

# Linwood Library Gazette

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." —Steele.

VOL. 1, No. 2.



NOVEMBER, 1935.

## WELLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

By JOSEPH NORRIE, Chief Librarian.

I have been asked by your Committee to give some idea of public library work here in Wellington.

On December 1, 1840, a meeting of about twelve hundred Wellington settlers considered the advisability of opening a Public Library and Reading Room. The Port Nicholson Mechanics' Institute, Public School and Library was the result. In 1892 the Port Nicholson Mechanics' Institute was taken over by the Wellington City Council and the present Central Library building was erected. In 1902 the Newtown Branch was established, followed by other branches in subsequent years. During 1928 I presented a report to the City Council concerning the library service generally and advocating a system of Branch Libraries throughout the suburbs for administration from the Central Library. Since that report branch libraries have been opened in Wadestown and Miramar. Another library, the eighth of the system, is to be opened at Lylly Bay before the end of this year.

With a system of seven libraries it is almost impossible, in spite of the large reduction in overhead expenses, to carry out library service to the people of Wellington to the best advantage. When the present Central Library building was built 80 books a day was the average issue. The average daily issue for the city is at present 2,491, and the Central Library accounts for about half that figure. It is expected that the new library building will contain departments which should make library work here an even more vital

thing than it has become. The library is to cost £60,000. The Reference Department will contain adequate provision for periodicals and for the proper accommodation of New Zealand books which form a very fine collection. The Lending Department will be constructed on a modern plan, no book stacks being placed so as to hide the public from the assistants at the desk. The site which has been set apart is not that on which the existing building stands, but one very close, stretching from Mercer Street through to Harris Street and, being rectangular, will make designing a comparatively simple matter. Plans are at present being drawn up to be entered for the City Council's competition; and in drawing up the specifications upon which the plans are to be based, Mr Cecil Wood of Christchurch and myself, who are assessors, for purposes of the competition, directed particular attention to be devoted to the housing of junior books, music, the two Schools systems administered by the libraries, the bindery, which is at present located with the schools systems at Newtown, and proper cataloguing quarters. Provision will be made for photostatic equipment, special collections of pictures, maps, cuttings, postcards, etc., and for a vertical file.

It is difficult to be hospitable in any practical way in the present Central Library although one is always glad to receive a visit from librarians or members of committees, but in a new building it should be quite within our power to provide for a visitor to obtain a thorough idea of the nature and main lines of work within a comparatively short visit to the building, and I hope that people engaged in library work all over the country will