeared formally to support the application but made no submissions. The publisher, John Calder Ltd., of London (in association with the Olympia Press), had notice of the application and of the date for the hearing but did not appear nor make submissions other than to tender a letter claiming William Burroughs to be one of the most highly considered modern literary authors and submitting that though much of the

contents of the book seemed strong to non-literary people its price made it unlikely to give the book an appeal to persons other than those for whom it was intended.

We have considered the book in terms of the Statute. William Burroughs has previously had three novels published which (according to the *Times Literary Supplement* of 14 November 1964) have been "blacklisted by the British Customs and the U.S.A. Mails". None of his earlier novels were available to the tribunal and the present decision is confined specifically to *Dead Fingers Talk*. This novel is, according to the publisher, constructed out of his three earlier novels. The author is obsessed with the themes of drug addiction and homosexuality and the fantasy world of science-fiction. The literary style is, for all but the most resolute reader, impenetrable. There is no narrative; disjointed scenes are assembled by a "montage" technique; phrases and sentences recur in apparently random sequence. In this linguistic porridge some of the lumps are inevitably unpalatable. The author's manner of writing has so effectively restricted his potential reading public that in our opinion no further restriction seems called for.

Our decision is therefore that the book is not indecent within the meaning of the Indecent Publications Act 1963.

The Standards Act 1941—Amendment of Standard Specification

PURSUANT to the Standards Act 1941 and the regulations made thereunder, the Minister of Industries and Commerce, on 8 December 1964, amended the under-mentioned standard specification by the incorporation of the amendment shown hereunder:

Number and Title of Specification: NZSS 1843:1964 Domestic electric steam irons.

Amendment: No. 1.

Application for copies of the standard specification so amended should be made to the N.Z. Standards Institute, Bowen State Building, Bowen Street, or Private Bag, Wellington C. 1, or to the Government Bookshops at Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch, or Dunedin.

Copies of the amendment will be supplied, free of charge, upon request.

Dated at Wellington this 12th day of January 1965.

V. FAIRHALL,
Acting Executive Officer, Standards Council.

(S.I. 114/2/3:1330)

The Standards Act 1941—Amendment of Standard Specification

PURSUANT to the Standards Act 1941 and the regulations made thereunder, the Minister of Industries and Commerce, on 22 December 1964, amended the under-mentioned standard specification by the incorporation of the amendment shown hereunder:

Number and Title of Specification: NZSS 1920:1964 Unplasticised PVC pipe (type 1140) for cold water supply; being BS 3505:1962.

Amendment: No. 3 (PD 5259)

Application for copies of the standard specification so amended should be made to the N.Z. Standards Institute, Bowen State Building, Bowen Street, or Private Bag, Wellington C. 1.

Copies of the amendment will be supplied, free of charge, upon request.

Dated at Wellington this 23rd day of December 1964.

V. FAIRHALL,
Acting Executive Officer, Standards Council.

(S.I. 114/2/3:1357)

The Standards Act 1941—Amendment of Standard Specifications

PURSUANT to the Standards Act 1941 and regulations made thereunder, the Minister of Industries and Commerce, on 23 December 1964, amended the under-mentioned standard specifications by the incorporation of the amendments shown hereunder:

Number and Title of Specification	Amendment
NZSS 165:1959 Rigging screws and stretching screws for general engineering purposes; being BS 716:1958	No. 3 (PD 5106)
NZSS 361:1958 Hose of rubber with cotton or rayon woven reinforcement; being BS 924:1955	No. 5 (PD 5166)
NZSS 375—Screwing taps— Part 2:1958 Taps for Unified threads; being BS 949:Part 2:1954	No. 4 (PD 5129)
NZSS 488—Conversion factors and tables— Part 1:1961 Basis of tables. Conversion factors; being BS 350:Part 1:1959	No. 1 (PD 4850) No. 2 (PD 5028)
NZSS 661:1950 Methods of determining filter factors of photographic negative materials; being BS 1437:1948	No. 2 (PD 4804)