

PROPOSALS FOR THE  
THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY SERVICES

INTRODUCTION:

The resignation of Mr O'Reilly, City Librarian from 1951 to 1968, ended the most significant era in the Library's history. His appointment soon after the City had accepted responsibility for the control of the Library resulted in the fortunate combination of a brilliant and enthusiastic librarian and a Council which recognised the need to improve library service in the City.

The recommendations embodied in his Special Report to the Council adopted in December 1951 provided the basis of a policy which resulted in spectacular expansion for some years. But the struggle to maintain a reasonable rate of accessions in spite of ever-increasing book and operating costs coupled with the Council's natural desire to keep rate increases to a minimum has meant that, in recent years there has been little left over for the further development of an essential service for the benefit of the City as a whole.

In December 1967 Mr O'Reilly presented to Council a Special Report on the State of the Libraries. This searching Report surveyed developments since the 1951 Report and was intended as a basis for a libraries development plan. For various reasons (mainly Mr O'Reilly's resignation) little action was taken on the Report but it is now felt that, with a new Council, this is an appropriate time to consider further development of library service in the City. Much has been achieved since the City assumed control of the Library but there are many problems still to be tackled before every citizen's right of access to recorded knowledge is made fully effective through the City's library service as a whole.

For the information of new Councillors much of the material contained in Mr O'Reilly's 1967 Report has been re-emphasised or expanded in this report.

RATING AND FINANCE :

The 1967 Report showed that, whereas the City's total and general rating growth has been proportionate to the growth of property values during the present decade, this is not the case with the Library Rate. A Library Rate of the same proportion of the General Rate as in 1958/59 would amount, in 1968/69, to \$212,000 instead of the estimated \$178,913. A rate yield such as this would go some way towards keeping pace with the increasing cost of books and salaries and would allow for some capital development and a more energetic programme to arrest the declining use of the suburban libraries.

The Local Authorities Section of the New Zealand Library Association has compiled a summary of public library statistics as at 31st March, 1968, to enable members of the Section to assess the relative position of their library with other libraries of a similar size. The summary reveals that while the Christchurch local body grant was \$1.06 per capita, Wellington's was \$2.38, Auckland's \$2.53 and Dunedin's \$1.91. The N.Z. Library Association's provisional standard is \$1.40. Admittedly both Auckland and Wellington provide full branch systems but it is interesting to note that with no service to suburbs apart from a mobile service, Dunedin's rate per capita is nearly double that of Christchurch.

The Summary also shows that Christchurch's rate of .1285 in the dollar is well below those of the other main centres, and most secondary cities.

Apart from the physical limitations of the building, lack of finance is the major specific factor limiting further growth. The present budget is barely adequate to maintain existing services which in many respects are well below the standards of service other New Zealand cities enjoy. If Christchurch's library rate could be brought more into proportionate alignment on valuation with those of other cities it would still be a far lower rate per head of population than theirs but as an intermediary step would provide finance to allow for improvement of those services which are below standard.

### THE CANTERBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

#### BUILDING :

The 1967 Report dealt at some length with the inadequacies of the Library building and how important these inadequacies were in retarding growth in services. Much worthwhile material which would be of interest to borrowers cannot be displayed on the open shelves and considerable staff time is taken up in locating prematurely stacked books which may be shelved in one of several different places. With adequate over-all floor space to provide attractive access to the stacked stock a great deal more of it would be out on loan and material which deserves a permanent place in the collection would not need to be withdrawn from stock.

The recently installed steel shelving in the New Zealand Room has provided additional shelving for 5,000 volumes and the use of part of the Library flat for storage will provide room for a further 15,000 volumes though many of these will be prematurely stacked and their use will thus be restricted. At an average growth rate of 7,000 volumes a year this gain in shelving is a very temporary solution and in no way solves the problem in the main lending area.

It would appear that the only relief to be found within the walls of the existing building for the Lending Room would be the addition of a mezzanine floor at the western end of the main Lending Room, calculated to provide approximately 1,000 feet of shelving to accommodate 10,000 volumes. It is estimated that the cost of this mezzanine would be approximately \$6,000 and it is considered that its construction should be proceeded with in the next financial year.

#### A NEW BUILDING :

The most optimistic estimate would indicate that the present building, even with the addition of the mezzanine, will be jammed to capacity within four years, so a firm decision relevant to a new library building should be made forthwith.

The expenditure of public money on a new library building is justified where good library services are operating in cramped quarters, where professional work is impeded through physical restrictions, or where, simply, the work being done has outgrown the building designed for it. On all three counts Christchurch needs a new library; without one, further growth of services is being stifled and in fact it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the standards of service already reached.

The building as it stands provides approximately 19,000 square feet of floor space whereas an internationally recognised formula for calculating standards of floor space for public libraries indicates that the desirable standard is 67,000. To allow for twenty years' expansion, on the same formula our requirements would be 82,000 square feet in 1969, 88,000 by 1976 and 92,000 by 1981. These figures provide convincing proof of the need for a new building.

The first problem to be settled in planning a new library is that of a suitable location. Although an area of 15,000 square feet was set aside in the Town Hall complex it is my opinion that this area would not only be inadequate but there is a considerable weight of evidence to suggest that the proposed location would be a costly error. There are many recorded examples of badly sited new library buildings so poorly used that the capital tied up in them is conspicuously wasted. All too often these new buildings have been sited in civic centres, with which they have little affinity. The qualities of a good library site are similar to those of the large department store, and it should therefore ideally be on or adjacent to an area of heavy pedestrian traffic which is that of the central retail shops. The library's major objective has been defined as the provision of the best materials and the best service to be used by the largest number of citizens at the least service cost. This objective cannot be achieved by ineffective location of the building.

If it is accepted that a new building is essential then the first step towards it should be the setting up of a sub-committee to go into the complexities of location, size of building, finance and timing. Whatever decision is taken on timing it must be taken now so that the immediate space problems can be looked at in the light of a definite term of occupancy. It would be unwise, for instance, to contemplate temporary extensions to the present building without knowing how much longer it is likely to be used as a library.

#### CENTRAL LIBRARY SERVICES :

The lending services of the Canterbury Public Library, based on the 'Free-and-Rental Plan' adopted in 1951 are generally in good shape, the policy being the most economical one for ensuring a stock that is probably higher in over-all quality and more intensively used than any other in the country. In recent years, however, spiralling book costs have depressed annual accessions. Annual increases in the book vote, estimated to compensate for price increases during the previous year have been swallowed up by subsequent increases and there has been a steady decline in the number of books purchased each year since 1961. Lending services depend on current buying for high use and to maintain current buying it has been necessary to curtail systematic checking to ensure that all the currently standard works in the fields covered by the Serious Collection are held in the Collection. These standard works are an essential part of a well-balanced stock.

It is in the field of Reference services that the Library fails to fulfill the full functions generally expected of a modern metropolitan library service. Because of an inadequate book vote the Library is forced to restrict its purchase of important bibliographic and reference aids, which are librarians' working tools in the answering of enquiries. The range of periodicals which are the first source of up to date information in the developing areas of knowledge, is severely limited particularly in the fields of industry technology and commerce.

Christchurch firms are using the technical and commercial material of the Library more and more but this increase in use, emphasises the shortcomings of the collection and indicates that the problem of service to industry and commerce requires a great deal of attention. Such a service is an accepted part of public library service both overseas and in other major New Zealand libraries. In other centres, for instance, closer liaison between the public library and local firms including a survey of the periodical holdings of local firms to augment the library's technical resources and periodical holdings has made local industry aware of what the public library has to offer as well as revealing to the library concerned its strengths and weaknesses and how they can be best helped. This type of survey, however, would be inadvisable before the Library had something to show for itself and the first step would be to build up the collection by the purchase of current authoritative works and standard works which have appeared over the past ten years.

In this respect we are fortunate in having on the staff, the newly appointed Deputy City Librarian who is one of the few librarians in the country who have specialised in this field. Mr Wooliscroft, prior to his appointment, had just completed a survey of commercial and technical resources for the Wellington City Council and the N.Z. Library Association and it is proposed that he be asked to report more fully on the needs of this section of the Library and the steps to be taken to provide the business community with the service it can expect as a sizeable ratepayer.

Of all forms of public library service, reference service is the most exacting and in the long run the most rewarding to the civic authority. Because of the cost of maintaining this service little of significance has been done outside the city libraries, the use of whose reference collections extends far beyond their boundaries.

The State, through the Country Library Service, gives substantial aid-in-kind to most public libraries, but this aid is not given to the four main cities and is relatively limited in its application to the large secondary cities. In view of the value of the City Libraries' reference services to the whole community, and their non-participation in State aid, determined efforts should be made to persuade the Government to extend its aid to the City Libraries in the form of cash subsidies on a population basis for the support of reference services.

#### STAFF :

While the number of professional librarians employed is adequate at present, much of their time is being used on non-professional chores. Staff growth has not kept pace with growth of demand so that professional time spent on book selection, stock revision and reader advisor service has been gradually eroded in order to maintain essential services usually manned by assistants.

In both the Adults' and Children's Divisions long queues frequently form at service points while telephones go unanswered and there are often irritating delays at Enquiries Desks. In the Reference Division a similar situation arises from time to time. Here, however, an even more serious aspect is that, because of inadequate supervision, valuable material can be easily pilfered or mutilated. There is simply not the staff available to institute the additional routines necessary to reduce this waste of valuable assets.

In each of the three Divisions one additional appointment at the assistant level would give the professional staff more time to concentrate on the duties for which they were trained and for

which they were appointed. It would also help to alleviate the delays at service points and improve the supervision of public areas and service to the public.

A comparison with the staffs of the Auckland and Wellington Central Libraries shows that the pressures on our staff are considerably greater than in the other centres. With a library staff of 29 the Canterbury Public Library made over 928,000 loans in 1967/68; Auckland Central Library made 405,000 with a staff of 49, and Wellington Central Library, 670,000 with a staff of 41. These figures are not a reflection of inefficiency in the other centres but an indication of the poor standards of service in Christchurch, particularly in reference service. In Auckland and Wellington, reference services have been developed to the stage where they have made a real impact on civic life including that of business and industry.

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SUBURBAN LIBRARY SERVICE :

For too long, lip-service has been paid to the splendid achievements of the suburban libraries under the voluntary system of staffing. In all but a few cases these splendid achievements relate only to the long hours (over 800 hours per week altogether) and devotion to duty of the voluntary workers. The City is heavily indebted to these public-spirited people and could ill afford to replace them at this stage, but the service most suburban libraries are offering at present is a very poor reward for the effort put into it.

There is no desire on anyone's part to undermine the voluntary system though it must be accepted that it will inevitably be superseded. There is already evidence that it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract volunteers to assist in some areas and the demand for paid assistance already voiced by some libraries indicates that the present pattern is unlikely to be extended in the future.

The generally low standards of service in the suburbs is revealed in the comparisons with Auckland and Wellington branch library issues. From nine branch libraries and a bookmobile Auckland issued 1,600,000 books in 1967/68 while Wellington, with ten branches and a bookmobile issued over 900,000 books. Though not all suburban libraries keep accurate issue statistics the most optimistic estimate would be not much more than 500,000 issues from eighteen service points. This poor showing points to the inadequacy of the service and explains the heavy burden placed on the Central Library.

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As an interim measure the immediate aim of the Council as the City's library authority should be towards the ultimate attainment of uniform terms and standards of service throughout the suburban libraries. The major barrier to this is the reluctance of many libraries to abandon the subscription system and offer free-and-rental service to all. Within the limitations of the present system the free part of suburban service can be provided satisfactorily through the Pooled Stock scheme; the libraries can charge rental fees for their own books which are invariably the type for which borrowers will willingly pay a small fee. Burwood has proved that, by adopting these terms, the present basis of Council subsidy is enough to give them reasonable funds. Burwood's subsidy works out at 14 cents per borrower and the total spent per borrower is 40 cents. The worst of the subscription-run libraries receives a subsidy of \$1.45 per borrower and spends \$2.66 per head for a vastly inferior service.

A positive approach to suburban library service is long

overdue. While the City is heavily dependent on the voluntary workers and cannot afford to replace them at this stage even if it wished to, the libraries in turn would not be able to function without Council subsidies and Council maintenance of buildings. Given a positive, energetic lead most libraries would, it is felt, respond to the challenge to provide something more than what are, in effect, reading clubs run largely on Council subsidy for the benefit of a small minority of the community.

FUTURE SUBURBAN LIBRARY POLICY :

The adoption of free and rental terms will do no more than improve the existing service, and much more positive action is necessary to put the library system on a sound basis with adequate coverage of all parts of the City.

A definite long-term policy will safeguard the Council from the likelihood of being further committed to the piecemeal development which has taken place in recent years and which has done little to improve the over-all service.

Because of the uneven development of suburban libraries the City has inherited a cluster of far too densely situated units in the southern suburbs providing service at vastly different levels and leaving large areas to the east and north unserved.

Recent trends in suburban service have been towards the provision of several larger, strategically located district branches supplemented by a number of smaller neighbourhood service points. This sort of development would fit in well with the Christchurch Development Plan envisaging five district centres and seventeen local centres. Each district centre would have a proper branch library of approximately 3,000 square feet with a paid qualified librarian in charge. The local centres would be served by some of the existing suburban libraries and the superfluous ones would have to be persuaded to wind up.

The district centres named in the Development Plan are Papanui, Shirley, New Brighton, Linwood Avenue, and Sydenham. Except in the case of Sydenham the siting is considered ideal for branch libraries. Sydenham is too close to the Central Library for a branch library to be economically viable and the south west area of the City would be better served by a full scale branch on the Spreydon Library site. The present Spreydon building may well have to be replaced in the near future and if this is so the new building should fulfill the desiderata of a branch library building.

As to the other sites, a new building is justified at Papanui as the Library is a busy one by suburban library standards, achieving good issues from a wretched adult library and a most inconveniently situated children's section at one end of the social hall upstairs.

New Brighton, with a reasonably adequate building is already showing good results and it is possible that they would be open to the suggestion of a qualified librarian in several years' time. The building would probably require further extensions within ten years.

The Shirley and Linwood Avenue areas would have to be served in the meantime by a mobile library but permanent buildings would be necessary within a few years - at the Marshland Road/Shirley Road intersection and at the Linwood Avenue/Buckley's Road intersection.

The five branches are as much as the City could economically support at the full branch level. Of the remaining

New  
Spreydon  
Feb  
March  
1971

mobile  
approved  
C.C.C.  
16 June 1969  
Introduced  
2.6.70

libraries Mairehau, Burwood, Beckenham, and Opawa could be developed as secondary level branches with part-time paid librarians assisted by voluntary labour. These four would give adequate coverage of the areas outside the effective range of the larger branches. Hoon Hay is a special case. It should remain a children's library while the district remains young but eventually should probably be developed as a secondary level branch. A paid qualified part-time children's librarian should, however, be appointed as soon as possible.

*closed 7/71*  
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Addington, Linwood, North New Brighton, St Albans, Sydenham, and Waltham all come within the effective area of the central or main branch libraries and their continued existence would not be justified if the branches were established. Mt Pleasant, Redcliffs, St Martins, Sumner and Woolston would be better served by a bookmobile if the present units found themselves unable to operate under the new scheme.

The \$55,000 spent on suburban libraries this year is yielding a mediocre return and still leaves many areas of the City unserved. The adoption in principle of a policy aimed at the establishment of a two-tiered branch system supplemented by mobile service would clear the way for detailed planning along these lines and would form the basis of a sound metropolitan library system.

#### MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE :

Wholly unserved districts are Merivale, Bryndwr, Richmond, Shirley, North Linwood, Wainoni, Aranui, South New Brighton, Avonside, and Bromley, while Hoon Hay lacks adult service. Only two of these districts would rate library buildings but the rest would be more economically served by a bookmobile.

Bookmobiles cannot be regarded as an adequate substitute for library buildings but for the initial cost of a small suburban library and a reasonable annual cost thereafter, a bookmobile can provide service to a number of suburbs which would otherwise be unserved for many years.

Bringing books to people by bookmobile is the most dramatic, colourful type of everyday public library service and it has been proved most cost-effective in terms of loans per dollar spent. It can be used to estimate the likelihood of success of a library building in alternative possible locations and great flexibility allows for the seeking of service points located most conveniently for the greatest use. The bookstock, though limited, can be renewed daily by drawing on headquarters stock and the per-circulation book and salary cost is  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd to  $\frac{1}{4}$  that of a small branch library.

The provision of one bookmobile initially, would enable service to be given to five suburbs and the five most deserving cases would appear to be :

1. Shirley - corner of Marshland and Shirley Roads.
2. Linwood - corner of Buckleys Road and Linwood Avenue.
3. Merivale Post Office area in Papanui Road.
4. Wainoni shopping area.
5. Bryndwr shopping area.

*Approved 16.6.69*  
Buildings would eventually be required in Shirley and Linwood at which stage mobile service would be extended to areas where existing libraries were affected by the developments outlined above.

Practice elsewhere varies but it would seem that the maximum use results from half-day visits to each service point with at least two visits per week in most cases. However a little trial-and-error at the outset to determine the optimum deployment is not costly with a mobile service.

The capital cost of a bookmobile would be in the region of \$20,000 and a staff of two would be required to staff it and service the bookstock. But for an outlay equivalent to the cost of one small branch library at least five unserved suburbs could be given an interim service by the one means.

It is considered that the provision of a bookmobile should have priority over any further capital expenditure on suburban library buildings.

The analysis of suburban library statistics at the end of this report gives an indication of the unevenness of service provided. It shows the relative success of the newer libraries which have adopted free and rental terms and the economy with which they can operate. Enough evidence has been accumulated to indicate the libraries which are most deserving of further assistance and to serve as a guide to the areas in which future development should take place.

#### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS :

FINANCE: The need for the development of the City's library services, has, it is hoped, been clearly stated in this report, but development cannot take place without increased expenditure. In comparison with other centres the City's expenditure on libraries is extremely low and this is reflected in the low standards of service particularly in the suburbs. A Library Rate of a similar proportion of the General Rate as it was in the late fifties would restore Library finances to a reasonable level and allow for expansion and development.

BUILDING: The services from the Central Library are hampered by the physical restrictions of the building. Within the existing walls the only apparent extension that is possible is the construction of a mezzanine floor at the west end of the Lending Division. It is estimated that this would cost \$6,000 and it is recommended that it be proceeded with in the coming financial year. Planning for a new building should begin now and a sub-committee should be set up to go into the problem of location, size of building, finance and timing.

STAFF: Staff growth at the assistant level has not kept pace with growth of demand so that far too much professional staff time is required to maintain essential services normally manned by assistants. As a result professional duties such as book selection, revision of stock and research work are not receiving proper attention. An additional assistant in each of the three main divisions of the Library would help to alleviate this situation and it is recommended that three additional junior assistants be appointed at six-monthly intervals during the next year.

REFERENCE SERVICES: These should be strengthened particularly in the technical and commercial fields and a full report on the steps to be taken to achieve this will be prepared in the near future.

SUBURBAN LIBRARIES: Apart from the problem of accommodation at the Central Library, Council's main concern should now be with the poor standard of service in the suburbs.



Even voluntary helpers are beginning to express their concern at the lack of a progressive policy and many would welcome a lead from the Council as the City's library authority. The first step should be the provision of a bookmobile to serve the many areas of the City which are at present unserved. This proposal has already received the blessing of the Suburban Libraries' Association and should be proceeded with before any further capital expenditure on suburban library buildings is contemplated. The cost of a bookmobile is estimated to be \$20,000.

The provision of mobile service cannot be divorced from the broader question of improvements in suburban service generally. Until now Council has left the initiative mainly to the voluntary committees of the eighteen suburban libraries. They have done a magnificent job in terms of devotion to duty but have a limited concept of modern library service and lack the incentive or the knowledge to institute changes. Council should now take the lead in providing services of a reasonable standard throughout its territory and the City's Development Plan provides a framework on which satisfactory, economical library service can be built. It is recommended that Council should adopt in principle the proposal to develop a two-tiered suburban library system based on the Development Plan concept of five district commercial centres. Whilst it would take some years to implement, the adoption of such a policy would establish future priorities and eliminate the haphazard and inadequate development which has been the pattern in the past.

The adoption of the above proposals would help to restore the City's library services to the position of relativity they had amongst other Council departments in 1959 and would bring libraries into relationship with the City's over-all development plan. Above all their implementation would eventually produce an adequate, economical service covering the whole City - the type of service which citizens have a right to expect and which is an accepted part of city amenities in other centres.

(Sgd) J.E.D. Stringleman,  
CITY LIBRARIAN

CANTERBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

25th March, 1969.

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ANALYSIS OF SUBURBAN LIBRARY STATISTICS

(Figures are taken from latest Annual Report available, except Issues which are for 1967)

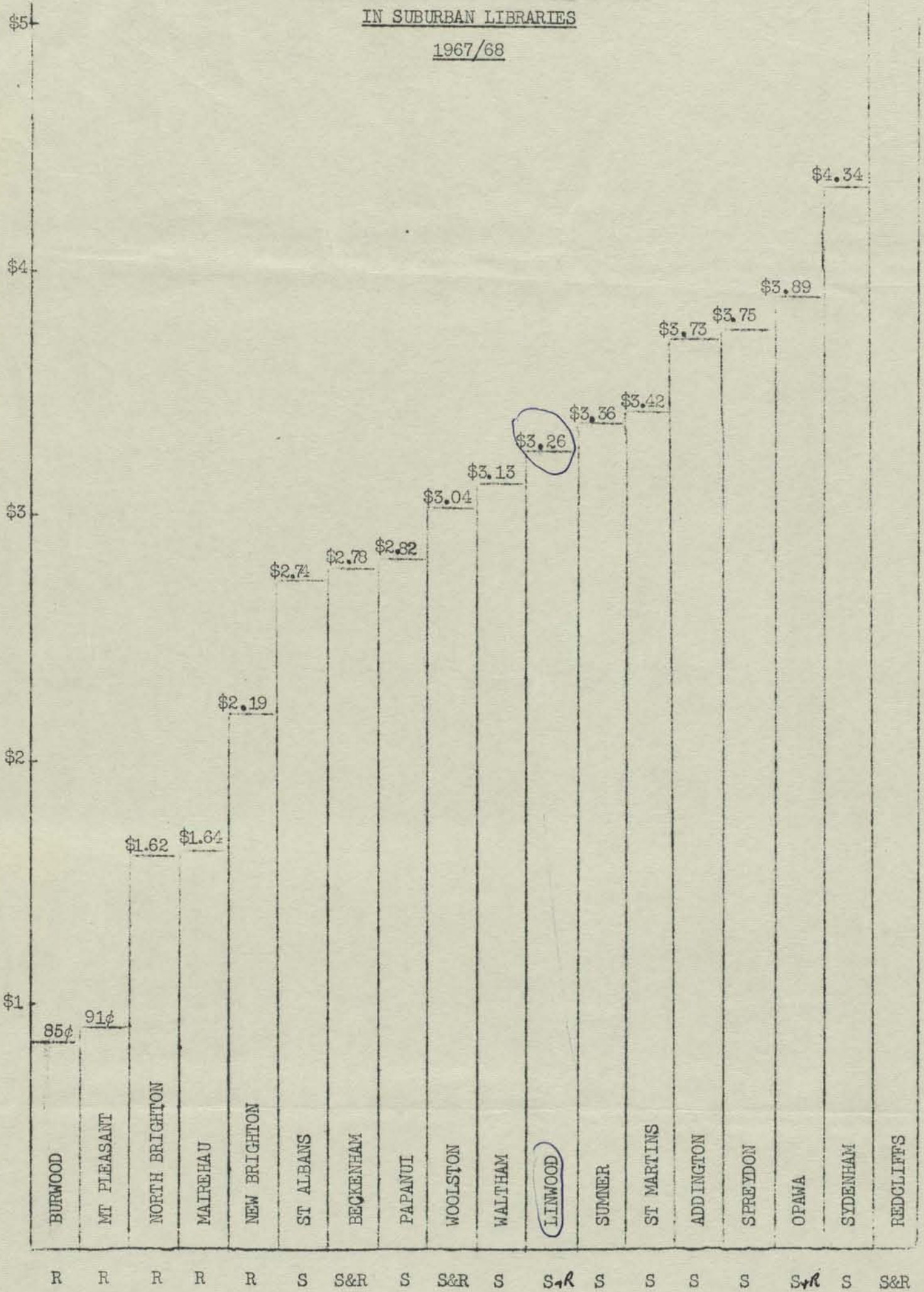
<u>Library</u>	<u>Hours Open Per Week</u>		<u>Membership</u>		<u>Terms of Service</u>	<u>Total Council Subsidy</u>	<u>Subsidy Per Borrower</u>	<u>Book Expenditure</u>	<u>Book Expenditure Per Borrower</u>	<u>Adult Issues</u>		
	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Children</u>						<u>Own Stock</u>	<u>Pooled Stock</u>	
						\$	\$.¢	\$	\$.¢			
Addington	10½	2	(14)	336	446	Subscription	654	.84	1,254	1.63	25,104	5,874
Beckenham	7¼	7¼	(13)	434	611	Subscription or Rental	685	.65	1,206	1.25	20,583	11,931
Burwood	7½	5½	(1)	2,246	3,347	Rental	804	.14	1,930	.40	27,050	32,711
Hoon Hay	-	4½	-	-	2,151	-	416	.19	416	.19	No Adult Service	
<u>Linwood</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>6½</u>	(8)	544	968	<u>Subscription or Rental</u>	690	.46	<u>1,572</u>	<u>1.15</u>	<u>35,097</u>	<u>11,501</u>
Mairehau	8½	4½	(2)	1,059	1,948	Rental	774	.25	1,740	.50	16,501	31,701
Mt Pleasant	4	2	(6)	595	225	Rental	416	.50	537	.74	3,106	3,049
New Brighton	12½	12½	(3)	1,001	2,441	Rental	804	.23	2,194	.62	No record	37,724
Nth New Brighton	9	3	(4)	687	725	Rental	654	.46	1,107	.78	3,998	17,913
Opawa	7	4	(10)	489	1,202	Subscription or Rental	702	.41	1,902	1.06	47,620	12,679
Papanui	8	5	(5)	645	2,211	Subscription	726	.25	1,824	.55	42,296	18,558
Redcliffs	5	4	(14)	276	317	Subscription or Rental	666	1.12	1,443	2.36	14,117	8,614
St Albans	11½	-	(7)	571	-	Subscription	654	1.14	1,565	2.60	32,251	5,648
St Martins	7	2	(11)	482	376	Subscription	684	.79	1,653	1.95	49,660	11,380
Spreydon	10	4½	(12)	470	1,405	Subscription	720	.38	1,765	.93	23,619	16,789
Sumner	12½	4	(9)	502	484	Subscription	708	.71	1,691	1.46	18,883	15,493
Sydenham	9½	10	(17)	255	130	Subscription	558	1.45	1,108	2.66	15,760	3,732
Waltham	5	2	(18)	132	429	Subscription	364	.65	413	76	7,500	4,865
Woolston	5½	3	(15)	298	622	Subscription or Rental	562	.69	906	1.16	15,089	8,534

BOOK EXPENDITURE PER ADULT BORROWER

\$5.22

IN SUBURBAN LIBRARIES

1967/68



'R' indicates Free-and-Rental policy.

'S' indicates Subscription service.