

the whole question. "Biblion's" letter was followed two days later by one from H. Wynn Williams, a prominent citizen, who emphasised the necessity of having all such important bodies as the Governors of the College chosen by the public whose interests they represented. He believed that, until this was done, there could be no hope of having their work publicly and properly done, and he considered that there was no doubt that the Public Library was being robbed of its share of the reserves, and that it was time the public were awakened to the fact. (21)

There can be no doubt, as later evidence will show, that the Board's attitude was mistaken, but to suggest its members were negligent in their duty to the College and to the public was a preposterous charge and savours of modern sensationalism. Even although the Board was in the wrong, it must be admitted that it was faced with a very real and serious problem. The National Endowment Act 1907 set aside an area of 7,000,000 acres (later raised to 9,000,000 acres) of land as an endowment in perpetuity to be disposed of only on leasehold terms. Seventy per cent of the net revenue was to help defray education costs, while the remainder was to be devoted to old age pensions. In 1926 the expenditure on education was £3,910,241 and on old age pensions £982,356 but the gross rental of the national endowment was only £138,040. (22) If the New Zealand Government had had to rely solely on this source to finance pensions and education, it would have been faced with the same problem which faced the Board who were trying to support

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21. L.T. February 18, 1884.

22. J.B. Condliffe, "New Zealand in the Making", London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1930. p. 235.