

GIVE THIS JOURNAL TO A FRIEND

FREE COMPETITION — SEE INSIDE.

Linwood Library Gazette

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

Vol. 3 No. 10



August, 1938

LIBRARIES IN SUBURBAN CHRISTCHURCH

By THE BROWSER

Spreydon Library is to be congratulated on the fact that it is the first suburban library to hear a councillor, Mr E. Parlane, definitely take his stand in advocating a Library Rate for Christchurch, and another, Mr E. H. Andrews, carefully heading in the same direction, giving figures to prove his opinion that "on the average section the rate would be less than 2/- "and that would not be a serious burden on the ratepayers."

Mr E. Parlane was on right lines in his advocacy when he said, "When the time comes that we have to strike a rate I hope the people will regard it as necessary to improve the social amenities of the city. In the next few years steps would be taken to create a Greater Christchurch, and it was necessary to be prepared for such a move. A Library Rate would be a *step* in the right direction, and he would certainly support the adoption of such a rate if it was sponsored while he was on the Council."

There is not only vision and foresight in the remarks of Councillor Parlane, but some courage also. The idea of a Greater Christchurch with 10 or more suburban libraries, each one independent of the others, entirely lacking co-operation, with no cohesion and no systematic planning as a whole, is one that would not be tolerated in any other city of 120,000 citizens in any English speaking country in the world. It involves a waste of effort and money and it is probably only because hitherto the total amount given by the

City Council has been so insignificant that it has escaped notice. In the last year the amount has been increased and must inevitably increase still more in the very near future. This being so it seems obvious that the question of efficient spending will crop up. Whatever the total sum is, or will be, it is clear that money from the rates is, and has been, spent on libraries, the use of which is rigidly restricted to those who pay a further rate as subscription. So that a few of the people, by paying this subscription reap and enjoy the benefit of money paid by all the citizens of Christchurch, either directly as rates, or indirectly as rent. It remains, therefore, that as soon as the ratepayers realise they are paying for something they are debarred from enjoying—unless they pay a further rate for subscription—they will speedily demand that the whole of the libraries be put upon a sound common sense basis, i.e., to be supported and controlled by the City Council and that the service be enjoyed by all.

Before the dream of a Greater Christchurch is realised it seems logical that the position of the present scattered and disunited library units should be, with other schemes of town planning, fully considered by the City Council in order that a Library System in and around Christchurch on modern lines regarding buildings, equipment, technique and service should be an accomplished fact, ready to function with the establishment of a Greater Christchurch. Even if the latter be delayed, the matter of library reform is urgent and vital.

The sub-leader in the "Press" of July