

to divide the spoils - hence, also, a scathing letter in the "Times" at the end of July.

"Every issue of your valuable paper contains a report of a meeting held somewhere or other, for the purpose of taking steps towards the establishment of a library in such and such a district, and, in nearly every case, we find a resolution 'carried unanimously', to the effect that the sum of £200 or £250, and in some cases £300 or £400 be applied for, etc. from the grant of £5000, towards establishing libraries in country districts ... I should think the Government will have at least seventy applications for aid to consider, ... and one feels a little curious to know how all are to receive the aid applied for ..." (25)

As this account is only concerned with those libraries now in the metropolitan area it would be irrelevant to digress with regard to the numerous small districts throughout the province which clamoured to feed at the public crib, but it is of interest to record that four days after applications closed the number of applicants had reached seventy-five. (26) Faced with the colossal task of ensuring that every district should be treated according to its merits, the Provincial Council set about dividing its grant in a workmanlike manner, laying down a definite principle for library grants. All sites for library buildings were to be vested either in the Superintendent or trustees with the declaration that they were for the purpose of public libraries and that the books or other property would not be alienated, but held for the benefit of the inhabitants of the respective districts. When these conditions were complied with, the Government was prepared to grant a pound for pound subsidy, varying in amount according to the population of the district, together with a grant, not exceeding £50, for the purchase of books. (27) When the final distribution figures were announced, Papanui

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25. L.T. July 29, 1873.

26. *ibid* August 8, 1873.

27. *ibid* August 20, 1873.