

which empowered the governing body of any city or town to levy a library rate, not exceeding a penny in the pound, for the establishment of free public libraries, could be brought into force in any area by a public poll held at the discretion of the Council or by a request in writing from ten ratepayers. (4) At the ensuing poll in Auckland the citizens endorsed the Council's action by a vote of 728 to 91. (5) Auckland was the first place in New Zealand to take advantage of "The Public Libraries Act" and the evolution of the Public Library from the Mechanics' Institute, as seen in Auckland, is a pattern which became commonplace throughout New Zealand. (6) In contrast to this pattern Christchurch stands forth as a unique example, as, for seventy years, the Public Library received no appreciable financial support from public funds but remained the property of Canterbury College which, because of a shortage of finances, was unable to maintain the library at a standard adequate to the needs of a growing city. It is this problem which makes the Christchurch library system so different from that of other New Zealand towns and on which we must now focus our attention.

In order to get to the roots of the problem it is necessary to retrace our steps to the year 1872 when, on January 15, a motion was passed in the Provincial Council

"That his Honour the Superintendent be respectfully requested to reserve a tract or tracts of country not exceeding in the aggregate 100,000 acres of purely pastoral hilly land in the Province of Canterbury, as an endowment for the School of Technical

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4. Statutes of New Zealand, 1869. No. 67, p.235.

5. John Barr. op. cit. p.4.

6. *ibid* p. 4-5.