

CHAPTER IITHE PUBLIC LIBRARY UNDER CANTERBURY COLLEGE,  
1878-1913

The period from 1878 to 1913 largely resolves itself into a series of conflicts between the City Council and the College Council with regard to the control of the Public Library - and, as in the early period of the Library's history, finance was once again the cause of grave concern. A survey of New Zealand Libraries published in 1934 states that, "The Auckland Public Libraries ... comprise the oldest, largest and most fully-developed library system in New Zealand."<sup>(1)</sup> This Library also developed out of a Mechanics' Institute which had been forced out of existence by financial difficulties<sup>(2)</sup> so that a brief comparison of the ensuing developments of the Libraries of the Queen City and the Garden City should not be out of place at this stage. The Auckland Town Clerk's Report 1879 states that the City Council, having been unable to comply with requests from the Mechanics' Institute for pecuniary assistance, was prepared to accept an offer from the Institute to transfer its site, building, and library to the Council subject to the ratepayers endorsing their action, by means of a poll, to bring into operation the "Public Libraries Act" of 1869.<sup>(3)</sup> This Act,

- 
1. Ralph Munn and John Barr. "New Zealand Libraries." Christchurch, Libraries Association of New Zealand, 1934. p.19.
  2. John Barr. "Three Score Years and Ten." Auckland, Auckland City Council, 1950. p.3.
  3. *ibid* p.3-4.