

siderable damage done, this was closed in 1905.

Figures are apt to make dry reading, but, used judiciously, they can also be instructive. It should now be apparent that, despite many assertions to the contrary, and despite the Board's professed lack of interest in any but the reference department, the whole library grew steadily during the period from 1874 to 1906. Not only did the amount of reading material increase both in volume and in variety, but the library building itself was also the subject of considerable expenditure. It would thus not be unreasonable to presume that the citizens of Christchurch, satisfied with their literary diet, were loth to sack the cook. "Better the devil we know!"

Although, on the surface, matters appeared to be quite satisfactory at the turn of the century, the financial position was by no means healthy. When presenting his annual statement for the year 1906, the Chairman of the Board of Governors said, with reference to the Library, that,

"I think the time has now come when this Board should consider seriously how far it is justified in withdrawing funds that were originally provided for 'the promotion of literature and science' (51) in order to provide the citizens of Christchurch with the most up-to-date novels and the magazines of the day."(52)

Further to this statement, the Chairman wrote to the City Council drawing attention to the financial position of the Library, and explaining that, as much of the money devoted to it in the past would

51. Preamble of 1870 Ordinance. Appendix A.

52. B.ofG. 1907, p.10.