

But the history of the library service which is insufficient and inadequate should be the concern of everyone connected with it, from administrators to members. This is the principal value which I place on this thesis. If only the people of Christchurch can once be brought to a realisation of the deficiencies of the present system and an appreciation of the value of an adequate one, their future cultural nourishment should be assured and they would be in a position to understand the outlook of their fellow humans - whether black, white or yellow.

The early citizens of Christchurch, realising the futility of attempting to maintain the Mechanics' Institute because of its precarious financial position, charged the Board of Governors of the newly established Canterbury College with establishing and supporting a public library. It would appear that in those early days there was an appreciation of the true function of a public library - else why would its control have been vested in a body concerned with education? Likewise it would appear that some at least of the early suburban libraries were founded with a similar appreciation. Almost from the outset financial difficulties became the cause of greatest concern, but throughout its period of control the Board kept its ideal firmly in mind and steadfastly objected to spending large sums of money on "trash". However, until recent years, the City Council has refused to face up to its obligations and has been content to let a valuable institution moulder away to comparative uselessness. It seems a great pity that the City Council, insisting on its "pound of flesh" and an exact interpretation of the letter of the law, demanded a share of the endowment from an already impoverished College.