

popularity of which was so great that even this accommodation was often taxed to its utmost limits, while in one year the total of 11,731 books was issued for home reading.⁽⁵⁾

When the juvenile department was established in 1908, all children between the ages of ten and fifteen years of age were admitted free. Although the membership did not increase as rapidly as at first expected, it soon began to progress, and by 1916 had reached 530, while the 16,020 volumes circulated in that year represented the encouraging average of thirty per member.⁽⁶⁾ This junior service was extended in 1917 to those between the ages of fifteen and seventeen years on the payment of an annual subscription of two shillings and sixpence, and by the middle of that year almost 200 volumes had been added to this section, over sixty of which dealt with subjects ranging from history and travel to nature-study, science, and biography.⁽⁷⁾ Making a statement to the press on the question of the children's library, Mr. Bell said that the object was to teach the children to read only the best literature. In general, he said that it was recognised both in the United Kingdom and the United States that adult use of libraries was dictated largely by training in youth. A public library without a juvenile section was the exception rather than the rule in both of these countries. It had been shown that, if children did not have access to good books, they almost invariably read rubbish, and children had far too many opportunities to read literature that blunted and vulgarised their taste. As the public library was the natural extension of the public school, he pointed

5. *ibid* 1915, p.28.

6. *ibid* 1917, p.36.

7. L.T. July 27, 1917.