

In Sydenham (or the Colombo Road District) a meeting was called by the School Committee who considered it their duty to extend the advantages of education to the adults of the district rather than to confine their efforts solely to children. Even at this early stage in Canterbury's history some of those present spoke in favour of the establishment of a free library but it was eventually decided to levy a subscription of two shillings and sixpence per annum.<sup>(19)</sup> It would appear from the report of the meeting at Woolston that a library already existed and, as at Papanui, the question was one of location.<sup>(20)</sup> The meetings held at Waltham,<sup>(21)</sup> Addington,<sup>(22)</sup> and New Brighton<sup>(23)</sup> all envisaged the establishment of new libraries in their respective districts although the first was called largely as a protest against the earlier meeting in Sydenham.

The question which immediately springs to the reader's mind is, surely, the reason for this sudden zeal. The impetus, it would appear, was the availability of financial assistance. Many of the provinces, especially in the North Island, were in grave financial straits by 1873 but Canterbury, although beginning to feel the consequences of a period of inflation, was still probably the richest province in the colony, and, like Otago, was widely renowned for its grants to education. This fact supplies the answer to the question, for on June 14, 1873 the Provincial Council made a grant of £5000 "for aiding in establishing new and assisting existing Public Libraries Book Clubs, and Institutes in country districts."<sup>(24)</sup> Hence the rush

19. *ibid* July 17, 1873.

20. *ibid*.

21. *ibid* July 25, 1873.

22. *ibid* July 24, 1873.

23. *ibid* August 1, 1873.

24. Journal of the Canterbury Provincial Council. Session XXXIX, June 14, 1873 p.115.