

on the public purse, and for their reluctance to have to show any rating increases at the triennial elections. In 1908 local bodies were given power to levy a library rate, not exceeding a penny in the pound, (64) while in 1938 the upper limit was raised to twopence. (65) Yet the Christchurch City Council, since taking over the Canterbury Public Library, has levied a library rate of only .17256 of a penny in the pound while the amount collected (£6364/8/10) represents only .00848 per cent of the total rate. (66) And so, for the want of a very small library rate, the Canterbury Public Library was allowed to deteriorate to a mere shadow of its former magnificence, and the suburban libraries were allowed to develop in a haphazard manner which militated against their rendering the best possible service to the public. Now that the City Library has been acquired by the people of Christchurch, it should be possible to take immediate steps to rectify this situation, but, until the library system is centralised or at least co-ordinated, the position will, perforce, remain far from satisfactory. It is to an understanding of the growth and inadequacy of this system that we must now turn our attention.

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64. Statutes of New Zealand, 1908, No.124, Section 90. "Municipal Corporations Act." This applied to all public libraries. The "Public Libraries Act" 1869. (vide supra Ch.2 p.24) applied only to free libraries.

65. *Ibid*, 1938, No.3, Section 8. "Municipal Corporations Amendment Act.

66. C.C.C. Rating Department.