

the city. (89) The first speaker apparently overlooked the fact that a library supported from the rates is still paid for by the people who use it - the difference being that more people pay less for it and that more people can use it.

Nevertheless the library grant for 1938 included only £700 for the suburban libraries and £400 for the city library. The Museum also received a miserable pittance. While it is a recognised duty of the Council to husband the ratepayers' money, this provides no excuse for the neglect and financial starvation of institutions which should be rendering essential educational service to the community. The case was admirably summarized by Dr. Guthrie in a letter to "The Press".

"The duty of civic authorities to provide their citizens with the means of intellectual culture is recognised in every civilised community. Christchurch seems to be the only exception ... Is it the people or their rulers upon whom we are to fasten the blame for this intellectual poverty?" (90)

This concluding sentence merits careful consideration.

Yet the City Council and the ratepayers of Christchurch sat complacently by while civic funds continued to be expended on recreational literature for a small section of the community. When addressing the Town Clerks' Institute of New Zealand at Christchurch in March 1939, the Director of the Country Library Service (Mr. G.T. Alley) usefully commented on the example of the Dunedin Public Library which, having become a free library, abandoned the attempt to "satisfy the people who clamour for the current literary rubbish", and pursued the policy of building up a valuable stock of books. (91)

---

89. *ibid.*

90. "Press" August 16, 1938.

91. *ibid.* March 16, 1939.