

GIVE THIS JOURNAL TO A FRIEND

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

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THE N.Z. LIBRARY ASSOCIATION AND ITS DEVELOPMENT By "The Browser"

Some years ago, to be exact, in March, 1910, in response to an invitation from the Dunedin City Council, a few well known men gathered together and founded The Libraries' Association of New Zealand.

It is interesting to read the proceedings and papers of that first conference of Library representatives and friends.

Among the motions carried was one proposed by Mr Mark Cohen on "Traveling Libraries and their Management," and in speaking to his motion, outlined a scheme, that, in essence, is practically the same that has come into being this year, after 28 years.

Mr T. W. Leys moved "That special provision should be made for Juvenile Libraries and Reading Rooms," and later, "That the importance of well equipped Branch Libraries and Reading Rooms in suitable positions be pressed upon the notice of Municipal Councils, that these libraries should be worked in conjunction with the Central Library, and under a common system of management, but with the aid of a local committee."

At the same session Mr T. W. Leys also moved, "That this conference views with very great regret the discontinuance of Government Grants to Public Libraries, especially those established in country districts; it regards the withdrawal of the grant of £3000 as a retrograde step, etc."

Mr Shaw, of Auckland, moved, "That it was of the greatest importance that the Municipal Corporation Act 1908 should be amended so as to alter the present limitation of the Library Rate from 1d to 3d in the pound." This was also carried.

This was the day of small things, and few of those who took part in that first conference of N.Z. librarians are alive today to see the strength and vigour of the Library movement throughout New Zealand, and the fulfilment of some of their ideas.

Passing over the 2nd and 3rd conferences, reports of which I do not possess, we come to the fourth, held at Dunedin again, the fifth held at Wanganui, and so reach 1928, when the sixth conference was held at Christchurch. This was the first conference at which Linwood Public Library was represented, and it was there and then that the writer was first impressed with the N.Z. Library problem and its possibilities. Dr. Friend gave an exhaustive paper on "Library Liaison within the Empire" inter-alia he said: "One cannot live at the heart of the Empire for years and be in contact with the pulsating life of experimenting, pioneering and creative thinking and the bold planning of the after-war library world, without realising that library service is becoming a very strange and wonderful feature of national and community life—both urban and rural."

Also he claims: "Public spirit in the individual faith in education—particularly