

down in any large undertakings. The City, however, has much wider resources and can thus provide Christchurch with a Library such as befits a city of such high status, without the continual fear of lack of finance lurking in the background.

Without fear of contradiction, it can be said that the Library, when received by the Council in 1948, was not of a standard consistent with a city of approximately 124,000 inhabitants. Yet, in the early years of the Canterbury settlement, it would appear that Christchurch had a library of which it could well be proud. In making a final assessment of the responsibility for this lapse, two facts are extremely prominent. The College authorities, dogged with financial worries from the outset, were consequently unable to maintain all the institutions under their control at an adequate standard. They had to make a choice between keeping them all at a mediocre standard and ensuring that one or possibly two were maintained at the highest possible standard. Because they chose the second alternative, they have been strongly criticised by persons, many of whom have been in a position to familiarize themselves with the facts of the case. All things being equal a fair-minded person would tend to uphold these critics but it is at this point that the second outstanding factor assumes significance.

From 1869, before the Canterbury College acquired the Library, the City authorities had power to control the Library and to support it from the rates. The belated acquisition of the Library in 1948 plainly suggests chronic shortsightedness on behalf of many earlier Councillors. This view is certainly supported by the facts recounted