

are, like volunteer fire brigades, quite inadequate to the needs of a large city.⁽⁶⁹⁾ It is only to be expected that volunteer workers are little interested in accurate and elaborate cataloguing and card-indexing. Moreover, they have had no training in buying the better class of literature or in culling out the old, disused works which serve only to occupy valuable shelf space. When the City Library adds 5000 new volumes to the shelves of its circulating department skilled hands rapidly weed out 4500 volumes which are no longer in demand.⁽⁷⁰⁾ In this manner it is possible to ensure a steady supply of new books without being cramped for space. But figures and personal inspection show that many of the suburban libraries, while ensuring a steady supply of modern literature, neglect the equally important task of discarding the out-of-date. Hence they find themselves continually cramped for space and carrying a large stock of books which may not have been in circulation for two, three, or even five years.

The second important consideration must surely be the question of membership. This question involves the number of members in relation to the population of the area served and the qualifications for membership. Apart from a subscription varying from six to ten shillings per year,⁽⁷¹⁾ there is no check on membership and, if one so wished, it would be possible to belong to every library in Christchurch. It will be observed that these figures compare more than favourably with those for the City Library, which, starved through municipal shortsightedness, is compelled to levy a subscript-

69. Munn and Barr. op. cit. p.22.

70. Personal information from Mr. E.J. Bell.

71. These are 1948 figures. The average is 7/0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.